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BONAIRE

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The REPORTER

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SINCE 1994



Bonaire Springtime
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Flotsam and Jetsam



Following its winning of two seats in the recent Federal election the UPB, green, Party has shuffled party members into new positions. Burney el Hage will move from his seat on the Bonaire Executive Council to become Minister of Economic Development and Labor. He handled similar functions for the Bonaire Island Government and was the man who upgraded DEZA, Bonaire's Economics and Labor department, when he was its chief. Taking his place will be **Onnie Emerenciana** who has held several positions in FORMA (Job Training) and is active with Bonaire's Special Olympics Foundation. **Ibi Martis**, long a UPB stalwart, will take over as a State Secretary from **Noris Gomez**. **Anthony Nicolaas**, another committed UPB member, will become a Member of Parliament, joining his UPB leader, **Ramonsito Booi**, and opposition leader, **Democrat Jopie Abraham**, in that body.

► It is set that a BOO (Build-Own-Operate) power plant enterprise, similar to the one that supplies the Isla refinery on Curaçao and some public electric power as well, will take over the management and operation of Bonaire's power company, WEB. WEB management and BHM (Bonaire Holding Maatschappij, which oversees all of Bonaire's island-owned companies, headed by prior governor Richard Hart, Tonnie Rossen and Stijn Janssen) announced the change to its workers last week. The change was motivated by advice from consultants at KEMA, a Dutch firm, founded in 1927, from Arnhem, with a Curaçao office, that specializes in electrical power technical consultancy, inspection, testing and certification. BOO will also take over the WEB plant at Trans World Radio in Belnem.

BOO, with KEMA advice, has built conventional power plants and wind farms on Curaçao. The replacement of the Hato WEB plant, damaged by fire last year, by a new facility next to the BOPEC terminal has been discussed. It's hoped that BOO will be able to reduce the costs of electricity and water for Bonaire customers.

Bids are being solicited from 20 companies for construction of the new facility near BOPEC with a re-

sponse due by the end of April and a go-no go decision this June.

The high cost of WEB power has motivated the **Buddy Dive Resort** to produce its own power from on-site generators and at least two other resorts to produce their own fresh water through reverse osmosis.



► Another island-owned company, **TELBO**, may be bought up by a, as yet unnamed, communications company. According to Stijn Janssen, a BHM director, the island has "invested quite a lot" in TELBO and even though the Bonaire market is relatively small, there is interest from big telecommunications companies. Following deregulation there has been a competitive trend to consolidate telecommunications companies in the Caribbean in recent years.

► While over the Caribbean, at 07:45, Monday's **American Eagle** 7 am flight (EGF 5055) to San Juan radioed that it suspected problems with the landing gear of the ATR aircraft. It was carrying 51 passengers and four crew.

After consultation airline technicians decided to have the aircraft return to Bonaire. Flamingo Airport's emergency standby plan, including closing some roads in Belnem, was activated

► It's official. High Commissioner Gerold Daantje has stepped down after nine years of leadership of the Bonaire Police Force. In his goodbye address he said he was grateful for the support of the Police Union (NAPB), the press and other organizations. He is proud of the accomplishment of the force over the years and its upgrade and modernization. New Police Chief van der Stratten, who headed the Aruba police during the Natalie Holloway disappearance, said he felt that openness and support from the Bonaire community was necessary.



Chief Daantje (l) receives a parting gift from Governor Domacassé. His replacement, Jan van der Stratten (r), looks on.

and the appropriate island medical and rescue agencies alerted. The plane landed safely, after circling the airport to burn off fuel, at 08:38.

► **DAE, the only airline to connect the ABC Islands with the Antillean Windward island of St. Maarten, is ready to wage war with any competition.** "We no longer leave people behind at the airports," says DAE manager Floris van Pallandt. He was explaining that unless there are extenuating circumstances, as there are now, "competition is good and healthy, it keeps the parties keen. When the proposed new Curaçao-based airline, Insel Air starts inter-island flights, it will be at the expense of DAE, but this company will respond. Then, there will be war." According to a report in the *Amigoe* newspaper, van Pallandt, the

former KLM manager who started with DAE last year, is a hardliner in the aviation world who will use legal means to fight the competition. He refers to price/quality-related actions and he thinks that the company would be able to hold out longer, flying at a loss in order to drive out competition.

Aviation in the Antilles is a difficult business. ALM didn't make it; neither did DCA, Air Aruba, or BonairExel. When it turned out that the ATR airplanes that BonairExel used and DAE now uses require careful maintenance, the fleet of three aircraft, including a back-up, was not sufficient. DAE was forced to purchase and stock \$2 million worth of spare parts.

Divi Divi Air flies between Bonaire and Curaçao as well, charging a lower fare than DAE.

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► The Aruba Balashi Boys were on Bonaire for the preliminary arrangements to set up the first-on-Bonaire **Balashi's Bartenders' Competition**. A real challenge is that all cocktails must have the Balashi beer ingredient! This same format has been used in Aruba with the Balashi Bartenders' competition and met with huge success. Competition will be held on Bonaire April 29, just before Rincon Day kicks off. More details will follow. Those interested in participating in this professional and fun competition should contact Liz Rijna, Bonaire's very own GOLD Medal Winner of the CHA Bartender Competition, or Albert Silie from Balashi Bonaire. *Sara Matera*



Fernando Kock, Clifton Jong (Balashi Boys), Liz Rijna, and from Divi Flamingo, Sara Matera and Caroll Ann Soliano,

coral glimpses

(a bit of information about corals presented each week by naturalist Dee Scarr)

Look at a star coral head, or starlet coral head: every single little mound or indentation -- every single little circle of the whole coral head -- is an individual coral animal.

