Bonaire continues to shine as a premier dive destination as the island secured 12 different awards in the 2016 Scuba Diving Magazine’s Readers’ Choice Awards, including three #1 rankings. For the 24th consecutive year, Bonaire has maintained its first place position with the #1 Shore Diving Destination in the Caribbean/Atlantic region. Bonaire received first place in two other Caribbean/Atlantic categories: Best Macro Diving and Best Diving for Beginners.

Gas prices rose slightly in December
Gasoline 95 octane 101.67 ct. per liter.
Kerosene 51.30
Diesel 58.10
LPG 100LBS $30.36
LPG 20LBS $7.83

Last week the Bonaire Executive Council signed a memorandum of understanding with businessman Gerrit Shoe to build the first multi-level parking garage on the island at the site of the old Ford garage in downtown Kralendijk on Kaya Princess Marie. The building was purchased over 10 years ago and plans to up to it 12 for the high season in July 2017. It is doing its own heavy maintenance (C-check) since 2013 in their hangar at Curacao Airport. The InselAir spokesman added, “InselAir is, since 2011, an IOSA-certified airline. IOSA (IATA Operational Safety Audit) is the highest global benchmark for airline safety. InselAir also meets the requirements of the US FAA (Federal Aviation Administration). Due to implemented actions and measures InselAir has managed to improve the on-time performance from 60% to 72% in recent weeks and strives to get it back to 85%, which would be above the industry standard.”

Charter airline TUIfly suspended its code share cooperation agreement with InselAir a few weeks after KLM did. It is rebooking its passengers on other airlines, it said without saying which ones. This was confirmed by TUI. InselAir is struggling with flight delays, cancellations and financial problems as a result of a long outstanding claim of $100 million for tickets sold in Venezuela, yet to be released. The veracity of this claim was not confirmed. The Curacao government, which holds 21% of the InselAir stock, has been reluctant to advance Insel another loan.

The red turboprop airplane frequenting Flamingo airport is an InselAir Fokker 50 still partly wearing Avianca livery. Insel has other ex-Avianca Fokkers but they have been repainted.

TELBO announced that clients will be billed in advance for the fixed costs of telephony, TV and/or internet. The variable costs (phone calls) will be charged afterwards at the end of the month. In the previous billing system, all customers receive an invoice at the end of the corresponding month in which they are billed for the fixed and variable costs of the past month. With the new billing system they will receive a new Account Number (Klantnummer) on your invoice. Customers who object to paying both invoices in one month may apply for deferred payment of the invoice with the fixed and variable costs of the past month. For additional information call 9212 free.

Several days later InsuAir responded. It said it has 14 aircraft: four MD 82s, two MD 83s, four Fokker 50s and four Fokker 70s. It is operating nine planes currently and plans to up to it 12 for the high season in July 2017. It is doing its own heavy maintenance (C-check) since 2013 in their hangar at Curacao Airport. The InselAir spokesman added, “InselAir is, since 2011, an IOSA-certified airline. IOSA (IATA Operational Safety Audit) is the highest global benchmark for airline safety. InselAir also meets the requirements of the US FAA (Federal Aviation Administration). Due to implemented actions and measures InselAir has managed to improve the on-time performance from 60% to 72% in recent weeks and strives to get it back to 85%, which would be above the industry standard.”

InselAir has other ex-Avianca Fokkers but they have been repainted. Insel has other ex-Avianca Fokkers but they have been repainted.

The Reporter has had several inquirers about the many mushrooms appearing around the island. We asked Herman Sieben, the Director of STINAPA, who is knowledgeable about the mushrooms of the European Netherlands. He wrote that he is now also learning the mushrooms of Bonaire. The most common mushroom is Po- daxis pinivarius at left. The mushroom is not edible. A few day ago he found an edible species of Lepista at right. (see photos) Do not eat any mushrooms growing in Bonaire unless you obtain verification of their suitability from an expert!

BOAT PARTY! Sunday December 11th there will be lots going on at Kantí’s Awa snack and Kas di Regatta. Popular band RPM will be playing live music with Reggae tunes and more. Johnny Kleinmodig will also be playing live Latin tunes. You never know who else may jump in and jam for a bit! There will be music all day long. There is BBQ and other of other food and drinks and the coldest beer on the island available, no need to go hungry or thirsty. Come play in the water, with or without a boat.

Want to compete in the triathlon or sailing events? It is time to come in and sign up at Budget Marine. The Short Triathlon is a...
As the Nobel Poet Laureate Bob Dylan wrote, “The times they are a changin;” at least for Bonaire. This was made very evident when Bonaire’s first hotel, part of an international brand hotel chain, opened last Friday.

The 140-room Marriott Courtyard opened on schedule on Friday, December 2. Antoinette van den Burg, Area Marketing Director for Marriott, explained that The Courtyard brand, usually associated with business hotels also has leisure properties and was a good fit for the island because of its affordable rates, quality amenities and service. Fifty-five new jobs were created.

Introductory rates are $128-209 per room and the hotel has a canal-side infinity pool, whirlpool, fitness center, dive shop, spacious public rooms, restaurants and bar. Miami-based Azul Properties N.V. is the well-respected owner of the resort.

The 18-month long task rescued the abandoned buildings of an earlier venture and is one of the last sections of the original Flamingo Paradise development which created the canals by blasting channels in the limestone shore.

General Manager Koen Hietbrink is no stranger to Bonaire. Fifteen years ago he began his hospitality career as an intern at Harbour Village.

The official opening: Shown are Pedro Vera of Azul Properties, Governor Rijna, young author Guillaume Mar-tiszoon who cut the ribbon. The pastor of St. Bernardus Church did the blessing.

Budget Marine has reusable shopping bags for you. Big bag free with a $50 purchase. If you just want the coolest bag in town the small bags cost $1 and the large $2.

Want the perfect fun gift for a young lady? Or use the eco-friendly nail polish for yourself. Several great long-lasting colors available. Pass by Penny Lane, downtown and buy a bottle. Their slogan is “Natural As Mud.”

Christmas plants like red and white poinsettias, orchids and more have arrived at Green Label garden center. Get yours before they run out.

Holiday time is when we eat more than usual. Counteract that by exercising more. Bon Bida gym has weights, machines and classes to get you more fit and lose weight if you must. It has the only spin studio on Bonaire.

Spinning is increasingly popular in America and Europe because it burns the maximum number of calories but allows a person to set his/her own pace stimulated by motivational music and instruction. Pass by on Monday, Wednesday or Saturday mornings and check it out. The first class is free.

