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BONAIRE The REPORTER



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Walk-A-Thon 2024

While most of Bonaire was looking forward to sleeping in on Sunday morning March 10, 1,025 people bought tickets to get up early and support Bonaire Special Olympics in the 2024 Walk-A-Thon. We're unsure how many showed to either bike or walk from White Slave to Rincon but the important thing is they bought the ticket to support Bonaire's Special Olympics athletes.

The early birds who did show, and there were a lot, gathered at White Slave at 5 a.m. to bike, run or walk the 30k (18.64 m) or 20k (12.42 m) route respectively to Rincon.

Bonaire's 2024 Special Olympics Walk-A-Thon more than sold out this year. A 1000 tickets were up for grabs but an extra 25 more were sold raising the amount to \$20,500 to date.

Those who purchased a ticket received a Walk-A-Thon 2024 t-shirt, a cool Bonaire backpack/bag, a nice breakfast at the finish line and an award certificate for completing the journey.

Bikers got a head start at 5 a.m. and headed toward Sorobon while the runners and walkers began at 5:05 and headed toward Kralendijk. Everyone met up and traveled the

Queen's Highway with one destination in mind – Rincon. All along the route some 53 volunteers were stationed to distribute water, fruit, raisin buns and urge the participants on with local dance music to keep everyone moving. At Karpata, volunteers served hot dogs, sandwiches and even rum.

At the end of the trek participants were met with homemade soup from the Bonaire Lion's Club, fruit and drinks, and a breakfast prepared by Walk-A-Thon volunteers and a board member.

Two Red Cross vehicles and five Special Olympics vehicles traveled

the roads to ensure everyone's safety, resupply the water stops with fruit and the yummy raisin buns. The Red Cross came to the aid of two cyclists and Special Olympics vans picked up some tired walkers.

The several buses that transported walkers and runners in the morning

to the start at White Slave also drove them from Rincon back to the stadium where everyone had met prior to the event. Flatbed trucks helped transport the bikes from Rincon back to Kralendijk for those bikers who didn't want to make the journey on two wheels. Others volunteered their trucks to pick up trash, toilets and water.

The organization received some pretty hefty cash donations from: Fundashon Wega di Number Bonaire, Ennia, KFC, Onderlinge Hulp, Flamingo TV, Playa Trading and Guardian Group. T-shirts and bags for the participants were donated.

The Board of Special Olympics Bonaire and the athletes of Special Olympics Bonaire thank everyone for their support at the 21st Special Olympics Walk-A-Thon. Proceeds aid in funding the training of the athletes and Special Olympics competitions and trips. Proceeds will be used to fund the athletes trip to the 2024 Natiobal Games in the Netherlands.

More photos will be available of the 21st Bonaire Special Olympics Walk-A-Thon on *The Reporter* Facebook page.

Julie Morgan story / photos



Special Olympics athletes Photo Julie Morgan

WolBES and FinBES conference ends predictably



Who “won” the working conference on upcoming changes to the WolBES and FinBES laws organized by The Hague during March 4-6? Depends on whose press releases you read. In 2010 the WolBES and FinBES laws determined how Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba would be gradually integrated into the government of the Netherlands, each as a new political entity called an “offshore municipality.” WolBES defined how the municipalities would be organized in accordance with Dutch standards of governance, and FinBES created the financial relationships between the new municipalities and the central government, including how Dutch standards of financial management and reporting would be instituted. Everyone understood that WolBES and FinBES would have to be reality-tested for a few years then updated.

When they walked in the door, the four delegations already disagreed on the purpose of the conference. According to State Secretary Alexandra van Huffelen, “The conference is the conclusion of the consultation process and is not intended to discuss the constitutional relationships, the Statute for the Kingdom and/or the Constitution.” In her mind, the needed changes had already been discussed and agreed upon. The representatives of the various entities were now gathering to make some nuts-and-bolts decisions about how the new measures could best be implemented.

The Bonaire group had a different opinion. Headed by Daisy Coffee, with Clark Abraham, leader of the coalition, at her elbow, they had announced the event as a “conclave with the Netherlands about the rights of Bonaire.” They arrived with a list of 13 proposals “aimed at strengthening the autonomy of the public entities.” They claimed, incorrectly, that they had conferred with the smaller islands and the general public on Bonaire when writing their “white paper.”

Statia and Saba showed up with their own, more modest expectations of the conference. They were also thoroughly ticked off by Bonaire’s bossy attitude and its presumption in claiming to speak to the conference on their behalf, even suggesting that Bonaire was becoming “the new Curaçao.”

The Bonaire delegation wanted membership on the island council to become a full-time paid position. The Hague agreed only to fund a part-time salary. The Bonaire delegation, which disapproves of the government’s intention to make the island council larger and more broadly representative, claimed the right to determine the number of seats on its council. Kingdom Relations said the first expansion would proceed on schedule and agreed only to delay for one election the second expansion. Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba will now have something they wanted—permanent representation in The Hague. But that was agreed on in the 2010 agreement and has been awaiting implementation by the island entities. Originally The Hague had agreed in principle that new government laws would be passed with the possibility of separate versions adapted to the islands. Later they adopted a “comply or explain policy” instead. New Dutch laws automatically apply to the islands unless the public entities, proactively and in advance, can explain why their island should be exempted. The Bonaire delegation wanted comply or explain terminated. Kingdom Relations said no, but did agree that a joint official working group will be created to propose ways the island could be involved earlier and more actively in policy discussions. Bonaire did come away with some relief from preventive financial supervision and reporting obligations, but Kingdom Relations had already announced those earlier.

The anticipated hot topic of the conference quietly faded away. Last fall the OLB voted to pay 350,000 euros in annual support for the political factions. Between then and this month’s conference, by legislative sleight of hand no one but the opposition is talking about, that amount was increased by more than \$550,000, plus a fat slice of the OLB’s annual budget. Van Huffelen met separately with the Bonaire delegation and convinced them it would be better if she not approach Parliament with such an outrageous demand. Kingdom Relations had already agreed to pony up the 350,000, and the delegation decided that was sufficient. *DMR*

OLB ups the ante in effort to hire new governor

One would think talented people would be lining up at the door to apply for the top position in the government of an attractive island like Bonaire. But the job of lieutenant governor has proven to be a hard sell. The position has been reluctantly filled by Nolly Oleana since Edison Rijna’s resignation in January, 2023. In January of this year the OLB announced that two suitable candidates had been found, but both withdrew.

A second, broader round of recruitment has been launched. The offered salary has been increased from \$106,950 to \$119,914, and the vacancy has been published in national newspapers such as De Volkskrant and Telegraaf.

Candidates have until April 7 to apply. Acting Kingdom Representative Helmond will vet the candidates to assure they meet the stipulated requirements for the job, then a confidential committee of the Island Council will make a decision. *DMR*

Hooligans shut down fishing pier

The governor has ordered the temporary closure and rehabilitation of the fishing pier on Kaya J.N.E. Craane. People who hang around at night have been threatening and stealing from people who are walking the Malecon, even groping women passing by. The authorities see evidence on and around the pier of smuggling and drug-related activities. The rightful users of the pier, the fishermen, are avoiding it.

Government spokespersons said the government consulted with the Dutch Caribbean Police Force, the Royal Military Police, STINAPA, and the harbor master, then declared the pier would be temporarily closed while it is made safer for the public and more suitable for the fishermen. Light poles have already been installed at the quay. Illegal structures and vessels will be removed and arrangements will be made for management of the pier. *DMR*

OLB to fund BonLab continuation

Facing closure because the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) terminated its care contract, BonLab will attempt to build a business that is not directly compensated by the government. The Island Council has unanimously approved a \$2.5 million contribution, enough to keep BonLab afloat for a year.

BonLab has been threatened with closure for years because the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport wants to save money by concentrating laboratory care at Fundashon Mariadal. Concerned that a Mariadal monopoly would threaten the quality of lab care on the island, the Executive Council and the Island Council, the management and employees of BonLab, and the trade union have continued to lobby for BonLab’s continuance with encouragement and support of deputy Nina den Heyer. *DMR*

The REPORTER

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Nubia Obando Photo Julie Morgan

Nubia has Magic Hands

owner of Harbour Village Bonaire. Magally asked Nubia if she would like to work for them in Bonaire.

to focus on massage and ended up attending a massage institute.

Nubia said, "When we arrived, I thought this is very small. Where are all the people? There was the salt company, Cultimara and not much else. It was very nice on Bonaire at this time."

"I studied nutrition and about metabolism; I don't have the diploma, but I have the knowledge. It feels so

Nubia's Magic Hands go to page 4

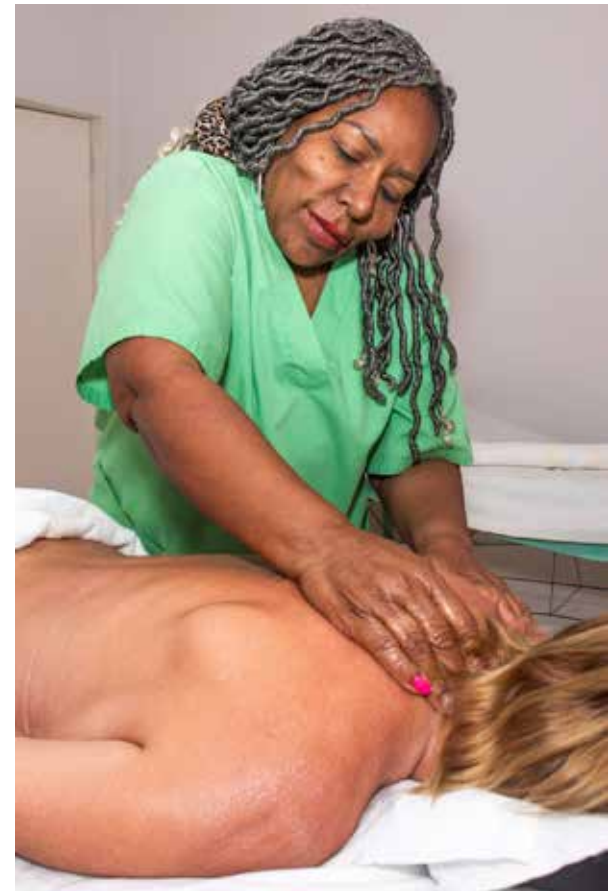
Nubia worked at Harbour Village for many years. Clients from all over the world praised her talents on Trip Advisor and other sites. Many are still her clients.

Tim Webb, former hotel manager at Harbour Village from the 90's said, "I have had hundreds of massages from Nubia. She is awesome and can really read a body and find the trigger points. I still have a massage every three weeks and have had hundreds of therapists and she is still in the top three in my lifetime. I use her as the standard when I have a new therapist."

On March 5, 2005, Nubia opened her own shop at the Hato circle, Day Spa, Face & Body by Nubia. This month she is celebrating 19 years at this location. Her specialties are reflexology and therapy. Nubia asks the clients specific questions about their pain to determine treatment. If it is a medical issue, then a doctor's okay must be given before she will proceed with the therapy.

Nubia said, "One client had pain for 10 years and with my therapy, his pain went away. I like helping people with my hands. One client said, 'Nubia you have magic hands.'"

Nubia began her training in Venezuela and spent one year studying medicine at a university as she wanted to be a doctor. From that education she decided she wanted



FOR SALE! Kaya Proud 23B Well Maintained Family Home



- Location: Playa Pabou
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f http://www.facebook.com/REMAXBonaire



Nubia's Magic Hands from page 3

good to help. So many people have problems and I have the experience and can help these people," said Nubia.

Nubia explained she has three nationalities: Colombia where she was born, Venezuela where she grew up and Bonaire where she will grow old.