The individual Great Star Coral animals are easy to see in this close-up.



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Springtime in Bonaire

Covering the hillsides, particularly in the northern parts of the island, are blooming Brasilwood or Dyewood trees (Latin name *Haematoxylon brasiletto*). This year the flowering has been spectacular with massive patches of yellow blooms. This relatively short tree, tough looking with its deep grooves in the branches and short heavy thorns, is a gift of beauty to the island when it blooms. Its small stature and strong wood brave the arid climate and strong winds, and when many other plants and trees have lost their leaves and nearly given up, the Brasilwood bursts into bloom. This is a tree with a positive attitude. The flowers grow together in tight clusters, giving it the appearance of the northern forsythia. The Brasilwood trees once covered Bonaire, but when it was discovered that their roots could produce a fine quality red dye not only for fabric but for bacterial stain cultures, they were nearly wiped out. Even now where Brasilwood are cleared, the less desirable Cossie tree with its long sharp thorns takes over and makes it impossible for any of the original vegetation to come back.

You can see a massive display at Hilltop where a developer is planning a multi-hectare hotel project with a "wedding village" that was announced last week. He must have an environmental conscience and leave some of these ancient trees when the backhoe and bulldozers arrive to "clean" the land.

But right now enough Brazils are left for you to enjoy the blooming and appreciate the fine qualities of this sturdy little tree. *L.D.*

(Flotsam & Jetsam. Continued from page 3)

► **Twelve Arubans or Antilleans secured seats during Dutch city council elections last week.** MAAPP, which is the organization that promotes Antillean-Aruban participation in politics, made the announcement. Of the 12 successful candidates elected to the Dutch city councils, eight were from the PvdA political party.

► Following weeks of speculation, the **Round Table Conference (RTC)**, a key step on the road to a new governing structure for Bonaire and the other Antillean islands scheduled for **March 28, has officially been postponed.** Dutch Prime Minister Jan-Peter Balkenende made the announcement on Friday, March 10, following the Kingdom Council of Ministers' meeting. Balkenende said that "It's too early and there are too many unanswered questions."

After a meeting in Bonaire at the end of February, the committee concluded that a Kingdom summit was required on issues concerning finance and justice for the RTC of March 28 to be a success. Politicians in The Hague are still very skeptical whether the necessary constitutional reforms can go into effect by the scheduled date of July 1, 2007. The Antilles are not happy with any delay.

► Dutch Minister of Defense Henk Kamp was quoted in the media as saying **he believed Venezuela wanted to control the Antilles**, but that the Dutch Kingdom's military could easily



Defense Secretaries Rumsfeld (US) and Kamp (The Netherlands)

counter any Venezuelan attack. "Venezuela only has second-hand naval vessels, which are no match for the Royal Dutch Navy. But Chávez wants to invest in more powerful armed forces within 10 to 15 years. Holland will try to prevent Venezuela, via diplomatic and political channels, from becoming a threat in the future," Kamp said.

He also referred to Chávez as an "unbearable populist who has a lot of money and who has a big eye for the 'snippets of land' adjacent to the Venezuelan coast that are part of the Dutch Kingdom."

The Central Government of the Netherlands Antilles said the Minister's comments were unexpected. Prime Minister Ys said Kingdom policy was "... to have a good relationship with neighboring country Venezuela and wants to reinforce the traditionally friendly relationship with Venezuela."

► **The Morotin garbage dump in Rincon will be maintained and organized,** according to a release from SELIBON, Bonaire's waste management company. Residents of Rincon have long been dumping their household trash at Morotin. Now SELIBON Interim-Manager, Rudsel Leito, wants to have a bulldozer stationed there to bury the trash. Part of the trash was being burned due to lack of machines to bury it. Before burning, the SELIBON employees separate the waste and remove glass and material that are harmful to the environment. A gate will be installed at the new site. Eric Frans will supervise the operation. SELIBON also collects household refuse that does not belong on Morotin for transport to the Lagun Road landfill. The service is free.



Selibon photo

Burning trash at Morotin

► **Early Sunday morning an open 30-foot boat with six men aboard capsized off Bonaire's northeastern coast.** The men, from Trinidad, had been adrift for 15 days after their engine stopped. As their boat neared the coast a large wave turned over the vessel and the men had to swim to shore. The Bonaire police boat and the Coast Guard helicopter participated in the rescue and recovery. One man, who drowned during the grounding, was found near Willemstoren light. The weak and dehydrated men were admitted to San Francisco Hospital and will

return home as soon as they are fit.

► **The Public Health Administration in Aruba** is conducting an information campaign and large-scale cleanup action to exterminate breeding places of the *Aedes aegyptii* mosquito that spreads Dengue Fever. **It was announced that 1,642 cases of dengue had been registered in Aruba between October 3, 2005, and February 1, 2006.** Authorities still don't call it an epidemic.

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TOURIST TAX TRAUMA II

Now that it has turned out that the proposed Island Ordinance on tourist taxes is unfeasible, the Tourist Corporation Bonaire (TCB) has come up with some amendments. They divided humanity into three categories: residents of Bonaire; non-residents, but born in the Netherlands Antilles or Aruba; and the rest. They suggested special lower rates for the old and the young on local flights, which is a nice gesture but irrelevant to the problem at hand. Locals pay NAf10 airport tax when they go to Curaçao, but aliens pay NAf27/US\$15 (Why more?) The only persons who pay \$75 are aliens traveling abroad. These are people who travel on Air Jamaica, American Eagle, KLM or go straight to Valencia.