Bonaire’s Sunfish Sailing team was disappointed with their performance at the World Sunfish Regatta in Colombia last month. Ultra light winds put our team at a disadvantage because they rarely get to practice in those conditions here. But a good time was had and the team gained experience and respect for the light wind sailors.

While new restaurants are springing up, familiar ones are closing. The unique Lac Baai Restaurant on the east side of Bonaire run by the team of Raoul, Persia, Marcel and Dave closed on November 27. It will reopen on January 10 with a new team and chef.

The next edition of The Reporter is just before Christmas. If you want an advertising message get your ad in before 16 December.
from the land. It’s so different from the life we have here.

In 1986 I came to Bonaire and opened my own practice. On Aruba the Lago Refinery had closed and Aruba was sinking into a deep depression. Bonaire was quiet. From the airport you could see Kralendijk. I slept with my windows and doors open and I never had to lock my car. I kept my practice on Aruba and worked one week here, one week there.

While flying back and forth all the time the ‘flying-virus’ resurrected and my dream job popped back into my mind. I applied at Air Aruba because they needed pilots. In 1995 I got a call asking if I could pass by the office. They told me I was selected to fly the next Monday to Miami. Maybe they thought I would never give up my practice to fly as a copilot, but I had my secretary cancel my patients and went flying! I sold my practice on Aruba but kept the one on Bonaire where I worked my three free days every week. I felt very lucky! Why did I do it? I didn’t want to die thinking ‘if only…’ So, I did it. I lived it and it was fun! I flew for seven years, then Air Aruba went bankrupt in 2000.

My first son, Andrew, was born in 1988 and after the birth of my second son Emill in 1989 (named after my grandpa who came from China and couldn’t spell very well) I got married. I stayed on Aruba and came three days a week to Bonaire. Then Andrew went to study in Holland and I stayed on Aruba. My marriage had failed. I was already in the process of divorce when I met Estefani Pabon.

“I went to apply for a job at Sentro Dental Bonaire,” Estefani says, “where I was hired by Eric who wanted to train me as a dental assistant. The new building at Kaya Soeur Bartola was just finished and there were two treatment rooms while he had only one assistant. The work was interesting. One week later, on a Friday, he asked me to go with him for a happy hour and I said, ‘No, I prefer to stay at home.’ He started teasing me: ‘You’re so young and so boring, so I said, ‘Huh! Let’s go!’ And that’s how it all started. He is a quiet guy, he’s not possessive and not controlling. In fact he was the exact opposite of my ex-boyfriend. He was a grown-up and I liked it.’

“For me it was a challenge’ Eric says. ‘She was a very attractive girl. I had to give in many times, but it was the same for her and now I feel I’ve really grown up. My problem is that I don’t have the patience to explain things to people because I don’t understand why they don’t get it immediately.” ‘We talked a lot after work,” Estefani says, “and I also pointed out to him that his behavior wasn’t so nice and he took it to heart. He changed a lot, in a positive way. When our relationship became strong we felt we were missing something, and after having been together for five years we decided to start a family and our daughter Emily was born in 2013.”

“When my sons were born,” Eric says, “I was an ambitious dentist, eager to build a future. I was at a different time in my life. Luckily the relationship I have with my sons now is 1000%. We have a very intense contact and they are happy with their little sister. Both of them live in Holland where Emiln is an economist with Niek Interational and Andrew is Head of Research and Development with Finups in Amsterdam. To have a three year old daughter at my age is precious. Of course it comes with challenges because she has just started and I am over the hill, which is something I think about often. But every day it’s a joy to come home and Emily is very attached to me. She is a sweet girl – just like her mom – but she has a strong will just like me and her mom! I grew up in a culture where we didn’t snuggle a lot.”

I am from Cúcuta, Colombia, and came to Bonaire in 1999 with my mother and my brother Jason. I was 10 and Jason was 11 when we arrived here. I was super happy, a new life, a new school, new kids – a new challenge - that’s what I love! I had a real nice time and as there was only one high school, all the children of Bonaire were together. It was like we were one family and all of us went out on the boulevard on Friday night! It was fun! Bonaire has been good to me and I love the island.”

“When I moved here in 2008,” Eric says, “I immediately decided to build a new practice. Throughout the years it has grown from a solo-practice to an all-round oral care facility where dentistry from A-Z is offered. We have 11 people working here, but the orthodontist, the implantologist, the periodontist and (via the hospital) the dental surgeons (because we have the equipment) come to work here on a regular basis. Today we had the IGZ (Health Inspection) from Holland visiting and they were very impressed with the progress. Also they mentioned that our practice is absolutely not inferior to one in the Netherlands. I worked hard to come to this level and I’m still working hard and spending a lot of time and money to keep it up to date. And in my pursuit of perfection I recently followed an education about cosmetics around the mouth. Nowadays I’m allowed to use fillers and Botox to complete the perfect smile.

My life is perfect; I found a real good balance. I love to be home and I would rather have people coming here than to go out. I love my garden where I have a lot of different fruit trees and vegetables from Surinam and of course I do miss my country – its nature and its fertile land, and one never knows about the future, but for now I am happy here.”
Dear Editor:

Before I came to the Caribbean in 2008, I bought a new laptop in Vancouver with an extended warranty and fearing overheating, I bought an under-laptop cooling fan. Every Saturday night, I perform a full weekly backup to an external USB drive. Before I went to bed, I checked that the backup was complete, disconnected the external disk and turned off the laptop and had a good night sleep, knowing I had a backup copy safely tucked away.

One particular Sunday morning, I went into my home office and turned on the laptop and it didn’t start up. I thought “This is why I bought the extra 2 year warranty” and looked for the warranty forms. Of course, the warranty expired YESTERDAY!

I was now a bit frustrated, so I picked up the laptop wondering which Window™ to throw it out of, and noticed a puddle of water on the cooling fan. When I moved the cooling fan, there was an even bigger puddle of water on the desk.

Being a geek at heart, I got out my screwdrivers and took apart the laptop (all 39 screws) only to find it was very wet inside. I put a bit of the water on my finger and tasted it and it was very salty.

It was at that point that the numbers added up and I checked the under-laptop cooling fan and realized that I forgot to turn it off.

All night it had been cooling a cool computer in a hot humid climate, causing the salt water to condense and basically short out the computer.