Nubia said, I am not the best, but I do my best. Everybody has the same treatment from me. I thank God for bringing me to Bonaire. I love this island and the people of Bonaire. Thank you to the people of Bonaire."



Nubia's Day Spa not only offers eight different types of massage, but facials, mani-pedis & waxing, back treatments, Bonairean salt body scrub, reflexology, acupuncture and special packages.

For more information visit www.bonairedayspabynubia.com. Or call 717-2622 or on WhatsApp +599-785-3398.

Reading *The Reporter's* online? Visit our business page on page 18 for a quick link to her website.

Photos / Story Julie Morgan

Ask Bob

Bonaire real estate advice



Are most properties on Bonaire sold furnished? Steve P

Many properties are sold completely or partially furnished, especially if the Seller does not live on Bonaire. The cost to ship

household goods from Bonaire to their home country is expensive, so the Sellers generally leave the furnishings with the sale. Personal items and artwork are usually not included in the sale, so if you want these, you need to specify it in your offer and the purchase agreement. Before you sign a purchase agreement to buy the property, you will be given an inventory list to review and sign, that shows what items are included in the sale. If the Seller lives on Bonaire, they may sell the house unfurnished, and move the furnishings to their next home. You can buy household goods, furniture and appliances on the island.

Regards, Bob

Bob Bartkoski, Re/Max Bonaire Broker/Owner

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Letters & Opinions

The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various authors and forum participants do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of The Bonaire Reporter.

Unseen Menace: The Lingering Environmental Impact of Bonaire's Subtle Oil Spill

Introduction

Nestled in the Caribbean, Bonaire, renowned for its natural beauty, faces a subtle yet profound environmental challenge—a recent oil spill discovered by the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard on February 7. The echoes of this spill reached Sorobon Beach and Bonaire's east coast by February 26, triggering immediate cleanup efforts that, though visually reassuring, mask the enduring repercussions on the island's delicate ecosystems.

This recent spill adds to a history of environmental stress; in 2017, the east coast was similarly tainted by oil, demanding substantial time for ecosystems to rebound. The health of an ecosystem is directly linked to its resilience, defined as its ability to persist despite exposure to stressors. Bolstering biodiversity emerges as a pivotal strategy to enhance this resilience.

Mindful adherence to sustainable development principles—such as curbing erosion and runoff through halting coastal development and preventing deforestation—is pivotal in fostering ecological resilience.

The coral on Bonaire's east coast has never been inventoried, complicating assessments of recovery from the 2017 pollution and gauging the present impact of the recent spill. The absence of baseline data raises a critical question: Is it preferable not to gauge the extent of damage, sparing us worry about poten-



tial destruction, or does this lack of information hinder effective protection and restoration of these fragile ecosystems?

The Illusion of Clean-Up

Despite commendable cleanup efforts, restoring Bonaire's environment proves a nuanced and intricate process. Visible improvements may imply a return to normalcy, yet the impact on ecosystems persists. Even minuscule tar balls leave a lasting mark beneath the surface, where subtle oil remnants continue to threaten marine life and habitats.

Revealing Environmental Stressors

The aftermath of the spill reveals a disconcerting truth—the environmental stressors triggered by this seemingly minor oil spill. Its subtle yet pervasive pres-

ence jeopardizes wildlife through toxic contamination and physical contact, imperiling coral reefs and their associated marine organisms. These effects extend beyond the shoreline, infiltrating the intricate web of life defining Bonaire's coastal environment.

Concealed Consequences for Habitats

While the oil spill may not visually dominate Bonaire's landscape, its concealed consequences permeate crucial habitats. From sandy beaches to mangrove tree roots and seagrasses, the impact is far-reaching. Even in small quantities, oil can infiltrate and disrupt these ecosystems, leading to long-term consequences that extend well beyond initial cleanup efforts.

Navigating Long-Term Recovery Challenges

This article emphasizes the challenge of long-term recovery from even seemingly minor oil spills. Despite a visually oil-free coastline, the intricate processes of natural recovery can take years, if not decades, acknowledging the varying recovery periods for different ecosystems to restore affected habitats to their normal functioning state.

Conclusion

Bonaire's seemingly unassuming oil spill carries profound ecological implications that demand immediate attention. As the island undergoes cleanup efforts, there still will remain oil residues which continue as an environmental stressor for the ecosystems. The true impact of an oil spill extends far beyond its immediate visibility, one more reason to prioritize long-term recovery efforts for the sustained health of Bonaire's precious ecosystems.

It is imperative to cherish biodiversity, recognizing it as the cornerstone of ecological resilience. As stewards of this planet, our role is not just to remediate the damages but to actively cultivate robust and thriving ecosystems that can withstand environmental stressors. Let us strive to be good ancestors, leaving behind a legacy of a vibrant and resilient Bonaire for generations to come.

Foundation Save Plantation Bolivia

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POLICE REPORT

Property crime

Mar. 6/7. Between 6 p.m. on Wednesday, and 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 7, a white Toyota Tercel with license plate B-4115 was stolen while parked on Kaminda Mexico.

Mar. 2/3. A black-painted Kymco Agility scooter with license plate MF-1676 was stolen between 6 p.m. Sunday and 10:30 a.m. Monday when parked in the scooter parking lot in front of the entrance of an apartment complex on Kaya Yuma. The scooter was locked with a steering lock and a chain lock attached to the rear wheel.

Feb. 29. A black leather wallet with contents was stolen when it fell from the owner's pocket in front of a restaurant on the Kaminda Lagun.

Feb. 27. A black backpack with gray stripes was taken between 3:50 and 4:15 p.m. when the owners were snorkeling at Donkey's Beach. It contained, among other things, two sunglasses from the brands Ralph Lauren and Maui Jim, a car key and a telephone case. The bag was under a cloth on a chair on the beach.

Feb. 26/27 & 29. A blue-painted Toyota Corolla with license plate B-5663 was stolen between 6 p.m. on Monday, and 3 p.m. on Tuesday. The car was parked unlocked in front of a house on Kaya Stormvogel. On Feb. 29 around 1 a.m. a patrol spotted the car on Hanchi Amboina. When the driver was ordered to stop, he complied. The three occupants, aged 40, 53 and 60, were immediately arrested for theft and possession of stolen goods. The car was taken to the police station.

Arrests

Mar. 8. Around 11:10 a.m. a man, 36, who had been stopped by a patrol for a routine check on Kaya Nikiboko South was arrested for possession of a stolen scooter.

Mar. 6. Around 7:30 p.m. a young man, 16, was arrested for insulting a civil servant, for deliberately failing to comply with police demands and for resisting arrest. A police officer stopped two boys who were riding bicycles without lights in the center area of Playa. One of the boys insulted the officer and then continued cycling. After a short chase, he was stopped with the help of bystanders at Kaya Jean B.F. Vitte near a mini market and was arrested.

Mar. 3. A man, 56, destroyed his neighbor's door. After being asked several times to show his ID, he did not comply and was arrested for vandalism and violation of the BES Compulsory Identification Act.

Mar. 3. Around 7:20 p.m. on Kaya Andres A. Emerenciana a patrol ordered two men, one on a scooter and the other on an E-bike, to stop because the scooter was without a valid license plate. Both men ignored the orders and increased their speed. The driver of the scooter managed to drive away. The driver of the E-bike was forced to stop. The suspect was asked to show his identification, but gave false information. He could also not prove where he had rented the E-bike. As a result, the young man, 17, was arrested and taken to the police station. The E-bike has been seized for further investigation.

Mar. 2. Around 8 p.m., a man, 35, was arrested by the Special Assignments Group (GBO) on Kaya Caribe for threats, assault with a weapon and violation of the BES Firearms Act. The suspect assaulted one person and threatened several people with a firearm.

Mar. 2. Around 11:20 p.m. a chase took place that later ended in a collision on Kaya Korona.

A patrol driving on Kaya Monseigneur Nieuwindt spotted three vehicles driving at high speed on Kaya Nikiboko South going to Playa.

At the Kaya Nikiboko South roundabout, all three vehicles passed the center conductor on the left while vehicles arrived from the opposite direction. The approaching vehicles had to swerve to avoid a collision. The drivers continued to drive at high speed towards the Soernan di Roozendaal roundabout where one of the vehicles then drove onto Kaya Nikiboko Noord towards Amboina.

The patrol chased this car but the driver did not respond to orders to stop. Due to the high speed at which the driver was traveling, the officers considered abandoning the pursuit due to the risk of a collision. The driver also recklessly overtook several vehicles driving in the opposite direction.

At that point, another patrol pulled up diagonally across the road in an attempt to force the reckless driver to stop. The driver did not reduce his speed and continued to drive towards the service vehicle then deviated just in front of the service vehicle to drive past towards Playa. This continued the chase. During the chase, the driver crashed into a car in Playa and continued driving. Moments later, on the Kaya Korona, the car struck the rear of a vehicle in front causing the driver to lose control, then struck a lamp post, drove through a hedge and

came to a standstill in a business car park. Two people then got out of the front passenger side door of the vehicle and tried to run away. Both people were asked to remain but did not comply. As a result, warning shots were fired in the air. The suspects did not respond and continued to run. After a short foot chase, the officer managed to capture the first suspect. During the arrest, this suspect showed aggressive behavior. The second suspect was also arrested further away.

The first suspect, a man, 19, was arrested for attempted manslaughter, crimes against public authorities, driving without a driver's license, driving without valid insurance and not being able to show a valid ID. The second suspect, a man, 19, was arrested for crimes against public authorities and failure to show valid identification. The two other male occupants of the vehicle, aged 19 and 20, were also arrested for not being able to show valid identification. The car was seized and taken to the police station.

Mar. 1. Around 5:55 PM, the central control room received a report of a dispute between neighbors at Hanchi Amboina. The patrol mediated between the reporter and the person involved and then left. A little later, another report was received that there was an altercation between the same neighbors and bottles were being thrown. A man, 32, was arrested for vandalism and crimes against public authorities, a man, 33, was arrested for threatening and a woman, 30, for crimes against public authority.

Feb. 29. Around 10:10 p.m. the central control room received a report of a fight between several people at a bar on Kaya Korona. When the patrol arrived, no one on the scene wanted to say anything about the fight. A little later, a person involved in the brawl reported to the hospital with several injuries.

Feb. 27. Around 10:30 p.m. a man, 43, was arrested for assaulting a woman at a bar on Kaya Orinoco. The victim was taken to hospital by ambulance for medical treatment.

Feb. 27. Around 5:20 a.m. a man, 63, was arrested on Kaya Dr. J.G. Hernandez for violation of the Opium Act BES. During a search of the suspect's home items were seized: a can, a jar and several packages containing suspected narcotics; a leg holster; a knife; a small scale and a mobile phone.

Driving under the influence

Mar. 6. Around 2:15 a.m. a scooter with three people on it without helmets was spotted parked on Kaya L.D. Gerharts. The driver, a man, 23, was found to be under the influence of alcohol and was arrested. In addition, the driver was fined for being unable to produce a driver's license and for not wearing a helmet. He was banned from driving for four hours. The other two passengers were also ticketed for riding without a helmet.

Mar. 5. Around 1:35 a.m. a man, 37, who was stopped for a routine check was arrested on Kaya Princess Marie for driving under the influence of alcohol. He was given a two hour driving ban.

Feb. 29. Around 1:45 a.m. a man, 37, was arrested on Kaya Bonaire for driving under the influence of alcohol. The suspect was involved in a collision in a parking lot. In addition, the suspect was ticketed for not having a driver's license.

Feb. 27. Around 12:45 a.m. a man, 32, was arrested on Kaya Sonmontuno for driving under the influence of alcohol. He was involved in a collision with another car. He was also ticketed because he could not show a valid driver's license.