The aliens who travel through Curaçao leave the island on a local flight and pay consequently NAf27. (A couple yielding \$30 instead of the \$610 that would be collected now.) Why do aliens always have to pay more on this island? At the entrance of Washington Park they always want to know what you are: resident or non-resident. The latter category pays more. Are they being discouraged from going to the Park on purpose, and in general are aliens purposely being discouraged from coming to Bonaire?

Strictly speaking the airport charges no tax at all. It is, or is at least supposed to be, compensation for the services the airport renders to travelers.

It is time for the conclusion that tourist taxes such as room tax and rental car tax cannot be replaced by a higher airport tax - they are not being of a kind - and at the same time be fair and non-discriminatory. The government just has to do its best with a little more collecting of the tourist taxes as they are.

G.Vellinga

OPINION ON TOURIST TAX

Dear Editor:

I know that the government is trying to figure out how to get its hands into tourists' pockets, but personally I think the whole thing stinks. My friends, Lois and Ted Santy, remember the days when Cai Cai Cecilia, the islands only tourist guide, used to greet every airplane in a white uniform with a hat, and the words "wel-a-come to Bonaire." He was always there with his beautiful smile and he took them in his own car for no remuneration to the Hotel Bonaire, followed by an on-island tour the next day. What a sweet man and wonderful representative for the island.

On departure, instead of a tax, tourists were given a basket of gifts including such items as a bottle of Scotch, bag of salt, a map or picture of Bonaire.

These days, it's not good enough that tourists choose to come here (often having to take three airplanes) and spend their money at all the island's businesses for hotel stays, restaurant dining, diving, car rentals, windsurfing, fishing and other water sports, and in our shops and supermarkets (all of which already include our regular 5% OB).

Now Bonaire expresses its deep heart-felt gratitude for being chosen as a vacation spot with an island tax.

The reason Bonaire has grown to this point is because of people like Cai Cai who loved his island and the people who visited here.

Cai Cai has passed and so has the love of tourists.

Laraine Abbey-Katzev

Bonaire resident (who first came as an American tourist)



REACTION ON AN ARTICLE IN THE REPORTER ABOUT THE ISLAND TAX

Dear Editor:

I read that the TCB is thinking about changing the system of getting the Tourist Tax. I see it as discrimination between Residents and Non-Residents and also for *Pensionados* who bring yearly a lot of money to Bonaire.

The reason for the TCB doing this is that they cannot get a sufficient grip on the car rental companies and hotels to pay the tax to the government. And instead of doing something about that they find out another way of treating the tourist.

If an Antillean citizen goes to the US, Europe or even The Netherlands, they don't have to pay any money for getting into the country.

So by the human rights it's more of a tourist discrimination than something else, and I think that the TCB is creating a bad situation for the tourists that will affect Bonaire in the future.

Scuba divers saw also an increase in tax for scuba diving from \$10 to \$25, without any reason. And what to do for all the passengers of the cruise ships? They will stay away as well so the economy of Bonaire is slipping away.

I'm thinking sending a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of *Koninkrijkszaken* in The Netherlands and asking them to do something about the plans.

Also I will send a letter to all the world diving societies to stay away from Bonaire as soon the Government starts with the plans as mentioned in the article.

F. Boon, The Netherlands

AN OPEN LETTER TO (GOVERNOR) DOMACASSÉ, (SENATOR) BOOI AND (COMMISSIONER) ELHAGE:

Esteemed gentlemen,

I have lived on Bonaire for two and a half years and, as with many others, I am concerned about crime here and how our police force responds to it. Sadly, with another violent crime taking place, this time in Hato, we find our police force still seeming to not want to take care of the victims of such crimes.

We have a new police chief, but apparently the same "police culture." We have public servants who do not want to serve the public. Something must be done about these officers who were so rude, indifferent and unkind to the victim of this recent attack.

I understand that none of you can directly solve this problem. However, you must use your political power to bring pressure on the police chief to force him to change the attitude of his police officers. You must also work to involve the Minister of Justice and responsible parties in Holland so that they too will help to ensure that our police will do what they are paid to do—'protect and serve.'

Thank you.

A L P Brown

Rectification

Scott and Sharon Barlass requested the following be published to clarify their position on a paid advertisement by APA Construction that first appeared two weeks ago in *The Bonaire Reporter*:

"The APA Construction NV 10th Anniversary ad listed in the March 3 - 10 *Bonaire Reporter* did not have the permission of Scott and Sharon Barlass to be named in the ad as a "client who supported us from the start and continue to so." In fact, there are unresolved quality issues, payment issues and completion issues on our home. **In no way would we recommend APA Construction, Asdrubal Marcano nor Justino Bravo for the construction of a home, pool, concrete work nor remodeling.**

Ralf and Julia Klug were also mentioned by APA in the ads and they also did not give permission to APA Construction."

Flotsam and Jetsam (Continued from page 4)

► **The Bonaire Nature Alliance (Aliansa Naturalesa di Bonaire) has elected a new Board of Directors.**

Elsmarie Beukenboom, representing STINAPA Bonaire, is President; **Mabel Nava** representing Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire is Secretary; **Marlis Melis**, representing The Donkey Help Foundation, is Treasurer.

Active Aliansa member organizations include: STINAPA Bonaire, Washington Slagbaai National Park, Bonaire National Marine Park, Animal Shelter, Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire, Donkey's Help, Fundashon pa Bon Koral (Coral Protection) and Magazina di Rei (King's Warehouse).

Inactive members are: Fundashon Salba nos Lora (Save the Parrot), Fundashon Tene Boneiru Limpi (Keep Bonaire Clean), Bat Foundation and Amigu di Tera (Friends of the Earth).