With nothing to lose, I removed the hard drive and took the motherboard to the kitchen sink and washed it with soap and water, much to the chagrin of my wife. I put it out in the sun to dry, and then reassembled it and BINGO, it worked!!! That was in 2009 and I am writing this article on the same computer, but now I remember to turn off the cooling fan each night.

Brian Niessen

Brian Niessen a Canadian computer consultant, recently arrived on Bonaire, who has been working in IT since 1976. He plans to do computer consulting here. He has offered to help our readers with their computer problems. If you have any questions you would like answered, email Brian@BonaireTechSupport.com and if he can’t answer them in a column in The Reporter, he will answer them on the Bonaire Tech Support Facebook page or website at www.BonaireTechSupport.com

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Bonaire personality Pierre Perigault Monte sends us greetings from Stockholm, Sweden along with his copy of The Bonaire Reporter. Pierre has been active in helping with Bonaire youngsters at FORMA and Jong Bonaire.

WIN A DINNER AT A TOP BONAIRE RESTAURANT: Send your photo to reporter@bonairenews.com to be entered in our annual contest for the best picture.
Lots of people on Bonaire want the United Nations to intervene to pressure the Netherlands to redefine the constitutional structure of their island and sister islands that has existed for more than six years.

After Bonaire voters chose the option of “direct ties to the Kingdom” of the Netherlands in a 2004 Referendum, in 2005, a Round Table Conference of officials from the Netherlands Antilles and Dutch governments laid the groundwork for the determination of the future of the islands. Both Curaçao and St. Maarten would become semi-autonomous countries (“status aparte”) of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, (as Aruba had in 1986), while Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba (the BES islands) would be a “public entity” within the Netherlands.

Consequently on October 10, 2010, the Netherlands Antilles was dissolved and the new political/constitutional structure became effective. During the next six years the results of the changes became apparent. Not everyone was pleased with the results, especially in the BES Islands. One of the most vocal critics of the structure was James Fines, a former executive of a local bank, who founded the Foundation Nos Kier Boneiru Bek- NKBB (We Want Bonaire Back) to call attention to the inequalities and problems. He conducted a long-running sit-in during 2014/15, only stopping when the local government agreed to a new Referendum.

On Friday, December 1, Finies, in collaboration with Davika Bissessar, Chairwoman of The “We Dare To Care Foundation,” took a bold step. They organized a critical public forum focusing on the political future of the Dutch-administered Caribbean in a well-attended conference in the Cacique Hall of Plaza Resort. Topics explored included the implications of the October 10, 2010 (10/10/10) changes focusing on the self-determination of the BES islands – as well as other Caribbean territories, with the possibility of joining the United Nations list as Non-Self Governing Territories (NSGTs).

Keynote speaker of the conference was the honorable Dr. Carlyle Corbin, United Nations expert and main advisor to the government of French Polynesia regarding its historical relisting as an NSGT. The full-afternoon symposium was followed that evening by a fundraising “Gala” at Eddie’s Restaurant. At least 80 attendees listened and participated as government officials and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) specialists from various cultures and backgrounds discussed the political status options for island dependencies to achieve full political and social equality. Noticeably absent were official representatives from Saba and the Dutch Kingdom (Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland).

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Nico Rollan, who MC’d the event, first introduced all participants to a chillingly beautiful rendition of the Bonaire National Hymn, followed by a moment of silence for the fallen heroes who fought for the freedom of Bonaire, Curaçao and Aruba. The song Pueblo Ta Cry (“A Nation is Crying”), performed by some of Bonaire’s finest young artists, clearly moved the entire audience. The colorfully filmed ballad, according to Davika Bissessar, reflects the ongoing problems on Bonaire, such as the socio-economic and cultural differences within the island’s diverse culture.

Among several guest speakers from other islands, notably Aruba and Curaçao, who elaborated on the evolution of autonomous country status and other dependency and semi-dependency arrangements, was Fulbright scholar, Ms. Lodesca Livingstone, from Providencia Island, Columbia. Ms. Livingstone compared Providencia Island’s efforts to preserve its cultural traditions (its English-language colonial history with Great Britain, later as a dependency of the Colombian government and its subsequent fight for political and cultural freedom) to NKBB’s current struggle to free the BES islands from the Netherlands’ cultural and regulatory embrace.

Host of the evening, James Finies, briefly provided background information regarding the event and the ongoing concerns of the people of the BES islands. The evening concluded with a special performance by a young artist who entertained with his delightful renditions of traditional island music and dance.

(Continued on page 16)
MCB Annual Merit Awards

Each year a poll is taken of MCB Bank Bonaire employees to get their view on which of the islands charitable foundations are deserving of a cash prize from the bank. This year, at an informal outdoor press conference Managing Director Leonard Domaccasse and Chereth Kirindongo presented the awards to three deserving foundations: Akademia Talento Nobo (New Talent Academy), Fundashon Sonrisa (Smile Foundation) and Stichting Dierenasiel Bonaire (Bonaire Animal Shelter) G.D.

The Akademia Talento has about 50 members who get together every week to practice traditional and modern dancing, drama, theater and poetry. On Mother’s Day they offered an entertaining show. Overall they provide creative activities and a wholesome focus for Bonaire youngsters.

Founded in 2012, the Sonrisa Foundation is a group of friends who offer activities and direction for less privileged youngsters between ages 4 and 16. They make children smile by offering visits, trips, pizza and activities free. Over 300 children have participated.

The Bonaire Animal Shelter has consistently worked to provide a better life for Bonaire’s animals and people. They provide care, free neutering, adoptions, and education to the public. They work to shelter homeless pets and control the animal population.

Prisoners' Art Show

Artist and teacher Adi Figaroa is very proud of the works of his students who reside in the prison in Bonaire. Adi has been giving art lessons to the prisoners for the last four years, and it’s amazing to see what these incarcerated people can create.

For several years the JICN, which oversees the prison, has put together an exhibit for the public. This year it was on Sunday, November 27, at the Sporthall from 1 to 5 pm. The theme was Christmas and the art and handwork was varied, expressive and very creative.