Traffic accidents

Mar. 10. Around 5:25 p.m. the central control room received a report that a pickup truck had rolled over on Kaminda Tra'i Montaña. When the patrol arrived, the driver was seated next to his vehicle. The driver stated that he was driving from Rincon towards Playa and lost control in a bend. The driver was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Mar. 9. Around 5:10 p.m. a car and a scooter collided on Kaya Korona. The driver of the car stated that she was turning left onto Kaya Esther when a scooter hit the rear of her vehicle. The driver fell off the scooter and was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Mar. 6. Around 2:30 p.m. the central control room received a report of a single vehicle accident on Kaminda Djabou. A car crashed into a lamppost and then drove into the fence of a house. The impact caused the lamppost to fall over and land on the car. By the time the patrol arrived the driver had left the location. The officers saw electrical cables hanging on the vehicle. A water pipe had also broken, and water sprayed towards the cables. Because this situation was unsafe for both the victim who was still in the vehicle and for the many bystanders, the officers decided to remove everyone from the

vicinity of the crime scene.

While the officers were cordoning off the area, a group of bystanders went to remove the passenger from the vehicle but were stopped by the officers. The victim was taken to hospital by ambulance for medical treatment. WEB staff arrived on site to remove the power from the lamppost so that there was no longer any danger to those present.

An investigation found that three cars collided one after the other at high speed. For unknown reasons, the driver of the last car lost control and caused a collision.

The Dutch Caribbean Police Force would like to request everyone to always follow police orders. Resisting or touching victims involved in accidents of any kind can have fatal consequences for the victim and legal consequences for the perpetrator. In the event of a collision, leave the task of removing a victim from the car to the ambulance or fire brigade personnel.

Mar. 8. Around 3:50 a.m. a patrol spotted a vehicle driving northbound on Kaya Korona recklessly and at high speed overtaking several vehicles. Due to the car's high speed, officers decided to abandon the pursuit on Kaminda Tras di Montaña. A little later, the vehicle and driver were found at an address in Rincon. The driver was cited for reckless driving.

Mar. 4. Around 7:45 p.m. a car and a scooter collided on Kaya Industria. The driver of the scooter was treated on the spot by ambulance personnel. The driver of the car was cited for driving without proof of insurance.

Mar. 4. Around 12:35 p.m. a car and a scooter collided on Kaya Gilberto F. Croes when the driver of the car did not give way to the scooter. The driver of the scooter was treated on the spot by ambulance personnel.

Feb. 29. Around 8 a.m. a car collided with a cyclist at the intersection connecting Kaya Grandi with Boulevard Gobernador N. Debrot, Kaya Neerlandia and Kaya Herman J. Pop. When the patrol arrived, the ambulance crew was checking and treating the cyclist. The driver of the car stated that she was driving north, and suddenly she saw a man on a bicycle crossing the road. She tried to dodge but was unable to do so. The cyclist stated that he had not paid close attention when crossing the road. The car touched the front wheel of the bicycle, and as a result he fell on his head. Traffic was temporarily regulated by the police until the services had finished their work.

Traffic checks

Feb. 26 – Mar. 11. During routine traffic checks tickets were issued for driving without: 8x a helmet; 21x a valid driver's license; 16x valid insurance; 21x a seat belt on. Tickets were also issued for: 6x for holding a phone while driving; 2x for driving in a prohibited direction; 1x for not transporting children in a child seat.

Feb. 28. Between 9:30 - 11:30 p.m. a planned traffic control was held at Boulevard J.A.. Abraham. Police stopped 12 cars and eight scooters, and seven drivers received fines: 4x for driving without a valid driver's license and 3x for driving without valid insurance.

The fines for the above violations varies between \$30 and \$225.

Fire / Arson arrest

Mar. 10. Around 2:10 a.m. a fire in the mondi at Kaya Veronica was reported. When the patrol arrived, the officers saw the fire was located next to an uninhabited house and that it was in danger of spreading. An old vehicle also caught fire during the fire. The fire brigade extinguished the fire. No one was injured.

Mar. 5. Around 6 a.m. a house on Kaya Caranjito was searched as part of the investigation into the arson of the cars that took place in the evening hours of Friday, January 12, in the Tera Cora area. A man, 43, was arrested for arson and violation of the BES Firearms Act. In addition, several articles relevant to the investigation have been seized. During the search, a firearm with ammunition was also found and seized.

Public order

Feb. 27. Around 12:45 p.m. the central control room received a report that a lifeless body had been found in an apartment on Kaya Sabana. After an investigation, the medical examiner determined the death of a 75-year-old man with initials L.J.J. born on November 6, 1948 in Bonaire.

Feb. 27. Around 11 a.m. the central control room received a report about a cruise tourist who had become ill while snorkeling at Klein Bonaire. The victim was taken by a passing boat to shore, where ambulance crews took over resuscitation, but to no avail. The 74-year-old man with initials R.D.M. was born on September 15, 1949 in England.

Bonaire Marine Park Platform Meeting #4



Conservation manager Kalli DeMeyer chairs the meeting. Photo Julie Morgan

Every seat was taken at the Bonaire Marine Park Platform meeting #4 at Delphin's Conference Center on March 7. With the recent oil spill, sargassum season approaching and the state of Bonaire's reefs regarding SCTLD and bleaching, concerned watersport and nature stakeholders were quick to accept the by invitation only meeting.

Bonaire National Marine Park (BNMP) manager Judith Raming opened the meeting giving a quick overview before handing the microphone to conservation manager Kalli DeMeyer.

Major topics were: Sargassum Update; Oil spill update; Platform update and 2023 highlights; Marine Park capacity and Focus in 2024.

Sargassum

DeMeyer noted to date the amount isn't that high yet but it is expected to flow along the coast at Lagun, Sorobon and Washington Park. The influx to date is manageable but what has arrived has been mixed with oil.

Oil Spill

Trinidad/Tobago oil spill was expected to make landfall on February 29 but the oil went underwater making it impossible to track and arrived at Sorobon on the 26th. Oil booms had been placed in anticipation. Following its arrival more booms were placed, channels to the mangroves were closed and cleanup began. A military team brought their own equipment making it possible to complete the cleanup in five days. Closer inspection of the oil is necessary for it to be salvaged. It is being treated at the landfill with precautions.

DeMeyer said, "You will still see oil at Marcatera and Baby Beach, we cannot get it off the stones so we relocated them. There is still a warning in place for people to not get into the water... We expect to lift the ban next week but it could go on for at least two weeks."

Platform Update #3 and 2023 Highlights

Water safety ordinance is the responsibility of the Harbor Office. STINAPA can only report but not enforce. If you see unsafe activity on the water call 715-8000 to report it.

Nature permit/nature fee of \$10 was supposed to be levied on cruise boat passengers. This is not a cruise

boat fee but an overnight fee. This was postponed by the government.

Cruise boat nature fee for passengers was postponed by the OLB (local government). Their intent is to take the nature fee and merge it with the tourism tax. This is a major threat to STINAPA financially as it primarily funded by the nature fee.

Commercial operator fee to the marine park has been postponed by the government.

The Commercial operator's nature permit annual fee is not implemented at this time.

Reef Ranger Course for nature permit holders is a requirement.

Requirement for a Surface Marker Buoy (SMB), deployed from depth, not at the surface requirement is scheduled.

Public mooring reservation system plans are being discussed on how to implement. A pilot reservation system is in the works for Klein Bonaire.

Rezoning of Lac Bai has been delayed by the government.

There were major achievements at Lac via funding from Resembid and project manager Jessica Johnson. Two rangers are present every day, new boat, watch towers at Lac and Sorobon, coral nursery, seagrass restoration, fecal bacteria monitoring and the rezoning plan.

Marine Park Informs site was released on social media with videos on moorings, boating, diving and the two no-fishing zones.

Klein Bonaire has three new walking trails. Rangers maintain the cabanas, picnic areas and empty the trash bins. Elsmarie Beukenboom's reforestation has provided growth. She aims to plant 1000 Bonaire Sabal Palms on the island. To date 590 volunteers have assisted. Contact Stinapa if you would like to be a part of this project.

RoffaReefs from the Rotterdam Zoo, funded by WWF-NL, is a new partner with STINAPA and Piskabon. RoffaReefs collects fish eggs, incubates and will eventually repopulate Bonaire's reefs. They have established a fish DNA database, mapping of species breeding, studying fish life stages and have photographed eggs hatching which has never been done before. In May a project manager will be on Bonaire full time. The zoo is setting up a wet lab for efficiency of the project.

Conch Project in collaboration with WWF, Piskabon and Curacao. Baby conch were placed in Lac two weeks ago and they are growing. Conch are distinctive animals only found in the Caribbean.

Density of lionfish on the reef was at its lowest point in 2015 but the numbers are rising again. Commercial hunters are selling the fish for up to \$50 per kilo and tend to let the fish grow because they are worth more possibly causing the increase.

Bleaching in 2023 was the worst to date on Bonaire, but other islands had it worse. It was first detected in October and the elevated sea temperatures have continued into 2024. The good news is SCTLD goes into remission from the bleaching.

SCTLD

Roxanne Liana Francisca STINAPA biologist and senior conservation manager brought the crowd up to date on what is happening in the region and what the marine park is trying to do. SCTLD was first identified on Bonaire's reef in March 2023. Since then, BNMP has enforced disinfection by divers and tracked the spread. Jeannine Toy has been hired to coordinate training of volunteers for antibiotic coral treatment.

At the height, 4 out of 10 corals had the disease. Bonaire is slowly moving out of the outbreak, but it is most likely going to stay. Out of 100 colonies, 46% have died. This is not all coral species but primarily brain, boulder, star and flower corals.

"If we lose all of our brain coral, we can't do the research. We need to keep them alive as long as we can. Some corals are resistant, but they need our help if they are going to recover," said Francisca.

Antibiotic training for several volunteers began the weekend of March 9-10.

Incidents handled by BNMP in 2023: Rescued tourist from Klein Bonaire; Towed a Curaçao boat into customs; Diesel truck overturned; Curaçao fishing boat ran aground at Lac and it took six days to offload its fuel. 640 verbal warnings were given to people using the marine park. Fisherman from Piskabon and BNMP are united in helping with incidents that happen every month.

Challenges for 2024 will be income generation due to the potential loss of the nature fee and the inability to collect the commercial operator fee. We have a huge staff turnover and that requires funds for training and team building. BNMP has an urgent need to replace their control boat.

Focus for 2024. SCTLD and trying to mobilize as much as possible. There is a lot of thought of what comes next regarding how to repopulate the reef and survive climate change. Many questions and statements were put forth regarding how STINAPA will survive financially, the nature fee, fishing zones, moorings and Lac rezoning. *Julie Morgan*

Coordinating Registered Nurse

Our core values are Integrity, Responsibility, Respect, and Collaboration. We are seeking a candidate who embodies these values—an enthusiastic, experienced, and service-minded Coordinating Registered Nurse. This individual should be passionate about elevating the development of our care departments to new heights. In the role of Coordinating Registered Nurse, you will assist the Manager Care in coordinating daily duties within the care departments.

Responsibilities include:

- Coach staff members to enhance their skills and performance.
- Manage materials effectively to support optimal patient/client care.
- Provide nursing care within established guidelines and service levels.
- Contribute to the development and execution of the operational and tactical year plan for care departments, ensuring quality care and streamlined processes.

Organizational structure and reports

This position reports to the Manager Care. Receives operational and functional instructions from the medical manager, island physicians and visiting specialists.