► **Rotary Club Bonaire will hold its popular annual RotaRally road rally event on Sunday, 26th of March.**

The RotaRally is a tradition on Bonaire and is celebrating its 20th anniversary. A road rally is a contest where one follows a series of cryptic and intentionally misleading directions, via car, from the rally's starting point at Seru Largu around Bonaire to collect "points" for spotting specific markers around the island. The entrants with the most points for accu-



rate direction-following win prizes. A snack/meal will be ready at the RotaRally's destination, Jos' Kunuku. All profits go to charity.

The entry fee for each car participating in the RotaRally will be NAf25 per vehicle, with trophies awarded to the top three point-getters. The lunch tickets will be available at a special price of NAf12,50 p/p. The RotaRally starts at 10 am at Seru Largu. It's recommended that tickets be purchased prior to the event. The tickets can be bought from any member of the Rotary Club or Aijen Botterop, 786-0251; Edwin Vrieswijk, 786-2005; or Jules van Dongen, 717-5877.

► Welcome to new advertiser, **Digital FM Bonaire, 91.1 on your FM dial.** The station broadcasts 24 hours a day and is the only radio station on the island with breaking news. Their announcers are everywhere! Their first regular scheduled news of the day is at 7 am, followed by 12 noon news. In between there's music and other variety programs. Check it out!

► From April 13th through April 17 over a hundred enthusiastic tennis-players will swarm over our island as the **4th annual MCB Cup will be played at the Harbour Village Tennis Center.** The main sponsor is MCB Bank. Co-sponsors are Heineken, Budget Car Rental, Littman's Jewelers. Tennis School Sport Bonaire will handle the matches.

The players will come from Bonaire, Curaçao, Aruba, the US, the Nether-

► **The planned sewer project for Bonaire is suspended** following a second scientific opinion that returning insufficiently treated waste water to the coastal zone will harm the coral. The effects of sewage, even if it has been given treatment to remove solids, were made very clear during a presentation by Harbor Branch researcher, Dr. Brian



Dr. Brian Lapointe of Harbor Branch Ocean Research presenting at Capt. Don's Habitat

Lapointe. Dr. Lapointe described the total devastation of Jamaica's coral reefs following the installation a similar type of sewage system around Negril on Jamaica's west coast. In the area swept by the exhaust plume of the sewage outfall many varieties of algae have overgrown the reef.

Bonaire and Curaçao are about to begin monitoring for algae growth and sea water nutrients, some of which may come from human and animal waste. **In Bonaire 10 sites around the island will be checked to establish a "nutrient baseline"** for future years, if and when Bonaire gets central sewage. Using modern technology the researchers will be able to tell if the nutrients and any algae growth are due to man-made or natural sources. Paul Houtjes of the Central Government Environmental Department is in charge of the work.

lands, Surinam, Germany and Venezuela. Registration is open for Men's and Ladies' singles, doubles and mixed doubles in A, B, C and D (beginners) in 18+, 40+ and C 50+. Registration closes April 10th or when maximum capacity is reached. Registration forms are available at the Harbour Village Tennis Center, at the Barracuda Tennis Club and at all MCB branches. You can also request a registration form

from Tournament Director Elisabeth Vos by dropping her an e-mail at evos@harbourvillage.com. Registration fee is \$30 for 1 category or \$40 for two categories, and includes a tournament shirt, a BBQ, a Party night, Happy Hours and lots of tennis. For all info call 565-5225 or 717-6907.

► Every Saturday from noon to 1

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(Flotsam and Jetsam. Continued from page 6)
 pm there's a new radio program on Voz di Bonaire, 94.7 FM. It's a program especially for local people to help them understand the importance of tourism on the island. There'll be lots of information, interviews and prizes. The program will be hosted by Merel of Match Consultancy and Diana Sint Jago from BONHATA.

► **Bingo Bango started on radio Voz di Bonaire (94.7 FM) last week.** It's a radio Bingo where the listeners can sit at home and win lots of cash. The big prize now is NAf15.000! Buy a *Revista* (magazine) *Bingo Bango* at Voz di Bonaire, Larry's Bakery or Movieland for NAf5 and play to win. More information call 786-1919.

► This is the week for the **Full Moon Walk** through the beautiful countryside of Rincon and Playa Grandi. It's **Friday, March 17**. It starts at the Rincon Catholic Church at 6:30 pm and ends there as well. The cost is only NAf7,50 for adults and NAf5 for children, and it includes water, juice, fruit, and bread and salad at the end. There's a special route for 60 plussers too. It's organized by members of the Rincon Parish. Call Edith Strauss Marsera at 717-4060 or 786-4643 for more details.

► Two of this island's most respected and loved visitors, **authors and marine biologists Ned and Anna DeLoach, will return to Bonaire in September.** "We are very proud that

Ned and Anna will stay with us again for the third consecutive year," said **Buddy Dive's** general manager Jan Willem 't Hoofd. They will be on island during the week of September 10, the coral spawning season, which peaks September 13 and 14. The DeLoaches will present several seminars and dive with the guests.

► Starting April 1, Golden Reef Bonaire will offer All Inclusive Resort Packages: choose meals from numerous Bonaire restaurants including **Cactus Blue**, El Fogon Latino, Bambu, La Guernica, **Bistro de Paris**, Pincho's de Brazil, Imperial Japanese, The Pirate House and Zeezicht. A different restaurant can be chosen each night. The seven-day package has unlimited shore diving and a four-door pickup included with the meals, accommodation and other goodies- tax included, for \$915. Contact: info@goldenreeffinn.com or call from the US 866-790-7333 or on Bonaire: 599-717-5759

► If you missed out on getting your **"ID My Gear" marking paints, Carib Inn** just received another shipment. It sells quickly so get there soon. It's indispensable in a place like Bonaire where look-alike dive gear is everywhere.