Story & photos by Laura DeSalvo

Frog by Udemiar Fidangue
Conch by R. Abrahamz
Mermaid by Irma

JICN social workers were hostesses: Chanta Espacia, Mary-Ann Thomas, Suphaemy Jong, Aisheline La Croes

The Akademia Talento Nobo Group

Dulitza Rijna accepting for Fundashon Sonrisa

Paul Wichers accepting for the Bonaire Animal Shelter

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The Bonaire Reporter Dec 5-19, 2016
As a boy I wanted to be an astronaut. Not a cop, not a fireman - an astronaut. So I went to the library and read 'How to become an astronaut.' It had a lot of pictures, everybody was happy, even the moon smiled. At the end of the book there was a questionnaire; I wasn’t allowed to scribble in a library book so I jotted down the answers on a separate page, added it to the book and returned it. Somehow I thought NASA would be smart enough to scan all juvenile libraries in the world in search of smart boys who suited their program. I confused NASA with the NSA.

For months I waited. In the meantime I kept working on my skills: I made a helmet out of a cardboard box, I tried very slow jumping, I practiced the 'It's one small step' speech. But NASA never called, and disgruntled, I chose to be writer which is kind of exactly the same but different. Who wants to be strapped to huge tanks filled with highly flammable liquid nitrogen and two million moving parts all provided by the lowest bidder in a government contract anyway?

Flash forward to Curacao 2016. Me and my beloved Tine are lying on Tugboat Beach, a nice quiet place where you can snorkel, away from the touristic crowds. While we were sipping Zula we mock the apprentice-divers who cautiously step into the water. "You must be crazy, wearing a full body spandex suit, combined with all that heavy gear, having to walk like penguins in this heat. Never in our lives we are going to look that ridiculous."

Fast-forward to Bonaire, two months later. Time and I are struggling around on the rocky shores of Salt Pier, trying to get into the water without breaking a hip. We are currently wearing: a full body wetsuit - Tine even a 5mm-suit - and about 25 kilos of gear on our back. We move like penguins on acid.

What happened? Well, Ryanne, that's what happened. You might remember Ryanne as the person who convinced me to swim to Klein Bonaire, an epic adventure that nearly ended with me lying on the bottom of the ocean. Ryanne has a knack for coaxing people into doing things they solemnly promised themselves they would never do. Ryanne is an experienced diver and an experienced hypnotist. "Just try it. You will never want to snorkel again." She kept repeating that sentence, over and over again, and like a subliminal message on a Beatles-album, it got stuck in our minds. So Tine and I went on a test dive with the great people of VIP Dive.

The next day we signed up to get our Padi. Due to Tine's crazy shifts at the hospital, we had to take the course separately. And there I was again: reading a book called 'How to become a diver.' It even had a questionnaire at the end of each chapter. In the morning my instructor, a kind guy called Daniel, gave me an exam. I passed with flying colors, and after that we went into the water, practicing all the necessary skills like sitting on the bottom of the ocean watching barracudas swim by. I learnt a lot in just a few days, and yes there are some tedious parts - like having to watch a four-hour Padi-promo-video on how to buy matching diving gear - but once you are below water, a new wondrous world opens up. Amazing is a too small a word.

When you think about it, there are a lot of parallels between diving and being an astronaut.

First of all: it's dangerous. You float through an environment that doesn't contain air. But you are trained to be very careful and check your instruments regularly. Things can go...
For the last few years nature on Bonaire has suffered from lack of rain, but now we have so much of it that our yards are spilling over.

And with that other problems are popping up—like weeds, fast growing grass and wild plants that are over growing your nice plants. A lot of mosquitoites are now living in the grass which harbors water, and that’s just what they need to reproduce themselves. And also all that overflowing water can transport your good garden soil with it into the street. So you are loosing the nice garden dirt you had around your trees and in your veggy garden. Some of us have had enough of this and are looking for solutions.

Well, there are some ideas how, for a while or for a long time, you can protect your garden against all of this. I myself will start soon with these ideas and I thought I would share my ideas with you.

What do you think about rocks and stones in your garden? This is not something new on Bonaire because a lot of people decorate their garden with these natural stones. So I thought let me do that too. Even though I don’t necessarily want them forever, but yes it’s a nice change and it can solve for awhile my concerns about my garden.

First, start with the white broken beach stones. Before you cover your soil with them, you have to clean the yard or that part you want to cover. Totally remove any grass and level the area. Cover the soil with big thick plastic (rolls), like those used dur-edge with big rocks around, so that the dirt about 30 to 40 centimeter. Make a strong wood around the trees. Make it high like trees steady. Some of those trees were pa-

I was looking very gloomy and rainy that day when Sankikolas was sup-
posed to arrive, but despite everything he and his wondrous Swarte Pieten made it. They landed by boat as is traditional, but the site of the action had been changed from Wilhelmina Park to Jong Bonaire where a mammoth high decibel screaming crowd was waiting.

The Swarte Pieten cavorted, danced and tumbled, all to the delight of the crowd—kids and adults alike. The Pieten arriving in Bonaire all had “black face,” by popu-
lar demand. In parts of Holland the Pieten these days are supposed to look “dusky,” not black. (Bonaire prefers the tradi-
tional!) Candy was thrown, kids scram-
bled, photos were snapped, games were played. Sankikolas had his book that lists good and bad children. Everyone had a marvelous time.

If you were lucky you might have encoun-
tered some of the Swarte Pieten dur-
ing the following week going through town on their way to bring joy and laugh-
ter to the old folks home, to children’s parties and businesses. They are Bonaire’s loveable characters and they come only once a year, at the end of November. Don’t miss them!
**BONAIRE MARITIME FILM FESTIVAL**

**Vanishing Sail Headlines the Bonaire Maritime Film Festival**

A special evening of film and honor highlight the Bonaire Maritime Film Festival to be held at Plaza Beach Resort Bonaire, Saturday, January 14, 2017 from 5:30 pm. The event will feature the award-winning documentary, *Vanishing Sail.*

This 90-minute film tells the story of trade and smuggling by sail in the West Indies, and follows a community of boat builders in Carriacou who struggle to maintain their tenuous grip on a dying culture. Viewers will see shipwrights Alwyn Enoe overcome all odds, completing the sloop just in time to compete in the prestigious Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta. Viewers will see shipwrights Alwyn Enoe overcome all odds, completing the sloop just in time to compete in the prestigious Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta.

**Salute to the Sailors.** Five men connected to Stormvogel during its early sailing days will be honored on stage. The elderly seamen include Ismael Solano, captain; Jan Feluda, boat building crew; Luis Coffi, cook; and deckhands Lucio Solano and Beeochi Frans. Foundation president, Boi Antion and head of restoration, Johnny Craane, will present awards to the crew. Intermission will include a cash bar and snacks.