Requirements

- Licensed RN on at least MBO -4 level or Management training at Bachelor /HBO level
- At least 4 years relevant working experience
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Organizational skills
- Quality oriented and patient/client centered
- Team player and the ability to work independently
- Computer knowledge and skills
- Verbal and written communication skills in English, command of Dutch is an asset

Main Tasks

- Organizing and coordinating daily work process; shift making; tracking hours
- Support with the implementation of HR-policies
- Ensure that medical guidelines and instructions for doctor and medical specialists are adhered to by staff
- Assist with the preparation of the year plan for the care departments on an operational and tactical level
- Monitor and analyze internal and external development, identifying possible bottlenecks
- Liaise with other health care professionals

What we offer

The initial appointment is for a period of one year. You will work full-time and will be asked to work. We offer a competitive benefit package in line with our Collective Labor Agreement. You will take part in the Dutch Caribbean Pension plan, Zorg-verzekeringskantoor BES health insurance plan. The starting monthly gross salary is between USD 3198 – 3551 (based on full-time employment) based on experience.

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Closing date: March 25th 2024



About the St. Eustatius Health Care Foundation

SEHCF is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Queen Beatrix Medical Center, St. Eustatius' only medical center. With a team of 65 employees, including 4 doctors, a midwife, a physiotherapist, and a Practice Supporter for general practitioner care with a focus on diabetic care, SEHCF offers care in the field of general practitioner care, community care, emergency care and physiotherapy.

St. Eustatius has a population of about 3,100 inhabitants. SEHCF is fully engaged in developing the medical center with the aim of raising the quality of care to a high-quality level. In addition to expansion of the infrastructure, plans include expansion of the medical specialties offered and the optimal use of telemedicine.



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Reef Glimpses

by Dee Scarr

About That Glass, Again

Imagine a cruise line which ignores all local and international laws about ocean dumping.

Whoops! We don't have to imagine it: Silversea Cruises, a cruise line based in Monaco and owned by the U.S. company Royal Caribbean, has flaunted all laws and dumped debris on Bonaire's sea bottom. Twice.

The first dump, in 1995, was easy to trace: it wasn't there one day, the next day the *Silver Whisper* was at the North Pier, and the third day divers found a pile of mostly mechanically crushed glass debris but also some broken crockery reading *Silver Whisper*. Elsmarie Beukenboom of STINAPA, reported the dump to the Prosecutor's Office and the *Silver Whisper* was charged and fined. The Harbourmaster and volunteer divers worked together, and the debris was removed from Bonaire's sea bottom in less than two weeks.

The second dump, also near the North Pier, was found in late 2022. In its first collection effort, divers removed 87 pounds of debris. The toughest part was getting it from the dump site to shore, so later collection efforts included a lift bag and surface support from the BNMP. The current total of broken glass, bottle necks with and without labels, bottle caps, broken crockery, and other such trash removed from that dump, is 485 pounds (220 kgs).

Selibon has loaned me two yellow Klikos; each is now just over half full of broken glass. I'm not strong enough to tilt them, much less roll them anywhere.

It's logical to conclude that Silversea routinely crushes and dumps bottles and broken crockery, but probably they normally do it when at sea. Either their automatic dump button got triggered when they were in port here, or someone pushed the button without looking outside. Bonaire recycles glass, why can't



Silversea turn their glass in to Selibon? Or bring it back to their home port for recycling?

Could the answer be that it's easier for them to crush and dump than to recycle?

And don't forget cost. Everyone is concerned about cost, right?

Well, maybe not everyone. Silversea is a luxury cruise line. Their ships have no cabins, only suites. Every suite comes with its own 24-hour butler. The *Silver Dawn*, one Silversea ship that visits Bonaire, has a capacity of 596 passengers, with a crew of 411. I could not find any price on their website for any Silversea cruise (Is this a clue that if you have to check the price, you can't afford it?), and all the trips I had the patience to look at were waitlisted. So apparently Silversea fans are willing to pay for such special service.

I'd like to think those clients expected to be paying for the best environmentally-sound procedures, but there's not a word about that on Silversea's website. Royal Caribbean's website, talking about recycling, says, "We're landfill free!" Maybe they should turn it into a jingle: "We're landfill free, we dump at sea!"

My original goals are still not met:

1. Remove all that debris from Bonaire's sea bottom.

2. Get Silversea to pay Bonaire for its lawbreaking.

My favorite idea is for them to fund a scholarship, in perpetuity, in environmental studies for a Bonairean student.

3. Get Silversea to quit dumping. It's illegal, disgusting, dangerous to marine animals, and just wrong.

So far, I've written to:

The Pres/CEO of Silversea in Monaco and Pres/CEO of Royal Caribbean in Miami. My communications ended up in the legal department in Monaco and have not been answered. My accusations haven't been denied, either.

I also wrote to MARPOL, a special agency of the United Nations which oversees international shipping. No response.

On the To Do list for further communications:

-- Write about this to governments and harbor masters of areas where Silversea ships visit.

-- Write about this to investment counselors about Silversea's anti-environment practices.

If this debris had been dumped on land, we wouldn't have tolerated it for an instant.

It is, as far as I know, perfectly legal to send the following out to investment counselors, and I intend to send it to investment people as well as to the investment department people of Royal Caribbean.

Silversea Cruises and Royal Caribbean Cruise Line Investment Facts

What is the financial situation of Silversea Cruises of Monaco, owned by Royal Caribbean? A Silversea cruise ship, while docked at the Dutch Caribbean island of Bonaire sometime in 2022, dumped more than 485 pounds (220 kg) of crushed glass into the Bonaire National Marine Park.

Letters were sent reporting this to the President/CEO of Silversea, and the President/CEO of Royal Caribbean; in both cases the letters ended up in Silversea's Legal Department and never received a response. The accusation of dumping was never denied.

One conclusion to draw is that Silversea Cruises is so close to bankruptcy that they cannot afford to deal with their glass legally, and must therefore illegally dump the trash into the sea. Eventually being held responsible for such dumping is apparently less threatening to the companies than actually following local and international laws.

The conclusion is obvious: potential investors – for environmental as well as financial reasons -- should avoid Royal Caribbean and their scofflaw possession, Silversea.



Dee has been guiding divers on Bonaire since 1982. She's written about her undersea experiences in her books *Touch the Sea*, *The Gentle Sea*, and *Coral's Reef*; in *Dive Training Magazine*

from 1990 to 2000, with "Coral Glimpses" in *The Bonaire Reporter*, and now with "Reef Glimpses." through touchthesea.com.

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The *Gulfstream* being powered by its previous partner, the tug *Marlin*. Photo via Bellingcat, © 2008 Hans Rosenkranz



Follow the Money follows the leaking barge

The international legal/banking system is a great place to hide illicit assets. Nevertheless, investigative journalists like Follow the Money and Bellingcat have turned up an impressive amount of information about the sunken barge off Tobago that's been polluting the southern Caribbean with leaked oil, as well as the tug that took it there, then abandoned it. Bellingcat's reporting has been especially impressive.

According to Bellingcat, together the two vessels were an "articulated tug and barge system," or ATB. ATBs often operate for years as a paired team. The

barges are unregistered and unpowered vessels with a V-shaped notch built into their stern to receive the bow of a tug. When the two vessels are lashed together, the tug powers and controls the ATB and the barge transports the cargo.

Tugs, being registered, documented vessels, are easiest to track. In this case, the barge could be tracked too because its prominently displayed name, *Gulfstream*, has been showing up for decades in photos taken by organizations that routinely monitor commercial shipping around the world.

Investigators from Bellingcat discovered that in 2008 and 2009, *Gulfstream* was operating in the U.S. paired with a tug named *Marlin*. In 2012 *Marlin* was sold to San Martin Group Ltd, a Panamanian company. Google Earth shows *Marlin* and *Gulfstream*, still teamed, in Maracaibo, Venezuela, on July 28th, 2015. Other data shows the ATB was visiting petroleum ports in Venezuela and the Caribbean regularly during those years.

On March 23, 2021, San Martin Group Ltd, sold the *Marlin* to another Panamanian company, Star Goods Petroleum S.A. (The *Gulfstream* isn't recorded in the sale, but being an unregistered vessel, it probably would not have been.) No further record of *Marlin* has turned up since.

Bellingcat discovered *Gulfstream*, now almost 60 years old, spent several months tied to a dock in Colon, Panama, to prevent her from sinking. Then she was evicted for nonpayment of docking fees and spent several months beached. Recently she left Panama powered by *Solo Creed*, reportedly filled her tanks with two million dollars worth of fuel oil in Venezuela, then set out to deliver the fuel to Guyana Power and Light. But, as we know, she sank near Tobago and began befouling the waters she had just sailed through.

Bellingcat, searching for documentation of the ownership of both vessels, discovered that many people owned them, except perhaps for the people who actually did. The announced sinking triggered a flurry of new documentations. One apparent new owner of record had temporarily registered the *Solo Creed* in Zanzibar, though the registration expired a few days after the sinking. People who hadn't purchased the vessels claimed they did, from people who claimed they had never owned them. The names of shell companies in several countries turned up on documents of dubious validity. The ownership of the two vessels is now hidden in so many places it may never be found. DMR

What we learned from the oil spill

The *Gulfstream*, the tanker barge left sunk, abandoned by its tug unclaimed on a shallow reef just off Tobago, is no longer disgorging fuel oil into the Caribbean. There is still fuel oil in some of the tanks, but it is floating on seawater that has now risen above the leak point in the hull. That presumably will be pumped out safely.

Bonaire got off relatively easy. Most of the mess that washed ashore here seems to be cleaned up. The east coast tourist businesses that were out-of-business for several days are operating again. However, their guests are still advised to be cautious about entering the water.

What did the near-miss confirm for us? That Bonaireans step-up and pitch-in. That the Dutch military presence in the Caribbean is a ready and willing source of disaster aid. That we are quick to blame the people who work for government agencies when things don't go right.

The threat of the oil slick also reminded us that we live on a small, vulnerable speck in the ocean that has limited resources and expertise

DMR

(see also "Unseen Menace: The Lingering Environmental Impact of Bonaire's Subtle Oil Spill" page 4 this issue.)



The Bonaire Reporter held a 'Beat the Covid 19 Blues' photo contest back in 2020. Last week our second-place winner, Virginie Pellesier, finally collected her last prize: a 50 x 70cm print of her image of her daughter Ava with a local donkey. The print was donated by Michael and Diane LaFortune's Sign Studio Bonaire. The Pellesiers timing could not have been better to return to Bonaire and pick up the beautiful print. Sign Studio Bonaire closed

their doors January 1 but Michael and Diane were more than happy to make good on their promise of the print. The Pellesier family sailed into Bonaire back in 2020. Due to Covid restrictions they were unable to leave and were able to delve into everything Bonaire has to offer. They returned earlier this year and were excited to be back. Daughter Ava even completed her IDC at VIP Diving.

Joanie Sharrott 50 years visiting and promoting Bonaire



Joanie Sharrott Photo Julie Morgan

Back in 1974, just a little over 10 years after Captain Don Stewart started organized diving on Bonaire, Joanie Sharrott, certified diver for only a year, dived Bonaire. She had visited her local dive shop Diver's Cove in Lawrence Harbor, New Jersey and picked up a few Caribbean dive brochures from owner Al Catalfumo and Joanie decided to dive this little known island, Bonaire. Little did she know that first trip would change her life. That it would evolve into 50 years of coming to Bonaire and that later she would be awarded for her dedication to Bonaire.

On the first trip Joanie and her boyfriend stayed at the Hotel Bonaire, later known as Sunset Beach and now the site of Chogogo. They dived with dive leg-

ends Captain Don, Ebo Domacasse and Bruce Bowker.