► In last week's *Reporter* it was incorrectly stated that the car rental tax was \$6 per day. The correct amount is \$3.50 per day. Thanks to Budget Car Rental for spotting this error. G./L.D.

G./L. D.



TCB Director Ronella Croes announced that **"Dive into Adventure Bonaire 2006- (DIAB 2006)," set to start on June 17, will draw on local and international experts to create a truly fantastic total eco-adventure experience.** Philippe Cousteau, the President of EarthEcho International, a foundation dedicated to unifying scientific studies to promote nature conservation, ecology and education, will headline the event along with Charlie Mazel, a scientist with Physical Sciences Inc. Dos Winkel, internationally renowned author and photographer, a former Bonaire resident, and underwater photographers, Bill and Alice Miller, will be available to talk with the participants.

Bonaire is known worldwide for its underwater expertise with people like deep-diver Walter Stark (Rec Tek Scuba); Larry Baillie (Larry's Wildside Diving); Naturalist Jerry Ligon (Bonaire Dive & Adventure); Dee Scarr ("Touch the Sea"); Benji Schaub (Caribbean Gas Training); Karen Eckrich (Sea & Discover); Hendrik Wuyts (Scuba Vision); dive pioneer Captain Don Stewart; Kalli de Meyer, Execu-

tive Director of The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance; Fernando Simal, Manager of Washington Slagbaai Park; Ramon de Leon, Manager Bonaire Marine Park; and Elsmarie Beukenboom, Director of STINAPA.

DIAB 2006 will draw on the island's broad eco-adventure talent at Kiteboarding Bonaire and Plaza Resort's center for mangrove kayaking, snorkeling and cave snorkeling. Around-the-island tours will be available from Bonaire Dive & Adventure including sunset kayaking, mountain biking and nature tours. There's also Landsailing Bonaire, visits to the Mangrove Kayak & Info Center and especially Outdoor Bonaire's rugged rappelling, top rope climbing, mountain biking, caving and kayaking. Participants may try horseback riding in the surf with the Riding Academy Club and sail on the Woodwind trimaran's snorkel/sailing trips.

More details will become available as the event nears. For additional information contact the TCB at 599 717-8322.

DIVING with DEE The Misinformation Highway



Our authoritative, inaccurate adult gave us something worse than misinformation: the idea that just because some animals are capable of hurting humans, those animals should be exterminated. Sheesh -- did he ever pick the wrong kids! Look at this beautiful, venomous scorpionfish. Photo credit: Dee Scarr, Touch the Sea

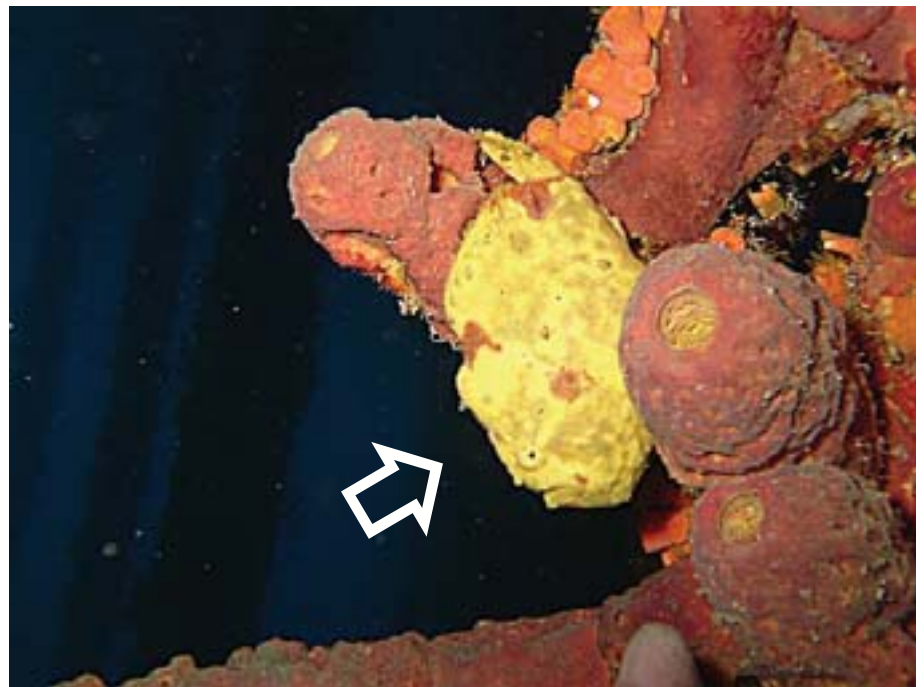
When I was about 10, one of my favorite activities was inspecting seaweed for animals. My family lived in an area of Miami with many canals. Wind and currents being what they were, very often rafts of floating sargassum weed would be pushed from the ocean into Biscayne Bay, across the Bay, and into the canals where the bridges were replaced by pipes under the roads and the floating weed couldn't pass.

My weed-inspecting friends and I carried specialized tools: broom handles with a couple of nails sticking out sideways from one end, and buckets on ropes. We'd fill a bucket with water, wash and cool down the sidewalk, and refill the bucket. Then we'd hook up bunches of sargassum and shake the weed over the sidewalk and marvel at what fell out.

The creatures adapted to live in sargassum weed are so perfectly adapted that they generally stayed with the weed even though we'd hauled it out of the water. We quickly scooped up all

the critters and put them in the bucket, then examined the shrimp, crabs, fish, and nudibranchs at our leisure. There was very little information available to non-scientists about marine animals at the time, so we had the privilege of learning about these creatures firsthand. Before we left we swept the weed back into the canal, and gently returned the creatures to the water nearby.