**The Bonaire Maritime Heritage Foundation organized this event as a fundraiser for Stormvogel.** Without their contributions, this event would not be possible. Early sailing days will be honored on stage. The elderly seamen include Ismael Solano, captain; Jan Feluda, boat building crew; Luis Coffi, cook; and deckhands Lucio Solano and Beeochi Frans.

**Stormvogel Rising,** a short film about the rebirth of the last of the sailing cargo ships of the ABC Islands, will kick off the evening. It shows how the 45-foot cutter, Stormvogel, was rescued from a Curacao backwater and brought home to Bonaire where it had been built in 1951.

**The Bonaire Maritime Heritage Foundation organized this event as a fundraiser for Stormvogel.** Five men connected to Stormvogel during its early sailing days will be honored on stage. The elderly seamen include Ismael Solano, captain; Jan Feluda, boat building crew; Luis Coffi, cook; and deckhands Lucio Solano and Beeochi Frans.

**More on the Festival in upcoming editions**

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**Animal Shelter Auction**

The Bonaire Animal Shelter Auction on November 27 was the most successful fundraiser they ever had. They sold 187 tickets and reached their goal of about $15,000. The setting was dramatic and welcoming at a spectacular waterfront home in Sabadeco.

Auction items were abundant, varied (dive courses, sculptures, fishing trips, art works, dinners, etc.) and at all price levels. About 15 volunteers made drinks, served hors d’oeuvres and gave information on the silent auction items. Popular musician Benji Schaub played in the background. Everyone had a marvelous time before the excitement of the bidding began.

Hub Groot, one of the most amazing and fast talking auctioneers they’ve ever heard in their life, got people excited and several bidding wars went on. Notary Anniek kept track of who bid, and won, on what. Many guests got what they bid on but everyone, no matter whether they won or lost, had a marvelous time. It was a night to remember!

In the next edition of *The Reporter* there will be an article praising by name all the sponsors, donors and volunteers involved. It couldn’t have been done without them. It was a night to remember. — Laura DeSalvo

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**A successful bidder**

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**Some of the volunteers posing for the camera in the kitchen.** It was hard to get them all together as they were so busy working all over the house and the terrace.

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**A view of the house from the seaside terrace—3 levels!**

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**Guests enjoyed the sunset, music by Benji, chatting, drinks and very tasty canapés.**

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**Auctioneer Huub Groot encourages the crowds to bid higher, “It’s for the animals at the Shelter!”**

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The Bonaire Reporter Dec 5-19, 2016
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Underwater Love (Continued from page 8)
terribly wrong but only if you act stupid.
 Remain calm. Inhale and exhale. Repeat.
Despite the fact that you are doing
something unnatural, that you are provoking
death, I find it very relaxing.
Second, there is the bliss of beauty. I can
imagine a astronaut looking down on earth,
that quiet distant blueshiht and oh-so-fragile
sphere, and being touched by a nearly divine
beauty. That is what I feel under water
watching the reefs and the coral and the
spectacular fishes: a humbling. Combined
with a certain solitude, which much be the
same in space, there is the feeling that you
are privileged to watch creatures you never
ever thought existed.
And finally, you rarely dive alone, just like
astronauts - except when you are a Russian
cosmonaut stuck in MIR for eight months.
It's not only much safer to dive with a
buddy, it's so much more fun. Diving with

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**REGULAR EVENTS**

**Rooi Lamoene Kunuku Park Tours**
$21 (includes tax). Discounts for residents and local people. Tel. 717-8489, 540-9880.

**Soldachi Tours**—See the Real Bonaire and be transported back in time. Learn about the history, culture and nature by Bonaireans from Rincon. Call Maria Koeks for more information: 796-7870, 717-6415.

**Park di Libertat—Park-playground and canteen (formerly Dare to Care Park)** Behind the hospital. Open Monday-Saturday 8am-7pm. Free entry.

**Nature Organization, STINAPA**, has frequent events—bird watching, sunset hikes, lectures, etc. Go to their website for more information for events of the rest of 2016: stinapabonaire.org/events

- **Marshe di Playa (Bonaire Duodero)**
- Every Saturday, 8am-1pm, across from Warehouse Bonaire, locally made and grown products.

- **Tera Kora Ranch Market—2nd & last Saturdays**—local produce, clothes, food, games for kids, 2nd hand items.

- **Monthly Cultural Market at Mangazina di Rei**—usually the last Saturday of the month, 8am-1pm. See the real Bonaire: traditional music, crafts, local produce, Creole kitchen, educational presentations. Mangazina di Rei is on the Rincon Road, at the eastern entrance of Rincon. Free entrance.

- **Bonaire Animal Shelter’s Garage Sale**—at Mangazina di Rei—usually the last Saturday of the month, 8am-1pm. At Kaminda Liberator Simon Bolivar, across from Brandariza Café. Tel. 717-4897. Drop off cast offs on Saturdays or at the Shelter on the Lagun Road weekdays. 717-4898

- **Last Saturday of the month**—donate foods and household items to Food Bank (Stichting voedselbank Bonaire) from 9:30am-2pm at Van den Tewel Supermarket

- **Wine Tasting at Antillean Wine Company’s warehouse on Kaya Indus**—Second Saturday of the month, 7-9 pm. (Always call to make sure it’s on: Tel. +599-560-7539.) Snacks and tasting of six wines for $10 per person.

- **Petanque**—Jeu de Boules, 2:30-6 pm. Landhuis De Tuin on the road to Lac Bai. Info: 786-0150

**Sundays**

- **Landhuis deTuin—Real Jamaican BBQ on the terrace of the land house in the quiet countryside. Jerk Chicken, BBQ Chicken, Seafood Curry, Veggie Dish, Child’s plate, Bread Pudding. On the road to Lac Bai—Kaminda Lac #101. Follow the signs, 12 noon to 6 pm. Tel. +599-786-6816, +599-701-1982. A fors school training.**

**Mondays**

- **Bonaire Goat Farm Tour—9 am.** Meet the goats, see milking, and more. $10 includes tea. Kids $5. 786-6590. Also on Wednesdays & Fridays.

- **Happy Hour at Captain Don’s Habitat Bar.** The books of Bonaire’s dive pioneer, Captain Don, will be available: Island Drift, Shangri-la, Sea Trauma and the newest book: Reef Windows. 5:30-7pm. Tel. 717-8290.

**Wednesday**

- **Bonaire Goat Farm Tour—9am.** See the Real Bonaire and be transported back in time. Learn about the history, culture and nature by Bonaireans from Rincon. Call Maria Koeks for more information: 796-7870, 717-6415.