Joanie remembered, "There were only six people at the hotel that had rooms for 350. It was kind of comical, you'd go down for breakfast and they wouldn't have eggs and we would lose electricity constantly. But my first dive in the water off the hotel at Front Porch is something I will never forget. There were fish everywhere. I was surrounded by yellow tail snappers, big ones, it was like being in an aquarium."

Joanie said, "After that first trip, I went to see Al and said he needed to run trips to Bonaire. The first trip we ran had 16 divers and over the years that grew to as many as 70 divers at a time."

Al eventually moved to Bonaire and opened the Black Durgun but Joanie continued to run trips for the NJ shop. She not only helped promote Bonaire in NJ, but at U.S. dive shows DEMA and Beneath the Sea. Always staying at Hotel Bonaire/Sunset Beach she worked with Bonaire dive greats Eddy Statia and Erwin Muller.

On February 29, Joanie and her husband Dale were honored by Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB) for 50 years of dedication to Bonaire. The ceremony was held at the site of the old Hotel Bonaire bar, now a palapa bar at Chogogo Resort. TCB's Helen Mercera awarded Joanie a silver pin, certificate and swag bag of Bonaire gifts. Lieut. Governor Nolly Oleana spoke and awarded Joanie the tourism award. The Lieut. Gover-

nor's father, Norcizio 'Nolly' Oleana was a bartender and waiter at the old Hotel Bonaire making the event even more significant.

Many of Joanie and Dale's friends since the 70's were in attendance bringing old stories and gifts.

Joanie said, "The event was beyond my imagination, there were people from all different decades and all share a love for Bonaire."

Joanie quit running trips to Bonaire in the 1980's when Al sold his dive shop but she continued to promote and visit the island with her husband. Currently the couple return to stay at their home in Hato for a part of the year. *Julie Morgan*



(L-R) Lieut. Governor Nolly Oleana, Joanie Sharrott and Dale Sharrott.
Photo Julie Morgan



Cream Cheese "Truffle"

by Chef Corjan Hoogerheide, Lekker Thuis Restaurant

"Truffle" of cream cheese

200 g (2 C) cream cheese, at room temperature • 40 g (1/4 C) Walnuts • 30 dried figs, chopped • 30 g (1/3 C) cranberries • 30 g (1/3 C) dried tomatoes, chopped
15 g (1/8 C) red onion, chopped • 1 clove garlic, minced • 20 g (1/8 C) banana pepper, chopped • 30 g (1/4 C) apple, in small cubes • 10 sprigs of chives, finely chopped • Pinch of cayenne pepper • Salt

Green papaya salad

1 small green (unripe) papaya, grated or cut into fine strips • 2 lemons, squeezed • 1/2 red pepper, finely chopped • 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped • 1/2 bunch coriander, finely chopped • Pepper and salt • 50 g (1/3 C) green beans, cut into rings and cooked • 1 tablespoon palm sugar

Preparation

Mix all ingredients with the cream cheese and roll mixture into 80 g (¾ C) balls.

Bread balls in 50 g (1/3 C) salted nuts and 2 radishes, all finely chopped.

Fry a Papadum. Put some papaya salad on it and serve the "truffle" on it. Garnish with cherry tomatoes and possibly some balsamic glaze.

Each month Chef Corjan Hoogerheide of Lekker Thuis shares the recipe for one of his personal dishes created from Bonaire's fresh ingredients.



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Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei in Rincon: Tues.-Thurs. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat. 8-noon

Library: Mon. 12-5; Tues. to Thurs. 8-5; Fri. 8-4:30; Sat. 8-12. Kaya Gramel 715 5344. Anyone can become a member. Free for residents between 0 and 18 years. Adults \$6 a year. Members can borrow ebooks online. www.onlinebibliotheek.nl

Marshe di Playa Local market Sat. 9-1. Kaya Industria, by Warehouse Supermarket.

Pakus di Pruga (Animal Shelter flea market.): Pakus is closed until we re-build.

Terramar Museum Mon-Fri 9-2. Kaya J.N.E. Isla Riba 3. Admission \$10. Residents \$5. Tours \$20. Children under 12 free. +599 701 4700
<https://www.facebook.com/terramarmuseumbonaire/>

STINAPA headquarters: Mon-Fri 8-4. +599 717 8444. After hours: +599 777 8444.

Washington Slagbaai Park: Open Tues. - Sun.. 8-5 (entry to 2:30 p.m.) \$40 (Free with Nature tag)

Open now to July 2024	Terramar Slavery Exhibition: WE ARE Mon. - Sat. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
SACA Art Center Exhibits February, March, April	SACA Art Center Antriol. Kaya Korona 74. Open Wed - Sat. 3 - 10 p.m. http://www.sacabonaire.com Artist Dillon Rannou exhibition Feb. 24 to Apr. 8. Artist Adrie van de Ven exhibition Mar. 16 - Apr. 29 (See below)
Friday & Saturday March 15-16	BON DOET Annual volunteer event on Bonaire. See the jobs that need doing and sign up at https://www.bondoet.com/nl/all-jobs
Saturday, March 23 Sunday, March 24	Pickleball exchange / competition 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Saturday, March 30	Nos Zjilea Cultural Event 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei, Rincon. Enjoy the music, dancing, crafts, amazing food and drink.
Sunday & Monday March 31 - April 1	Easter Sunday & Monday. Public holiday. Government offices and many business are closed.
May 23 through June 6	Bonaire Culinaire 15-day spring edition.



Adrie exhibits at SACA

From Saturday March 16 until April 29 SACA Art Center Antriol will hold a new exhibition with the abstract work of Adrie van de Ven.

Van de Ven first came to Bonaire in 1992. He taught primary classes in both Bonaire and the Netherlands, then switched to secondary education to teach art at SGB.

Van de Ven finds his inspiration in the overwhelming colors of Bonaire: the different blues; the turquoise colors of the sea contrasting with the pink saltpans; the colors of the flamingos flying overhead; the iguanas; the flourishing kibrahacha. After years of painting iguanas and flamingos, his work became more and

more abstract. He now works with oil as well acrylic to produce abstract paintings of 100x100 cm. Adrie also makes etchings, lino cuts, collages and beautiful watercolours.

Van de Ven says: *“Living and working on Bonaire is a privilege and an enjoyment. During my first years on Bonaire the tourism-office used the slogan “unhurried, unspoiled and unforgettable.” It’s a pity that we lost that in the last years. Saying that..... it reminds me of a quote of one of my inspiring artists Pablo Picasso. “If you want that the butterfly keeps his shine, then don’t touch them.”*

More info at www.iguanabonaireart.com

Events, Meetings, Sports

12 steps meeting: Wednesdays at Kaya Den Haag 30 in Hato. Meeting starts at 7:15 p.m till 8:30 p.m. Info: 12stepsbonaire@gmail.com

Alcoholics Anonymous open meeting Every Thursday, 7 - 8 p.m. International Bible Church Kaya Papago 104 in Hato (Behind Bon Bida Spa and Gym and Bon Bida apartments). All welcome, regardless of primary addiction or no addiction at all.

Art Gallery Sobremesa Bonaire View or buy art from Bonaire's local artists. Opening hours are Tue-Fri 2 - 5 p.m. and Sat 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Abraham Boulevard 10.

Beach Tennis Bonaire Kaminda Djabou (behind Budget Marine). Open daily until 10 p.m. People can play for free or register for training and tournaments for a fee.

Bridgeclub Bonaire organizes a bridge evening Wednesdays 7:30 - 10:30 p.m. All playing levels are welcome. Info: 795-0128 (only whatsapp text messages), bridgeclubbonaire@gmail.com. <https://www.facebook.com/bridgeclubbonaire>

Diver Safety. Presentations with Jason Buttenshaw held the third Sunday of the month 6:30 p.m. at Sugar Thief, 8 Kaya Inglaterra.

Pickleball. Chinese Assoc. Tues. & Thurs 6-8 p.m.; Jong Bonaire Weds 6-8 p.m. this week only; Sand Dollar at Eddy's almost daily 8 a.m. Come join the fun. A sport for all ages.

Racing / Fevering. The Onima fever platform is available every Tues. Thurs. Sat. and Sun. 4 - 7 p.m.

Tennis Lessons for kids age 6 - 12. Free. Will start again April 6. Every Saturday. Courts at Eddy's. Email info@bonairetennisassociation.com. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Bonairetennis/> Paul Ruijs +599 782 4569.



Echo Conservation Tours - Weekdays at 8 a.m. or 5 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. To reserve email at info@echobonaire.org



Manta Monday - Nicole Pelletier of the Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation. Presentations at 7:30 p.m.: March 18th - No presentation; March 25th - Divi Resort; April 1st- Toucan Diving. Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation facebook. Email: Caribbean.Islands@mantatrust.org



Reef Renewal Bonaire. Sundays 5:30 p.m. Blennies Restaurant – Buddy Dive Resort. Free. Open to everyone. Want to learn about coral reef restoration on Bonaire? Come listen to a staff member, instructor, or volunteer give an informative presentation about Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire and the importance of restoring and protecting Bonaire's coral reefs! Questions? email: info@reefrenewalbonaire.org



Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB). Free public presentations at Yellow Submarine, every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month, at 8 p.m. See facebook.

You can help keep Bonaire clean

Saturdays	One Hour Clean up Power. Weekly coastal clean up every Saturday, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Location given on FB: https://www.facebook.com/OneHourCleanUpPower/
Sunday, Apr. 14	Clean Coast Bonaire. 4-6 p.m. Boka Onima. Donate your time. Work as a citizen scientist to collect marine litter & data. https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=clean%20coast%20bonaire

2024 Cruise Ship Schedule

DATE:	CRUISE SHIP	TIME	PIER	CAPACITY
Wed. March 13	SEVEN SEAS SPLENDOR	1200-2300	North	754
Fri. March 15	NORWEGIAN SKY	0700-1800	South	3674
Sat. March 16	WIND SPIRIT	7300-1700	North	148
Sun. March 17	AIDAMAR	0730-2100	North	2686
Mon. March 18	AIDAPERLA	0830-1800	South	3286
Tues. March 19	CELEBRITY BEYOND	0800-1700	South	3260
Wed. March 20	RUBY PRINCESS	0630-2000	North	3575
Sat. March 23	WIND STAR	0730-1300	North	159
Sun. March 24	NORWEGIAN SKY	0500-1800	North	2480
Mon. March 25	MARELLA DISCOVERY	0630-1300	North	2074
Wed. March 27	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	0530-1830	North	2417
Fri. March 29	SEVEN SEAS SPLENDOR	0600-1400	North	754
	CELEBRITY EQUINOX	0700-1700	South	2852
Mon. April 1	STAR CLIPPER	0800-1500	North	180
	AIDAPERLA	0830-1800	South	3286
Tues. April 2	EURODAM	0730-2100	North	2731
	CARNIVAL HORIZON	0900-2300	South	4683
Wed. April 3	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	0530-1830	North	2417
	ROTTERDAM	0700-1800	South	2668

The Bonaire Reporter Mar 13 - Mar 27, 2024

Parrots and People Parrots in Art, Part One

by Mel McCombie

In my previous column, Parrots of the Caribbean (Feb. 28, 2024), I wrote about the many species of parrots that existed in the Caribbean prior to the arrival of Europeans in the late fifteenth century; parrots were so abundant that Columbus described flocks in the Bahamas as “obscuring the sun.” Sadly, the many species that existed then have been drastically reduced, as fossil records show. The incomplete fossil record can be amplified by visual records—by parrots depicted in art.