One of my favorite weed inhabitants was the sargassumfish, a stocky, smooth little fish (usually 2" or less in length) who'd rest on the weed with pectoral fins like hands. I don't think we even knew its name at that time; it's an anglerfish closely related to frogfish. One afternoon our weed-examining activities attracted a nearby adult. As I reached over to pick up a sargassumfish for the bucket, this man, with an air of great authority, stepped on it -- just wiped out its amazing little life - and said to us, "That fish has poisonous spines. It could hurt you. You should kill every one you find."



The sargassumfish is closely related to our frogfish: they each blend in to their environments, and neither is venomous or poisonous. The arrow points out a frogfish. Photo credit: Dee Scarr, Touch the Sea

That was my introduction to the way people behave around marine creatures and to the misinformation they rever like the air they breathe.

We'd picked up so many little sargassumfish with our bare (but wet) hands, and never even felt a spine, much less had any problem. After this pillar of authority departed, the next sargassumfish fell from the weed. We looked at each other, picked it up gently, by hand, and put it in the bucket as before and ever after.

It was later that we officially learned

the sargassumfish had no venomous spines or other defense mechanism other than camouflage, but we still instinctively recoiled from killing something just because it was capable of hurting us.

As adults, though, what's our responsibility when we hear -- or overhear -- misconceptions about marine animals? It's awfully easy to figure "It's none of my business," and walk away.

The trouble is, most of the misinformation about marine creatures alleges

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YACHTING AND WATERSPORTS PAGE

(Continued from page 8)

that the creatures are harmful, aggressive, anti-human, etc. Every time someone believes something like that, they care less about the health of the oceans because they're thinking about their own safety. They believe, for example, that the oceans would be better for people if sharks were all wiped out. They don't understand how all the ocean creatures are interconnected.

My friend Terry chose not to walk away and made a difference. At the Jersey shore one July, our attention was caught by a crowd of people. Turned out they were in a wide circle around a stingray at least three feet wide, actually taller than the ankle-high water where it rested. We couldn't tell if the ray was rippling its "wings," or if they were being moved by the waves, but it wasn't moving much other than that. Above the general babble, one voice was raised in proud inaccuracy: "It's a devil ray! I know because my dad fishes. Don't get near it, it will hurt you, it's a devil ray!"

The lifeguard had called for help, and was keeping everyone away from the ray, which made it seem even more dangerous.

The combination of the kid's inaccurate identifications and the guard's protectiveness was too much for Terry. "This is a stingray," she announced loudly to the teenager (and the rest of the crowd). "It could hurt you with these spines (she showed them the ray's spines) on its tail, but you can see that it's not even trying to use them." She told 'em she was a biologist, and delivered a brief talk about stingrays: such rays normally fed on bottom dwellers such as urchins, so the intake for their gills was on the top of their bodies, just behind their eyes. This was easy to point out since the top of the ray's body was out of the water.

Suddenly three little girls whispered excitedly to each other, grabbed their buckets, and ran up to us. "The ray can't breathe because the water is too shallow!" they told Terry. "Shouldn't we use our buckets to pour water over the ray?" The guard gave permission, and until the decision-makers arrived, all the children filled and refilled their buckets with water and carefully poured it over the ray's spiracles. No one left, and no one laughed at the kids for trying to help.

People who had earlier been discussing whether, if the ray was alive, it should be killed because it was a devil ray – were sincerely regretful when the ray was declared to be deceased. Thanks to Terry's willingness to speak up, though, those people's perspectives of one sea creature – and to some extent their perspectives of *all* sea creatures – were changed forever. That was a nice change from those people preparing to kill the creature just because they thought it could hurt them.

So, when non-diving acquaintances (off Bonaire, of course) discover you are a diver, after you reply to their question about sharks – then what? Do you use this opportunity to personalize the ocean's other inhabitants?

One of the biggest animal areas of confusion on Bonaire is sharptail eels. They aren't nearly as common in the northern Caribbean (such as the Caymans) as they are here, and they're rare in the Bahamas and Florida. Their

family is called "snake eels" for good reason: they look like snakes and they move like snakes. Thus they're often confused by divers new to Bonaire with sea snakes, which have not been reported in the Caribbean. When you overhear divers talking about the sea snake they saw, it's a perfect opportunity to offer the comforting information that we're unlikely to have sea snakes, but we do have snake eels – most commonly sharptail eels – and they're completely venomless.

There's one obvious objection to all this: isn't it rude to incorporate yourself into the conversations of others? The answer, in general, would be "Yes." But this isn't a general situation. This is a situation in which you can help the speakers (just remember to be tactful), AND help marine animals.

Around the same time I watched a man squoosh an innocent sargassum-fish, a young Alan Broder was buying a spear gun from a California dive shop owner who assured him that fish were incapable of feeling pain. It was years later – on Bonaire – that Alan realized that of course fish feel pain.



Sharptail Eel (*Myrichthys breviceps*)
Photo: www.cs.brown.edu/people/twd/fish/Bonaire/Bonaire.htm

The significance of that wasn't that he stopped spear fishing; he'd stopped spear fishing years before. The significance was that once he realized fish (and other marine animals) could feel, he felt much more connected to them and much more respectful of them. When he opened AB Sea Photo and his undersea art gallery and bookstore, Alan made sure to be well-stocked in books about marine animals, especially children's books.

Imagine what he could've done if someone had corrected that dive shop "expert" all those years ago.