**CLUBS AND MEETINGS**

- **Lions Club** meets every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 8 pm at Kaya Sabana #1. All Lions welcome. For more information call 510-0170.

- **Rotary lunch meetings Wednesdays, 12:15-2 pm - Divi Flamingo Beach Resort** in Peter Hughes meeting room upstairs above the dive shop. All Rotarians welcome. Call Gregory Oberoi 785-9446.

- **Toastmasters Club** meets every two weeks. For more information call Crisita de Palm 786-3827 or Lucia Martinez Beck, at 786-2953.

**CHURCH SERVICES**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints – Kaya Sabana 26, Sunday service-10am in Spanish. 9:00 am to 12 noon Add’l Info (599) 701-9522 Dutch/English 1pm to 3pm Add’l Info (599) 701-2892

Protestant Congregation of Bonaire: (VPGB), Kralendijk, Plaza Wilhelmina; Sunday service-10am in Dutch. Rincon, Kaya C.D. Crestian; Sunday service-8:30am in Papiamento/Dutch.

- **Children’s club**-every Saturday from 4:30-6 pm in Kralendijk, (annex of the church.) Contact: Marytjin@gmail.com or Dai-syncoff@hotmail.com

**Cruise Ships**

**What’s Happening**

**Cruise Ships**

**CLOSE-IN EVENTS**

Saturday, Dec. 10—Bird watching with Stinapa, 4:30-6pm, at LVV on the Lagun Road, Call Stinapa to reserve 717-8444


- **Art Fair at Restaurant La Can- tina/DeMar/Brewery on Kaya Granadi, 10:30am-4pm. Artists: Jose Smith, Ana Klein Heerebrink, Teen Bergh, Camila, Fred v.d. Brock, Wol-munt Jansen, Paulien Knip, Lorenzo Mittiga. Sign up wol-moer@gmail.com**

**Tuesday, Dec. 13—Yagariilla Full Moon Festival-Yoga, Ta-Chi, more!**

**YAGARIILLA FULL MOON FESTIVAL**

**SPRING EVENT**

**—Budget Marine Triathlon & Sailing Event. See** page 2 and sched-ule on page 6.

**—Art Fair at Restaurant La Can- tina/DeMar/Brewery on Kaya Granadi, 10:30am-4pm. Artists: Jose Smith, Ana Klein Heerebrink, Teen Bergh, Camila, Fred v.d. Brock, Wol-munt Jansen, Paulien Knip, Lorenzo Mittiga. Sign up wol-moer@gmail.com**

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**Thursday, Dec. 15—Kingdom Day—official holiday. Government and some private business closed.**

**Saturday, Dec. 17——Bonaire Christmas Shopping Night at Wil-helmina Park and Kaya Granadi, 5-10pm. Santa, Live music, DJs, prizes, raffles. Proceeds to Bonaire Food Bank. More on page 7**

**Sunday, Dec. 18—Bonaire Art Day in Rincon, 4pm-midnight. Mars, dancing, poetry. To reserve a stand, call 717-6420. Sponsored by Arte Bonaire.**

**The Bonaire Reporter Dec 5-19, 2016**
Aries (Mar. 21 - April 20) Before you proceed be sure to talk your plans over with those they will affect. Your fight for those less fortunate is not likely to end in sweet victory. Try not to attempt to do something unless you are fully intent on following through with the plans. Do you really want to start something with someone you can’t reason with? Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

Taurus (Apr. 21 - May 21) Do not force your opinions on others the connections will be short lived. Try to visit a country that excites you. You can’t win and they won’t listen. Romantic opportunities may not be as they appear. Your fight for excitement and adventure may be discovered. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

Gemini (May 22 - June 21) Things aren’t as they appear. Ask others to help, or you may feel that a burden is weighing you down. You need more space for the whole family. Someone you like may be receptive and actively seeking your company. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

Cancer (June 22 - July 22) Do not get upset over trivial matters. You don’t want to give anyone fuel for the fire. You can pick up additional responsibility that will lead to higher wages and a better position. Be extra careful with your valuables; loss and theft are evident this month. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22) Attend trade shows that will allow you to look at new products. Your self esteem will come back if you take part in organizational functions that allow you to be in the lime light. Don’t let someone talk you into parting with your cash unless you can truly see the benefits of doing so. Such over indulgence due to emotional upset will be your downfall. Your luckiest events will occur on a Thursday.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22) Your desire for excitement and adventure may be expensive. You must refrain from over-spending on entertainment. You can enjoy doing things that include children. Be sure not to reveal private information to the wrong individuals. Your luckiest events will occur on a Saturday.

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22) Use discrimination and play hard to get. Be sure to pay attention to your financial status. You will do well if you mingle with the brass this month. You can make successful moves. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Thursday.

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21) Your pursuits may end up being fruit less. A residential move may be necessary to get a better job. There will be hidden matters that you may find disturbing. Your talents might just be discovered. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Tuesday.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21) Don’t let relatives make demands of you. Work hard on improving your living quarters. You can make rewarding connections through the organized groups you associate with. Do things because you want to, not because someone else thinks you should. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Wednesday.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19) Take care of matters involving institutions or government agencies. Evasion is likely if you aren’t direct about your feelings. You can change your living arrangements. First find out if they’re married. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Tuesday.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18) Sign up for courses that will help you understand yourself better. You’ll have great insight. You should want to feel good about yourself and your goals. Make sure that you make reservations early. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Wednesday.

Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20) Take care of matters involving institutions or government agencies. Matters pertaining to your home environment will be favorable if you are direct. Be prepared to deal with groups and organizations of greater magnitude. Changes in your home environment are likely. Your luckiest events will occur on a Sunday.

Michael Thiessen

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Good-Bye Summer Triangle, Hello Orion

With sunset coming earlier in the Sky Park, you can see the stars earlier at night. As darkness falls, brilliant Venus will greet you. If you keep watching you will see both the stars of summer and the constellations of winter. In the west, the stars that lit up our summer vacation, the Summer Triangle, are heading out for the season. While in the east, the stars of winter will start peaking their heads above the horizon. And one guy’s wearing a snazzy belt.

Just after sunset this week face southwest where you can’t miss Venus blazing away. Wait until it’s fully dark, after 9 pm and you will see some lovely new stars rising. And after 10pm the stars of winter really shine.