Parrot scientists (psittacologists) have turned to art to try to identify the mystery parrots of the Caribbean. Looking at depictions of parrots from previous centuries is an imperfect way to ascertain identifications, since these images are necessarily hand-made. Photography was only available after 1839, and color photography not ubiquitous until the 1930s (though the first color photo dates from 1861). Figuring out which parrots are depicted in art comes with an asterisk, that the image may be fanciful as well as factual.

That said, the visual record tells us a lot. If you were a parrot owner in 1550, for example, you were a social elite, perhaps a ruler or statesman or rich merchant. Parrots were considered high prestige symbols of rank and taste. Exotic and costly, owning a parrot signified that you were important, akin to owning a thoroughbred racehorse



Anthony Van Dyck, 1635, portrait of a woman with her parrot, in a private collection in the U.K. (image is in the public domain)

today. It makes sense that artists sedulously included their parrots in portraits of these elites, just as a proud owner today would pose with their thoroughbred horse.

Anthony Van Dyck's portraits, created between 1620-1641, were lavish paintings much coveted by royalty and members of the nobility. Few could render details of elegant clothing so gorgeously and flatter his sitters. He created two portraits of richly dressed women with parrots, an Italian noblewoman in 1627 and a 1635 image of a woman with a large Elizabethan-style neck ruff. Both women are luxuriously dressed and depicted in rich surroundings, but it's the parrots that really grabbed me: each woman's status is enhanced by their companion parrots, only available to the 1% of the 1%. The parrot in the 1635 portrait is almost certainly an Amazon parrot of the Caribbean, one that scientists have not identified with certainty yet. But since Van Dyck worked from life (the person depicted actually posed for the artist), it's reasonable to suppose the parrots depicted were also drawn from life.

Macaws particularly signified the neotropical New World. Though parrots were known in Europe since the middle ages, thanks to trade with India and Asia, macaws were unknown in Europe until Columbus brought these large and colorful birds back to Spain. Two notable maps, the 1502 Cantino and the Caverio of 1506, both depict macaws as emblems of Brazil and central America. Think of this when you visit Baby, the resident macaw at Echo!

In part two, I'll discuss religious imagery that includes parrots, including a famous Italian altarpiece featuring a cockatoo perched above the Virgin Mary.



Mel McCombie is a retired professor, and conservation activist, and has lived part-time in Bonaire for 30 years.

Miss Bonaire 2024



Miss Bonaire 2024, Angie Daza Photo Julie Morgan

After months of planning, candidate selection, training and instruction, the pageant organizers crowned a new Miss Bonaire for 2024 just after midnight on March 10 at the Marriott Courtyard Bonaire.

The evening was formal with glittering sparkles and sequins worn by not only the contestants but also the guests. Serginho Finies served as MC for the evening, and Miss Bonaire Organization president Roderick Beaumont introduced key people to the crowd. The nine judges who were seated front row examined every move of the five contestants representing different barrios on Bonaire: Kralendijk – Zahira Avila; Nikiboko- Angie Daza;



(L-R) Miss Bonaire 2023, Ruby Pouchet; Miss Bonaire 2024, Angie Daza; Miss Petite Belleza Marina Internashonal, I-Shilah Benita Photo Julie Morgan

Noord Salina – Samantha Chacon; Rincon – Maria Luisa Troncon and Tera Kora – Mireska Winklaar.

The contestants were judged during several appearances on stage. They danced and lip synced to music while wearing identical red dresses, then they modeled evening dresses and swimsuits. Finies asked each young woman a “big picture” question such as “What value do you want to teach the children of Bonaire?”

The crowd was given one last look at Miss Bonaire 2023, Ruby Pouchet, in a farewell appearance with a pre-taped audio thank you speech to Bonaire.

Entertainment was provided throughout the night by a variety of artists including cultural dancers Mirasol - Monique and Donnie Winklaar; Flash Dancers, Lucas, Raisir, Geral Alberto, Saxophonist Choffie and Curaçao artist Boy Thode.

The judges reached their decisions around midnight and announced their selections. Zahira Avita, Miss

Kralendijk was named most photogenic and best body. Angie Daza, Miss Nikiboko received best interview, most elegant and best evening gown. Samantha Chacon, Miss Noord Salina was judged as most congenial.

Bonaire royalty for 2024 are: Rincon's Maria Troncon as second runner up, Kralendijk's Zahira Avila as first runner up and Nikiboko's Angie Daza is Miss Bonaire. The first and second runner ups received several individual prizes that included a smart watch, gift packages, airline tickets, laptop, fashion and dinner coupons. Miss Bonaire received designer gowns, iPhone, hotel stay, gift packages and coupons and airline tickets.

Sponsors for the Miss Bonaire pageant were: Changan Motor/ Dabboussie, Coral Casino, FWNB, OLB/SKAL, Flamingo TV, DiviDivi Air, Bon Laser/ Essence, Rento Fun, Gartish, Nos TV, Thursten Gym, Patricia Estetica, TCB, Eagle Eye, Don Andres, Elegance Spa, Marriott Bonaire and Hype Events. Lesser sponsors were: Sandra Bone, Juan Obersie and Bella Breeze. Julie Morgan

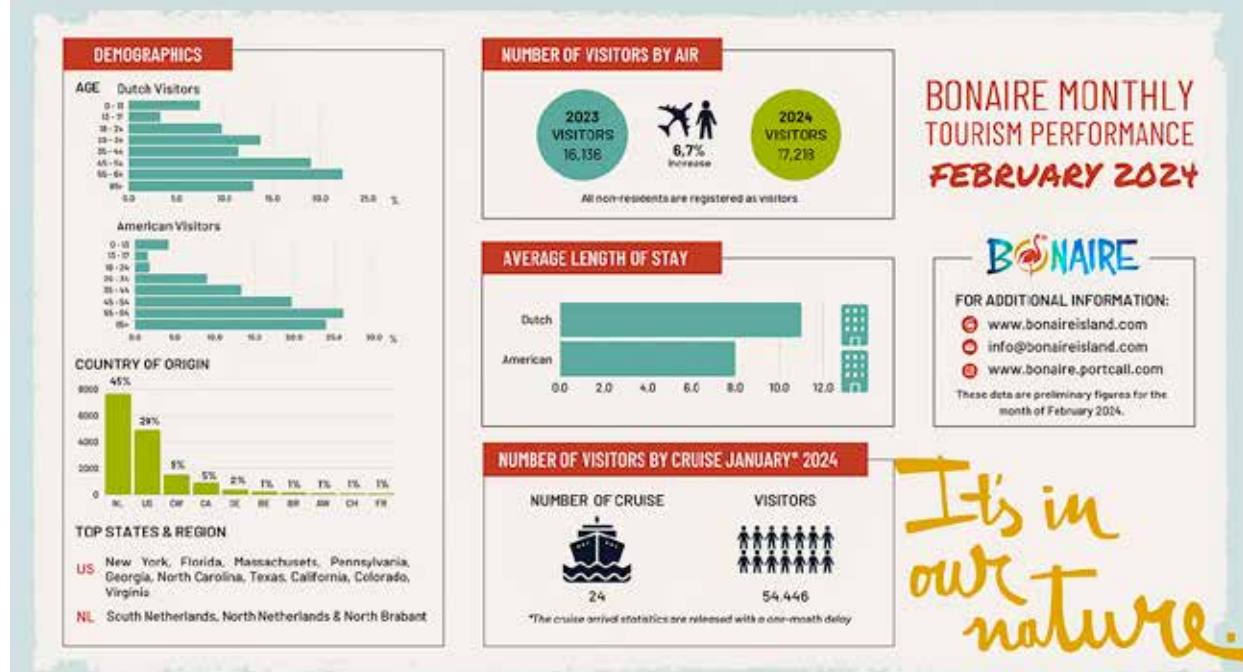
TCB informs

Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB) announced a record-breaking 17,218 stayover visitors during February 2024.

Comparatively, in 2023, the total number of visitors amounted to 16,136, while in 2019, it stood at 13,700, signifying a positive trend in Bonaire's tourism trajectory. This represents an increase of approximately 6.7% from 2023 to 2024 and a substantial growth of approximately 25% from 2019 to 2024.

Dutch visitors remained the largest group, accounting for 44% of the total, followed by Americans at 28.5%. Curaçao, Canada, Germany, and Aruba contributed significantly to Bonaire's tourism industry.

In 2024, Bonaire experienced a surge of 22% in American visitors compared to the previous year and a substantial increase of 81% in Canadian visitors. Despite these overall positive trends, there was a slight decrease in Dutch visitors from 7,923 in 2023 to 7,696 in 2024, representing approximately a 2.86% decrease. This decrease is due to the drop in frequencies and seats available on the AMS-BON route due to a change in aircraft equipment by our Dutch airline partners and the number of scheduled rotations.



U.S. visitors visited primarily from New York, Florida, Pennsylvania, California. The highest U.S. representation come from age groups 55-64 (26.2%) and 65+ (24%), indicating a strong interest from mature travelers. Dutch visitors mainly hailed from North Holland, South Holland, and North Brabant, with the dominating age group being 55-64 (22%) and 45-54 (19%).

Bonaire welcomed 54,446 cruise visitors with 24 cruise ships in January 2024.

For more detailed statistics and information about Bonaire's tourism performance, please visit our official website at www.bonaireisland.com or email us at info@bonaireisland.com.

Tourism Corporation Bonaire

Creating Optimal Health

by Irene da Cunda Costa

Giving your digestive system a little rest has many health benefits.

Dr. Jason Fung is a Canadian nephrologist who wrote in 2016 The complete guide to Fasting. As a nephrologist he had the opportunity to see the evolution of diabetic patients who ended up in dialysis and later with a kidney transplant. He knew losing weight was one of the keys points in reversing such a fate, but he found that patients had a hard time sticking to a diet. So, he did some research and tried the patients on intermittent fasting. At that time the medical establishment was opposed to fasting until they started seeing the good results he had with his patients.

Before Dr. Fung, in the late 60s and 70s, Dr George Cahill did a lot of research on diabetes, metabolic changes in kidneys and liver during fasting and he described the five stages of fasting.

Fasting has five stages according to where the body gets its fuel: glucose or fat. Most cells can use either glucose or fat (triglycerides) for energy, except for the brain that can only use glucose or ketones.

Stage 1: from 0-4 hours after a meal, there is a lot of glucose, levels of insulin rise and all the cells of the body use glucose as source of energy.

Stage 2: from 4-16 hours, is the post absorptive stage. The body is still using the glucose stored in the liver as glycogen to provide energy for the cells. During this stage insulin falls. This is important to know, because there are some diseases associated with high insulin: cancer, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, Alzheimer's, stroke, gout and high blood pressure, so making sure we have a daily period in this stage where insulin lowers is going to benefit health. So, you can start seeing here some of the benefits of fasting.

Stage 3: from 16-30 hours, is gluconeogenesis, the glycogen in the liver starts to run out and is an intermediate stage where the body is going to produce glucose from protein. This is likely the stage where we see a lot of autophagy. In 2016 Yoshinori Ohsumi, won the Nobel prize in Medicine for describing what he called

the intracellular recycling system. Autophagy gets rid of old cellular machinery that is not working well and replaces it with better parts. The body will sense what is faulty and will rebuild it better as soon as you start eating again. This stage of destruction of the senescence cells is important to give room to newly built healthy cells.

Stage 4 is the fat burning stage or ketosis, from 24 hours to 36 hours, at this point there is not enough glucose for the brain. The liver takes the triglycerides and turns them into ketones, which can cross the blood-brain barrier to be used by the brain. The muscles can burn fat directly for fuel. After 36 hours, fat oxidation takes over and protein burning drops to minimal amounts. If you are aiming to lose weight, this is the moment where more fat is burned.