Dee Scarr



Dee Scarr conducts "Touch the Sea" dives. They will enhance your diving forever. Call 717-8529. See her slide show "Touch the Sea" at Capt. Don's Habitat, Mondays, 8:30 pm. (No shows will be held March 20 and 27th)

VESSELS MAKING A PORT CALL:

Alter Ego	Flying Cloud, USA	Samba
Angie	Freestyle	Santa Maria
Atalama	Galandriel	Sandpiper, USA
Augustin	Goolka	Savoir Vivere
	Goril Two	Scintella
Banana Lady	Guaicamar I, Ven.	Second Lady
Blue Moon	Honalee	Sirius
Blur Thunder	It's Good	Summer Breeze
Bright Sea		Spart I Vento
	Kanana	Sylvia K
Camissa, Chan Is.	Keley	
Carlsea	Kika	Ta B
Cheshire	Manta	Ti Amo
Colonel's Lady	Maggi	Turn One
Cristina	Makani	
	Natural Selection	Ulu Ulu, USA
Dahu		Umilk
Decibelle	Ocean Breeze	Unicorn, Norway
Deneb	Okeanis	
Delphinus	Paleochora	Valhalla
Destiny	Prospera	Varedhuni, Ger.
Dutchess		
	Rasmus	Water Music
Endorphin	Reality	Yanti Paratzi
First Light		Zapphire

KRALENDIJK TIDES (Heights in feet, FT)

Remember: Winds and weather can further influence the local tides

DATE	TIME	HEIGHT	COEF
3-17	2:46	1.6FT.	12:55 1.1FT. 79
3-18	3:31	1.6FT.	14:10 1.0FT. 77
3-19	4:16	1.7FT.	14:45 0.9FT. 73
3-20	5:15	1.8FT.	15:25 0.8FT. 67
3-21	6:05	1.9FT.	15:58 0.8FT. 60
3-22	7:01	1.9FT.	16:26 0.8FT. 53
3-23	7:53	2.0FT.	16:55 0.8FT. 50
3-24	8:43	2.0FT.	17:24 0.8FT. 53

Antique Living Houses of Bonaire

Wooden Homes

by Wilna Groenenboom

Preserving Bonaire's Architectural Heritage



Two weeks ago I tried to open people's eyes to the beauty of the old architecture as seen in some of the buildings on Bonaire because sometimes it's difficult to see beauty in these old places.

The green cement house (upper left) is on the Kaminda Lagun road. Although there has been some rebuilding on the west side the east side remains in its traditional style. Maybe they changed the old wooden shutters for glass shutters to get more light, but I know which side I prefer.

Cement and stone can last for a long time, but wood can't. Even so there are still some people on Bonaire who try to maintain their wood houses in good condition - and succeed in it. A good example of this is the Salsbach house at the beginning of the Nikiboko Noord

road (lower left). The two wooden sides, more than 100 years old, are still in good condition. That is not easy, but it is possible, if the wood is maintained and painted well.

A not-so-good example we can see on the Kaminda Lagoen (below right). The right front side has nearly collapsed. At the back of this wooden house there's already a foundation for a new cement block house. If the cement building is finished, the time for this wooden house will also be finished!

There are not so many old wooden houses on Bonaire, so maybe the Government or another organization can help the owners to preserve those few that are left. The small brown wooden house (lower middle) is on the Kaya Pos di Amor, near the More for Less

supermarket.

But even stone has its limits. When all of its wooden structure falls, literally, then it becomes difficult for the stones to stay in position. A very sad example of this is standing in Nikiboko. It was once one of the most beautiful houses of Bonaire - if not for its beauty then for certain for its style. Even if there were people who wanted to restore it, each month it becomes more and more difficult or maybe even impossible as the structure deteriorates. It is sad to see it falling apart.

Conclusion: Most houses in which people are living stay in better condition than the empty ones. So it is my hope that more old houses become lived in again. *Story & photo collage by Wilna Groenenboom*

Wilna Groenenboom is an artist and photographer who teaches art at the SGB high school





The University
Of
Sheffield.

New Research into the Life of Bonaire's Loras Begins

Sam Williams, who conducted the successful Lora awareness project on Bonaire in 2003, is back - this time with a look-alike academic colleague from the University of Sheffield (England)- Rowan Martin.

Sam hopes to look at the factors that limit the population, for example food constraints, poaching and the predatory pearly-eyed thrasher. Rowan wishes to investigate the maintenance of the parrots' long term monogamy and the role of males and females within a pair. Both of them hope that their doctoral research, which will extend over a three-year period, will be of benefit to the Lora's conservation.

Mating Systems and Conservation of Amazon Parrots

The Yellow-shouldered Amazon, in common with other Amazon parrots, has an unusual and complex mating system. Pairs initially delay breeding for several years, but during this time they forge extremely strong bonds that last for many years.

A better understanding of how Amazon parrots reproduce and why they use this strategy will aid in the conservation of the parrots of Bonaire and elsewhere.

I'm Rowan Martin, a Ph.D. student from the University of Sheffield, UK, and am visiting Bonaire this summer to study the mating systems of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon, *Amazona barbadensis*. The work is supported by the World Parrot Trust and The Natural Environment Research Council in the UK.

The study has two main aims: Firstly, to gain a better understanding of reproduction in the Loras through exploring questions such as how they choose a mate. Are they always faithful? How long do partnerships last? Secondly, to investigate how environmental changes might influence the mating decisions of Loras and in turn, affect the future of the population.

The work will take three years to complete and is part of an international collaboration also using a captive population of Amazon parrots in the US. It is hoped that this work will not only help to conserve the Loras of Bonaire but can be applied to other species around the world. *Rowan Martin*



Rowan Martin

Conservation and Ecology of an Endangered Amazon Parrot

Parrots are the world's most endangered group of birds with one in three species considered at risk of extinction. Habitat loss and poaching are the main reasons for their decline. Specific ecological information is, however, lacking for many threatened species, as are conservation strategies based on scientific findings.