You’ll see the summer triangle stars in the western sky sinking in order of brightness, Vega, Altair, and Deneb. And you’ll still see them in this part of the sky for a few more weeks. Vega is part of the Constellation Lyra the harp... which looks like a little parallelogram attached to Vega. Altair is part of the eagle constellation named Aquila... which looks like a diamond-shape. Deneb is the tail of Cygnus the Swan... which some people also call the Northern Cross.

Each night these stars will set earlier and earlier but they will linger in the evening skies through December.

Now face east to preview the stars of winter. Here you will find six of the 20 brightest stars in the sky and some of the most distinctive and recognizable constellations.

Two stars of similar brightness are low in the northeast. You might call them twins... they’re Pollux and Castor; stars that mark the heads of the celestial Gemini twins. Up higher in the east you’ll spot bright, white Capella. This is the brightest star in the constellation Auriga the Charioteer. Over to the right of Capella is a star with an orange tint embedded in a V-shape of fainter stars. This is the bull’s eye of Taurus the Bull - a star called Aldebaran.

Then zoom into the real sign of the season, the belted one, Orion the Hunter. Do you see him over there low in the east? Orion is easy to find, with his distinctive three stars in a row just above the cactus tops. The belt stars bear the Arabic names, Alnitak, Alnilam, and Mintaka. The belt is definitely cool, but the brighter stars in Orion are great to check out too. The bluer star to the right is called Rigel. That marks the left foot of the mighty Orion. Rigel is one of the absolute brightest stars around.

It’s really far away, as stars go, at almost 800 light years from us. Then, the star in Orion that is decidedly redder, is up and to the left of the belt: This is Betelgeuse, a red supergiant star, about 640 light years away. It’s easy to remember because it just so happens to mark Orion’s armpit. Betelgeuse is one of the largest stars in the galaxy. If it took the place of our Sun, Betelgeuse would extend beyond the orbit of Mars. That means the Earth would orbit inside of it!

So enjoy the early stargazing this week and look for Venus right after sunset. Then stay up after 10pm to see the summer triangle setting in the west while Orion, Gemini, Auriga, and Taurus rise in the east.

Dean Regas & James Albury

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The Bonaire Reporter Dec 5-19, 2016

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The Bonaire Reporter Dec 5-19, 2016
Green Label Changes Hands, But Gradually

There is new growth at the Green Label Garden Center and it’s not only the plants. There is a new manager as Ap van Eldik and his wife and business partner, Agnes, will move to Holland where their children are in school. Since 1999 Green Label has been the place to go for plants, gardening advice, landscaping and garden maintenance. Under Ap van Eldik’s influence the island’s flora has become more green and varied through the years. He refused to believe that only natural plants and trees could survive on this dry, salty wind island with poor soil. That’s what he was told by many locals. So through the years he has experimented with more and more varieties and he’s growing them here rather than importing them. “We have more than 500 different varieties of plants that we propagate here on the island, and we’re always looking for something new,” Ap continues, “But we have to be careful as there is Palm Weevil in Curacao. We won’t be bringing anything in from there. We’re concerned as on this small island the wind spreads these diseases easily.” And, he continues, “Things you do here should belong to the island!”

Speaking of his staff, Ap proudly says, “There are four people who have been with us for nearly the whole time.” Green Label has the reputation of being good to their employees.

New Green Label head, as of the first of November, is Remco de Valk. Having the same love for plants and with a business background, Remco got hands on landscape training in the Haag and was in the landscape and maintenance business for nearly five years. But gardening in Bonaire is a challenge. It’s something new. “I have all kinds of knowledge but I must leave it there in Holland,” Remco laughs. “I’m adapting by ‘doing it’ here and working with Ap. It’s a wonderful challenge.” Remco continues, “This is a great place to live with my wife and kids. I am so thankful and fortunate for this opportunity.” His goal is to continue Green Label as it is now. “In the future we would like to have more products. If the customer needs something, they should speak out. What would they like to see more of in the shop? We’re here to give information about what’s here.” Remco would like to grow more vegetables and fruits and improve some of the existing ones like watermelon, Surinam bean, paksoi for example.

DID YOU KNOW?

That many of our Ruddy Turnstones leave Bonaire in the summer?

From August until May, you often see stocky, brightly patterned shorebirds, the Ruddy Turnstones, actively pecking, probing and flipping over stones along our rocky shores. All winter long you have to search for them as a result of banding. For instance, Ruddy Turnstones that breed in Western Canada fly south to spend the winter in North America, Australia and New Zealand! Some of the Ruddy Turnstones breeding in Northern Canada and Alaska come here to the Caribbean to spend the winter. The Ruddy Turnstones that breed in Greenland fly to Western Europe for the winter. So, if you ever see a bird with leg bands/flags, grab some binoculars, record the numbers/letters, and report your findings so that we may continue to learn more about our birds!

Story & photo by Herman Sieben, STINAPA Director.

1200 New Trees

Last month the Echo Foundation led the planting of 1,200 native trees in Washington Park. The ultimate goal is that at the end of the rainy season about 2,000 trees will have been planted in a protected area within the Park. The area planted is approximately 1.3 hectares (3.2 acres). A dozen volunteers from Cargill Salt Company and about 10 other local volunteers, in collaboration with STINAPA, added 680 specially selected native trees to the 500 trees that were planted in October. All volunteers were very dedicated and worked hard and as a result they managed to plant more trees in less time than in the previous tree planting event. Up-coming (and the final for the year) is a tree-planting event which will again take place within the WSNP, this time in partnership with the STINAPA Junior Rangers. The goal is to plant 500 trees on a site created on the Slagbaai side (near Juwa Pass). The reforestation project is carried out by Echo on behalf of the Bonaire island government. By planting native trees in protected areas Echo helps to restore the unique dry forests of Bonaire and protect its nature. More trees and a greater variety of trees are better for the animals, the soil, the climate and the people, of course.

If your business or organization can assist Echo in planting native trees, please contact Qurijn Coolen (quirijn@echobonaire.org or 785 4128) or Edshel Martha (edshelmartha@hotmail.com 796 -2534).

439435279585019  Lauren Schmaltz-Echo/ G.D.

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The Bonaire Reporter  Dec 5-19, 2016
The celebrations of the New Year are approaching and before you get into all the planning of your celebrations, let’s stop and think for a moment.

Each year, numbers of animals get scared and shocked by fireworks, they tear loose in panic, slip out of their collars, escape and many of them get hurt.