Stage 5: fasting more than 3 days enters the stage of protein conservation. Hunger starts to disappear. Ghrelin, which is the hunger hormone, starts to drop. The body feeds from its fats. This is how people can handle long fasting whether for health, protest, exploratory or religious reasons. This is not a fast you want to do unsupervised. You really need to have a good reason to do it. Sometimes it is necessary and beneficial, but fasting three days or longer needs supervision.

In the next issue I will write about other health benefits of each of these stages according to Dr Mindy Pelz in how to introduce fasting in your lives, contraindications and why women should consider hormonal cycling when planning fasting.



Irene is passionate about health, neurosciences and personal growth. Originally from Uruguay, she is an Integrative Psychotherapist (PNIE), Life Coach (ICF), Master in Nutrition(IUSC) and Yoga Instructor.



Meet Laurienne Francis, Nikiboko's new police officer. As of February, the residents of Nikiboko can contact Laurienne when structural solutions are needed for problems such as conflict between neighbors, family problems, noise pollution, neighborhood nuisance, etc. Nikiboko's working area includes: Nikiboko, Sabana, Lagun Hill, Washikemba, Amboina, Tanki Matrimonio, Nieuw Amsterdam, Mamparia Kutu, Bario Wanapa, Lac I Sorobon.

Laurienne can be contacted by email at Laurienne.Francis@politiecn.com or via the central telephone number 715 8000.

Laurienne works with five other police officers who are responsible for safety in their own work area:
Ronald Schleper: Playa, Playa Pariba, Playa Pabou, Kaya Industria and Kaya Hulanda.
Claudette Raphaela: Tera Kòrà, Belnem, Lima, Sabal Palm, La Palma, Punt Vierkant and surroundings.
Edson French: Rincon, Bopec and surroundings, Sabadeco and Tra'i Montaña.
Irvin Anthony: Nort Saliña, Hato, Republic, Nawati and Bona Bista.
Victoriano Station: Antriol, Antriol Pabou, Antriol Pariba and bario Mexico.

A Garden?

Just Do It!

by Angliet, Nature Lover

Fruits

It's amazing. Bonaire is full of fruit. Everywhere I bike there are trees with fruit ready to consume or will be ready within a few weeks. I've seen Mispel, pomme de cythere, carambola, goose berry, blimbing, appeldam, papaya, pommegranate, tamarind, coconut, bacoba, yellow mombin, cashew fruit, guyaba, passion fruit and maybe some more that I forgot. Perhaps you don't know these fruit names, but all the locals do.

Carambola

In my garden right now I have a lot of carambola (star fruit). I have the sweet type and one can do so much with it. In fruit cakes it's delicious, yogurt, salads, a chutney, juice, compote or just by itself. It's known as a fruit with very little sugar so people suffering from diabetes can consume it without problems.

I love its crunchy texture that's just like an apple. But I'm a bit worried, since last year, out of nowhere, there are a lot of fruit flies in the area of the tree. As if the birds and lizards are not enough, now the fruit flies are damaging the fruit so many are spoiled and drop off the tree. What a waste.

A friend gave me a hint that may result in undamaged fruit. Put some orange juice in a glass or can, add half a citron, a bit of vinegar and a few drops of dish liquid. Put this in the area where the fruit flies are. This cocktail attracts them and they drop in the liquid and die. It's a friendly solution, so give it a try. Other actions may need to be taken if it is a real plague.

- Remove rotten fruits from under your fruit trees. Keep it clean there.
- Keep vegetables and fruit in the fridge or in paper bags for bacoba. (fruit flies love this one).
- Rinse empty beer and wine bottles before storing them.
- Keep the kitchen clean and don't



Top L: appeldam; Top R: caramboles; Bottom L: pomme de cythere; Bottom R: carambole damaged by fruit flies

keep dirty dishes on the kitchen counter.

- Empty the dust bin often and clean it.
- Make sure food dirt is in a closed plastic bag.

Pomme de cythere

One fruit that I am surprised to see is pomme de cythere, also known as Ambarella, golden apple and Manzana de oro. Its Latin name is *Spondias dulcis*. There are two types of this fruit tree. A small low type about as big as a Guyaba tree and one that becomes as high and wide as a mango tree. For such a tree one needs enough space in the yard and it takes a few years before it bears fruit. But once it starts, it keeps on blooming and bearing fruit for the next hundred years. There are fewer of this type on Bonaire, but it's well known in the Caribbean and elsewhere in the tropics. I know where to find this tree here on Bonaire and often

pass by for its very delicious and healthy fruit. The fruit is round as an egg, turns deep yellow when ripe and tastes sweet and juicy. In Suriname we use it in almost everything. When green it makes a good chutney, soups and dhal. It can be cooked with vegetables, pickled, and in a compote or eaten fresh with a little salt and pepper. When ripened we eat it by hand and use it in juices, marmelade and fruit salad. I wonder why most of the time these fruits are left under the trees to get rotten. They have high nutritional values and are not spoiled by pesticides, tree ripened in the sun and clean air and are good in any cuisine. They are tasty and cost nothing. A gift of nature. How can we just let them rot and fall to the ground? With this tree in your garden or on your kunuku, you always have food with a high nutrients in good times and bad times and never have a hungry belly.

Appel dam

Last but not least is the appel dam fruit, so called locally and on other Dutch islands. We also had it in our garden in Suriname. As kids walking home from school we used to pick them from tree branches that were hanging over the fence. It was our "snack" and it was fun to see who could pick the most. Here on Bonaire there are many trees especially on the kunukus and in the mondi. In the new neighborhoods they cut these trees down, because the small fruits have lost their value and the stems have thorns. People don't want it in their modern yards anymore. But I found one which bears a lot of large sized fruit that is juicy and has a sweet taste. It has such a high nutritional value and a lot fiber so it makes a visit to the toilet a pleasure.

I often go to pick them and share with friends, neighbors, kids and colleagues in school and at the cruise market. Some of them know the fruit and love to have a taste from their "good old days." And for those who don't know the fruit, it's a new Bonaire fruit to experience.

The tree is not that big, it can fit in a normal sized yard, provides shade and attracts a lot of birds. It can withstand the dry weather and can grow in every kind of soil. In two-three years one can enjoy its fruit almost the whole year round and even make pickles and juices.

Try some local fruits right now and you can have them forever in your garden. Give it a try, just do it.

Angliet grew up in the Surinam jungle, moved to the Netherlands as a teen, where she trained as a teacher, then in Alternative Healing. She has traveled the world - north to Russia and

Alaska, south to Tierra del Fuego and Africa and all points in between. Returning to the Caribbean with her young family, she taught in St Eustatius and Bonaire. Everywhere she has lived, she has planted a garden and grown her own food.

Noz Zjilea showcases Bonaire's donkeys



Al Catalfumo inspects the new donkey exhibit at Mangazina di Rei. Photo Julie Morgan

Bonaire Donkey Protection League has declared March as Bonaire's Wild Free Roaming Donkey month. They recently constructed a corner in the Mangazina di Rei Museum for everyone to read about Bonaire's donkeys and to watch a video.

On March 30, the monthly cultural event Nos Zjilea will feature a podcast discussion with the league. The league will also give a live presentation as part

of Nos Zjilea's program, the public discussing Bonaire's wild donkeys in the past, present and their possible future.

League members working to preserve Bonaire's Nubian donkeys are: Michael Obersi, AL Catalfumo, Doesjka Falkenburg-Baart, Daniella Gustowski-Bernabel, George Thode, and Marian Walthie..

Photo Julie Morgan



Did you pay your Nature Fee?
All conservation projects, research, education and work we do are made possible by the nature fee you purchase.
We are incredibly grateful for your dedication to preserving our nature.
Thank you for purchasing your nature fee.
Available online at STINAPAbonaire.org



Tirzo "Tt" Cicilia July 6, 1969 - March 9, 2024

Tirzo, Tt, Cicilia was an iconic figure in the Bonaire restaurant scene for over 32 years. His eternal big smile was his signature. Tourists and locals alike loved the Tt for his large physical stature yet ever so soft and helpful nature. He never used his size to intimidate or startle someone, unless it was Halloween.

Born in Bonaire, he worked at Green Parrot Restaurant at the old Sand Dollar Dive & Photo and then moved on to Rum Runners at Captain Don's Habitat after the Lenny water surge destroyed the Green Parrot in 1999.

As restaurant manager Tt was dedicated to running the dining room at Rum Runners smoothly and assuring that every guest was satisfied. He had the people skills to lead the waiter team

as well as foresee guests' needs. His presence was felt in every facet of the restaurant.

Tt was from the old school of working until the job is finished. Throughout the years he had many side jobs including catering, private parties, Bonaire tour guide, construction, odd jobs and just lending a hand helping a friend move heavy items.

For nearly a decade, Tt was committed to protecting Bonaire's wild donkeys as a member of the Bonaire Donkey Protection League. He once said, "To lose our donkeys here on Bonaire would be like losing a part of ourselves."

We will forever miss that smile.

Sara Matera



ELEPHANTS ON BONAIRE?

If you have seen an elephant sign on the road heading north from Hato, you have probably wondered, "What's that?" It's the work of Canada based artist Christopher Griffin who has enriched the road to Sabadeco with an elephant titled, "Bonaire Blue." He has also painted an old building near Bolivia. His art is fun to see and the beasts seem to fit in with the natural scenery, but "elephants on Bonaire?"

Griffin is an artist well known for his public works who shares his work across the globe. When he recently visited Bonaire he fell in love with the island and wanted to contribute a bit of artistic beauty. Photo/story Julie Morgan

Make Bonaire Accessible

by Ria Evers-Dokter

What is MiVaBo?

It has been quite a busy week and now, just as I sat down to write, it hit me: do people really know what MiVaBo is? What it stands for and what they do?

I remember, while still living in Holland seeing a picture of Michael Gaynor, Rob Boutmy and another gentleman, sitting at a table at the City Café talking. I know that there was also a lady involved, Hetty Burgos. Shortly after that, April 17, 2008, they founded MiVaBo, Minder Validen Bonaire (people of Bonaire with disabilities)

The first issue was the bad accessibility to and from Bonaire. There was no decent way to get on and off a plane., the bad sidewalks, the big rings around the palm trees on the boulevard, the entrances of all shops and the drugstore.

And that is what is still going on. But there is a lot more because MiVaBo has slowly made a way to changes. MiVaBo is now being heard. When new building plans are made, MiVaBo is often invited to give our five cents of knowledge and experiences. And often we invite ourselves, to sit and talk with the authorities. This is a big step and much appreciated.

After all, if you want to know about disabilities, you have to talk to persons with disabilities.

MiVaBo is actively involved in projects that are set up to improve living situations: ramps have been made for people to go in and out of their house easier with a cane, wheelchair, or rollator. Handgrips in bathrooms and other safety aids have been added to many houses for people with needs. And because of the fierce rain showers, MiVaBo helped restore zinc roofs so people could live in dry houses again.

An ongoing part of the program is helping people get a rollator or a wheelchair, since that appears to be very hard to come by.

Going out to see a movie or going out for dinner is very hard when you are disabled on Bonaire. There are hardly any ramps and getting into a movie theater is very stressful. This is why MiVaBo organizes special dinner and a movie nights. Persons with physical disabili-



ties that use wheelchairs, walkers, canes and rollators, people that are deaf and/or don't talk and a large group of elderly are invited. MiVaBo tries to cater to the different groups and offer them a nice night out. The next dinner and a movie will be in Rincon and MiVaBo is looking forward to that.

MiVaBo organized a few workshops for writing and poetry. Especially the group of K.B.O. had a lot of fun and were very good. (K.B.O. is the desk for deaf and blind care in the ZW Group – the Healthcare and Welfare group.)