If you don’t have animals and you are planning to make a big firework show for the New Year, please consider finding a place for it, where as little amount of animals will be disturbed. You may even save a life.

Every year pets will suffer as a result of fireworks being set off. Animals have very acute hearing. Loud bangs and whistles may cause them actual pain in their ears. But by following these simple guidelines your pet doesn’t need to suffer.

Always keep dogs and cats inside when fireworks are being set off.

If you walk your dog, make sure your dog is walked earlier in the day before the fireworks start.

Close all windows and doors, and block off cat flaps to stop pets escaping and to keep noise to a minimum.

Ensure dogs are wearing at least a collar and tag.

Think about fitting pets with a microchip, so that if they do run away they have a better chance of being quickly reunited with their owner.

Prepare a safe place for your pet where it can feel safe and comfortable. They may like to hide there when the fireworks start.

Let your pet pace around, whine, meow and hide in a corner if they want to. Do not try to coax them out. They’re just trying to find safety and should not be disturbed.

Stay calm, act normally and give lots of praise for calm behavior. If they prefer to hide under your bed, let them do this instead.

Avoid leaving your pet alone during such potentially upsetting events. If you do have to leave the house, don’t get angry with your pet if you find they have been destructive or peed after being left alone. Shouting at a frightened pet will only make them more stressed.

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the transformation in the political status of the BES islands after 10/10/10, from previ- ously existing as an island territory within, the Netherlands Antilles to becoming par- tially integrated with the European Nether- lands. For Finies and other like-minded citizens and public officials on Bonaire, this new status amounted to a unilateral annexion, characterized by political, economic and cultural inequality. From this perspec- tive, the “public entity” label does not re- flect the wishes of the majority of the peo- ple of Bonaire, who voted their overwhelm- ing discontent with “the situation” after 10/10/10 in a questionable public referen- dum, on December 18, 2015, that was not overseen by an impartial outside authority like the UN. According to Finies and others, this “No” vote constituted a formal rejection of “direct ties” with or even partial integra- tion with the Netherlands. Various Bonaire- ans represented at the conference, either in person or in filmed interviews, expressed a feeling of loss of their beloved Boneiru to the Makabushu (aliens), as they call the Dutch immigrants who, they argue, act like oppressors, eradicating the Bonairean iden- tity, culture, language and values, and im- posing all manner of new, burdensome and unwanted regulations.

Bonaireans are generally regarded as a friendly people who respect and love their nature, culture, language and religion. But now many generations-long, local residents feel oppressed by an overflow of the latest Dutch immigrants who regard this island as their own. According to this view, some of these Dutch, especially the ones who ar- rived shortly after 10/10/10, came to claim their jobs, start new competing businesses and purchase houses – all as if they had a right to them. The traditional islander’s culture and language seemed to get disre- garded as more Dutch flood Bonaire. Chris- tian values and beliefs, such as anti-abortion and anti-euthanasia sentiments, were tram- pled upon. Even as the Dutch government has poured money into infrastructure, health care and education, in order to improve these areas, they argue that poverty and despair on Bonaire have increased, never- theless.

In Bonaire’s schools children are required to learn in Dutch – not their first language, which is Papiamentu. All their exams, ex- cept for foreign language tests, are in Dutch. All of their textbooks, even some of the foreign language texts, are written in Dutch. Their teachers speak Dutch. These students are overwhelmingly second-language learn- ers of Dutch. However, they are required to read, speak, write and understand the Dutch language at the same level as the Dutch students in the Netherlands, and to do so in an equal period of time. Consequently, some Bonairean students are overwhelmed and lose motivation. Others drop out alto- gether.

Bonaire’s poverty levels have increased measurably as the result of wage stagnation and post-2011 “dollarization,” the introduc- tion of the US dollar to replace the Antilles guilder, inflation accompanied by hugely increasing local prices. Many Bonaireans are expressing their rising frustration with a system of political and social inequality that is not of their choosing. They are alarmed that the public entity status of the BES is- lands imposed on its inhabitants had been misrepresented as a genuine status of politi- cal and economic equality by the Kingdom. They are deeply concerned that the King- dom of the Netherlands is proceeding with measures to legitimize dependency status, contrary to international norms of demo- cratic governance.

NKBK, representing the people of Bonaire who voted ‘No’ in the 2015 referendum, now calls for the Kingdom of the Nether- lands and other relevant U.N. member states to initiate the necessary procedures to re-list the former Netherlands Antilles islands, in particular Bonaire and St. Eustatius, on the United Nations roster of Non-Self Govern- ning Territories in order to provide the inter- national community with a required plat- form to review such democratic inconsisten- cies as may exist in the dependency form of government.

Dr. Corbin, who presently serves as the Executive Secretary of the Council of Presi- dents of the United Nations General Assem- bly and who has worked as a United Na- tions authority on self-determination and governance for over two decades, and as a U.N. Development Program expert on gov- ernance, was featured as the main speaker of the conference. He affirmed Bonaire’s wish to be considered for self-determination and to be listed as a NSGT. Other Carib- bean islands listed are for example, Ber- muda, Turks and Caicos Islands, US Virgin Islands and Cayman Islands. These places underwent several territorial transforma- tions, from slavery to colonization to de- pendency to autonomy. In this taxonomy, Bonaire is stuck in the third stage, one of peripheral dependency and only partial integra- tion. The tag line for Corbin was, “In my view, it is not now too late to change this status.”

Finiés’ hope to list Bonaire as NSGT will make it possible, he argues, for Bonaireans to be a nation once again with its own cul- ture, language, identity and uniqueness. The Special Committee on Decolonization of the United Nations, also known as the Commit- tee of Twenty-Four (the original number of members), reviews the political, economic and social situation of all NSGT’s on the U.N. list. The Special Committee, it is hoped, will help defend Bonaire’s rights by forcing the Netherlands to continue giving care in the areas of child care, roads, educat- ion, health care but at the same time eradi- cating poverty by providing more security and welfare to the ones who need it most, without asserting full control over the is- land.

The main question, for Finies, Bissessar and others, is, will the Netherlands indeed respect the voice of the Bonairean people and go back on its current policy of political inequality, while assuring self- determination and providing financial assist- ance at the same time? — Story & photos by Karen Buisman-Colmouar

Many thanks to James Finies and Davika Bissessar for their assistance to make this piece come alive; I used some of James’ words literally to express his emotions as they are. I also made use of online sources to provide more complete explanations and background info.

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