Almost every year MiVaBo tries to set up an art project and the poetry workshop was part of it.

Last year MiVaBo participated in BON DOET. MiVaBo had no clients or members, but we still wanted to do something special. So MiVaBo organized a morning at Sorobon with special beach wheelchairs, for those who have not been in the sea for a long time. It was a huge success.

If you want to know more, you can contact MiVaBo anytime. Find us at <https://www.mivabo.org/en/> <https://www.facebook.com/mivabobonaire/>

We want and need to get known!



Ria Dokter is living happily on Bonaire, where she also used to work as a director at FKPD and started Special Olympics Bonaire. She took care of her husband (R.I.P) for many years and feels that accessibility is the most important issue on our island.



Help us celebrate April Fool's Day
Our next issue comes out March 27 and we would love to see your best 'fool day photos' or read your tall tales.
Let's beat the blues with something funny...

Deadline is March 22.

The Bonaire Reporter Mar 13 - Mar 27, 2024

Piss and Vinegar

by Gijs Borsten

Bonaire’s favorite Hooker

One of the best-known hookers on Bonaire, being visited hundreds of times per month, isn’t employed by Pachi’s. Her name is Hilma, and, being one of the most popular dive sites of the island, she lies on the seabed, on the West coast, between Angel City and The Lake, slightly South of Punt Vierkant.

The ship - because that’s what she is - has been lying there, on a more or less level, sandy seabed, between the first reef that slopes down from the coast, and the second reef that is located about 200 feet away, since September 1984. Every diver knows where to find her. At the same time no regular tourist - if he knows who she is in the first place - has a clue of what Hilma Hooker has meant for Bonaire.

Lots of stories circulating among divers refer to the ship’s sad demise, mainly concerning the lawlessness of the last owner, the illicit cargo, and the way in which it went down. The information supplied by the internet is ample, but the stories that can be found there merely reflect the official version of the ship’s sinking. Remember: in 1984, there wasn’t any internet, and the lemma ‘Hilma Hooker’ was merely known to Bonaireans involved in diving. My former colleague Piet, who, being an eye witness of the course of events, initiated me in the way the ship was seized by Antillean enforcement staff, and taught me a number of facts that can be tagged as ‘Oral History.’

Anyway: the ship that was built in 1951 in Holland for bulk transport under the name of ‘Midsland’ - referring to a hamlet on the island of Terschelling - changed ownership a number of times during the 33 years of her working life. Along with the various owners, she also changed names on a regular basis, Hilma Hooker being her sixth name. The fact that she sunk for the first time in 1975, after only 24 years of service, kind of indicates that either she was poorly built or inadequately repaired.

Hilma Hooker, being the only ship owned by a Colombian shipping company (since 1979) drew the attention of Bonaire law enforcement officers in June 1984, when she ran into mechanical problems that prevented her from continuing her voyage when passing the island. When local custom officers found out that she didn’t carry any papers, and after they had learned that the FBI had been satellite tracking the ship under suspicion of drug trafficking, they towed her to the Town Pier for a search.



Diving the Hilma Hooker Photo Julie Morgan

Despite thoroughly examining the ship, nothing could be found.

In the meantime, the ship was occupying the town pier that was supposed to be available for cargo ships supplying the island with necessary goods. Besides, she was leaking to such extent that the on-board pumps had to run continuously, guzzling fuel by the barrel. Still, despite the extensive searches, after weeks, nothing had been found.

That is, until Captain Don Stewart and Janet Thibault explored the bottom of the ship and discovered some barnacle free strips and freshly welded metal running along the bottom of the ship. They passed their discovery on to one of the custom officers, who ordered evacuation of the direct environment - the better part of Playa - and, after they cut out an opening of about a square foot using a blowtorch, they found a load of marijuana of over ten tons.

Hurray.

The marijuana was unloaded, and taken to a stretch of open terrain on the coast of Hato (that was only partly built,

in the eighties), and, using a load of kerosene, the stuff was ignited to prevent it from disturbing the market, or the well-being of Bonaire’s population.

The moment it started burning, food and drinks were served to the island VIPs present at the celebration, and after a while, when everybody was sufficiently plastered and self-contented as a result of the booze they drank and successes they achieved, they went home, leaving the odorous remains of the herbs smolder.

For many months afterwards, the prices for marijuana on Bonaire that suddenly flooded the market, sank to an all-time low. And it wasn’t because of the quality, that made it cheap. It was just the smell of kerosene that made the difference....

In the meantime, Hilma was still docked at the town pier, still blocking the access for ships delivering goods. She constituted the danger, if she sunk, of permanently obstructing the accessibility of the pier. So, she was towed away to a safer place, and, with the pumps that kept her afloat being switched off, she tipped over in a matter of hours, and went down in the morning of September 12, 1984.

Bruce Bowker, owner of the Carib Inn, did a lot of work to make the ship safe to dive on, like drilling holes to let the air out and cutting cables holding up the hatches to prevent them from breaking, thus posing a danger to divers.

Bruce describes, in his article on the transformation of Hilma Hooker into a safe dive site, an alternative ending for the ship, witnessed by a Captain Don’s staff member:

“ ... The source of this information (...) says he/she witnessed a phosphorescent wake cutting through the water late the night before the Hooker sank. It is claimed it was a torpedo from the German submarine U-156, which has not been seen in these waters since last attempting to blow up the Aruba refinery on the evening of February 13, 1942... ”

I wonder which loophole in the space-time continuum can be held responsible for this to happen. And where is the damage caused by the torpedo in Hilma’s hull?



Gijs, originally from Leiden (NL), has been living on and off on Bonaire for about twenty years. He has no clear focus, and loves to be surprised by actors in politics and administration. Originally into The Fine Arts, then a career in (forensic) accounting, then a PhD in German Philology. Currently retired.



Daniël Godefroy and Aldrish Isenia won the Double Fun Tennis Tournament held on Eddy’s tennis courts Saturday, March 9. Robert Martis and Paul Ruijs of Bonaire Tennis Association presented them with their prize. The association will start the free tennis lessons for youth again on Saturday April 6, 10 - 11 a.m. The association has rackets available. Everyone is welcome. For more information, email info@bonairetennisassociation.com or app 599 782 4569.



Local stand-up comedians (R)Friso Gransma and (L)William Evertsz wowed the crowd with their individual comedy performances at Boutique Hotel Sonrisa Bonaire on March 9. We can’t wait to see what they’ll come up with in their next show. For the price of the ticket guests received a welcome drink and some great snacks. Sonrisa hosts, Corinne Harder and Beat Stocker, are hoping the comedy duo will return for a repeat performance in May. Photo Julie Morgan

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Hello people,

My name is Alix I'm a girl about 12 weeks old.

Six weeks ago I was left in a box in front of the Shelter gate.

I'm a very happy girl. I like to play with other pups and it doesn't bother me at all that I only have one eye. My people friends at the shelter tell me that I'm a beautiful girl all the time and it gives me a lot of confidence.

I like to cuddle, especially with kids. I love kids, so I really would like my forever home to be where I would be a family dog so I could have brothers and sisters, furry ones or human or both would be even better. I hope to meet you soon.

Photo/story Sanne Attevelt

If you would like to meet our cats and dogs, please come to Animal Shelter Bonaire, Kaminda Lagun 26A. Open Monday - Friday 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday 11 a.m.-2 p.m. You can also call 701-4989 or 717-4989 to make an appointment, via whatsapp, facebook messenger, or email animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com

Our cat of the week is Deborah.

Deborah is a black and white Domestic Short Hair cat and she is two years old.

Deborah was surrendered to the Animal Shelter Bonaire in January 2024 by people who could not care for her any longer. She is a very loving cat and starts to purr as soon as you pet her and just look at her precious face. She enjoys attention and cuddles.

Deborah will adjust well to other cats in the home, as she has been able to move to the Shelter Cat Palace without any issues. Deborah could be the perfect furry friend addition to your home. She is sterilized and has tested negative for feline leukemia and FIV.

Photo/story: Amy Bowen



Animal Shelter News

New cat boarding

Good news! The Animal Shelter Bonaire has a new cat boarding area. It can be stressful to leave your cat when you go on vacation, so the Animal Shelter Bonaire wants to help put your mind at ease by providing a home away from home for your cat or cats. Go on vacation knowing your cat is content and comfortable in the new and improved spacious facilities.

Safety of the animals at the Animal Shelter is a priority, that is why the Animal Shelter requires cats to be fully vaccinated in order to enter the new boarding facilities. A proof of vaccination is mandatory. Another important requirement is

that cats need to be treated for ticks and fleas with a product (such as Frontline) prior to arrival, otherwise, they will be treated upon arrival at the owner's cost.

The costs of cat boarding are:

One cat- \$8. a day.

Two cats in one kennel- \$11. a day.

Reserve ahead of time, the summer vacation and Christmas vacation are a busy time for the Animal Shelter and space is limited. You can reserve by sending an email to the Animal Shelter at animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com

Amber Jasperse



Piskabon responds to OLB closing fishermen's pier



Piskabon president, Ernest Lanoy

In the near future Bonaire's local government has decided to close down the fishing pier at Playa Pabou due to several complaints regarding harassment of women and drug activity. The pier is a free mooring site for local fishing boats and fish cleaning station on the waterfront.

Bonaire's local fishing organization Piskabon was aware of the actions scheduled by the government regarding the pier but was not involved in the decision making. This was a government call to inform the fishermen properly about this closure. Only a small number of the fishermen mooring boats at the pier are members of Piskabon.

Piskabon, president Ernest de Lanoy explained they were not a stakeholder or part of the decision in the press release issued on March 6. The so-called triangle: government, police and justice officer made the decision. Piskabon is not happy about this decision.

We want to help resolve this issue. We don't want to make it worse than it already is.

Management of the pier is needed similar to the Club Nautico pier and Piskabon is willing to assume the responsibility but it has to be a collaboration with every stakeholder. Currently there is not enough lighting on the dock and items have been stolen from the boats. Security and maintenance are required. At this time the boats moored are not registered and not secured.

De Lanoy said, "Give us a budget for management. With a proper budget for management and maintenance this pier can be an asset to the fishermen."

Piskabon is scheduled to meet with Lieut. Governor Nolly Oleano on March 14 to come up with a plan.

Julie Morgan Photo/Story

First ever Sports Expo hits a home run

Bonaire's first ever Sports Expo attracted approximately 1000 participants at the three venues Sports Hall Gorge Nicolaas, Parke Tului and Kralendijk Stadium on March 9.

Each site was a buzz with excited kids and adults trying their hand at the many sports activities now available on Bonaire. There was something for everyone, young and old alike. Demonstrations

were set at different times according to a schedule displayed at each venue. Attendees could watch, discuss the sport with presenters or actively participate. Transportation for Rincon residents was available to the different venues.

Sports Hall had: volleyball, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Iaido/Jodo, table tennis, Pickleball, gymnastics, BMX biking, bolas, boxing, Yudo, billiards, checkers, chess,

basketball, Kenpo, bodybuilding and powerlifting,

Kralendijk Stadium featured: rugby, frisbee, beach volleyball, hockey, baseball, softball, athletics, football and soccer.

Parke Tului presented: windsurfing, Sunfish sailing, Optimist sailing, water polo and competitive swimming.

At each location participants could enter a raffle to win one of five prizes for sports equipment from Indebon. Results of the raffle were not available at press time.

Sports Expo was promoted by Indebon and Den Moveshon.

Story / photos Julie Morgan



Brazilian Jiu Jitsu demo on the mat Photo Julie Morgan



Young sailors lose control in their attempts at Optimist sailing Photo Julie Morgan



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