PhD research student Sam Williams from the University of Sheffield will investigate ecological pressures facing the endangered Yellow-shouldered Amazon on Bonaire. The study is funded by the World Parrot Trust in partnership with the Natural Environment Research Council. This work is a natural progression from conservation efforts made by Sam during his visit to Bonaire in 2003.

The number of wild parrots on the island of Bonaire is declining. Nature related tourism is the major industry in this region and consequently there are economic reasons, in addition to aesthetic and moral justifications for protecting this endangered species.

Habitat alteration appears to have reduced the available food resource, and at crucial times, such as during historic droughts, the parrots may lose out in competition with other species over the available food. Breeding success is influenced by the aggressive nest competitor,



Sam and a Yellow-shouldered Amazon Parrot

the pearly-eyed thrasher, and most importantly by poaching. "Poaching has dramatically reduced the number of chicks going into the wild population, and if people continue to take Lora chicks then soon there won't be any wild Lora," said Williams. Population declines during major droughts are likely to have influenced the level of genetic variation within the parrot populations. Maintaining genetic variation is important for the long term survival of a species.

The effect of food availability on survival and reproduction will be assessed. Furthermore, competition over food between parrots and other animals will be investigated. Breeding attempts will be monitored to determine what prevents the chicks fledging from wild nests. The population's genetic health will also be investigated.

Ultimately it is hoped that this research will provide information on which to base the future conservation management for this species. *Sam Williams*

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and all extra parts, FL 45.00; Slide Carousel, 80 slides, FL 5.00; Slide Carousel, 140 slides, FL 8.00; Four Drawer, Metal Lateral File Cabinet, Beige, FL 75.00; If interested in any of these items, call 717-2848.

For sale: Sky kennel for large dog, KLM-approved, size F, NAF 300, tel. 786-5582.

For Sale: water ski bindings for combo ski's. Size 38 to 46 (Eur.) New, Complete with mounting material. Naf 100/pair. Tel. 786-5591

FOR SALE: Second Hand Dive Gear with 3-month unconditional repair warranty: Cressi regulators, BCs, with and without computers. From \$200. WannaDive at City Café. Call 717-3531.

For Sale: Ultra Classic Yoga Mats. Color: Black Price: NAf60. Call 786-6416

LADA NIVA (jeep) for sale 1991-4X4 drive 1.6 Cyl. 95.000km NAf5.400 717-2844 or 786-2844

Boat for Sale

Why import a sail boat when you can own a fast Regatta winner built right here? Classic

21' Bonaire Sail Fishing boat recently refurbished is for sale for NAf14,000 (\$8,000) Call George 786-6125/717-8988.



Free

FREE Cabinet doors, white wood, 20 +/-, all sizes. 717-6862 or 791-6003

Wanted

The Bonaire Reporter is looking for a Partner or Managing Editor

Join us to "Publish in Paradise." Working Partner or Managing Editor with journalism, writing/editing skills, business sense and energy desired. Most important: Must Love Bonaire! Call The Reporter at 717-8988, 786-6518. Email qualifications to: search@bonairereporter.com



Wanted: two-three bedroom house for doctoral students studying Bonaire's Loras. Minimum of 6 months. Call The Reporter at 717-8988.



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03/06

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Home-exchange with the Netherlands.

We are a family of 6 or 7. We offer a big house (11 rooms) in the centre of The Netherlands (near Utrecht) plus cars (seat 7 and 4). We are looking for a comfortable house (+ car) on Bonaire. e-mail: bob.smits@planet.nl

Wanted to buy: 4x4 vehicle in good condition. Jeep, SUV or pickup. Call The Reporter at 717-8988.

House-keeper for house and 3 dogs from June 9 till 24. Outlying house in kunuku. Own transportation and maximum presence wanted. Good reward! Please make an appointment, tel. 786-5591

Wanted: Diving Partner(s)

Allison Perry, a PhD student from the University of East Anglia in Norwich, UK, is here doing research until the end of May. She is carrying out underwater surveys to see how the number of corals and fish species depends on the area of reef surveyed, in order to better understand how many species might be lost in the future with the loss of reef area. This research is very important for the marine park. Allison needs to be diving 5 days per week (with 2 dives on most days) to complete her work, and is looking for buddies to accompany her. At a minimum, she needs someone to be within visible distance during dives, but if people are interested in helping with the actual fish and coral surveys, she would be very happy to have their help! If you are interested, please contact Ramon de Leon, Marine Park Manager 717-8444 or Allison (780-9809, email: a.perry@uea.ac.uk)

Found Dogs

Here are a couple of FOUND dogs that Mary DeSanza, who helps out at the Bonaire Animal Shelter, asked us to post.

The young female black/brown dog with the red collar was found by the dog catcher, location unknown. Shelter Manager Jurrrie Mellema said this dog can sing. He said she has quite the range of sounds, some quite amazing to hear, given that she is a dog! She is very lively and we know her owners must be missing her.



This lovely chocolate colored female dog looks to be a mix with possibly some Chocolate Lab in her. She is really a great dog. She has already been spayed. She was found in the Belnem area and brought to the Shelter by tourists who had been feeding her for the last week.



If one of these is your dog contact the Bonaire Animal Shelter on Kaminda Lagoen #26-A. It's open Monday through Friday, 10 am to 2 pm, Saturdays until 1. Phone #717-4989



Joint Garage Sale. Large Variety. Saturday and Sunday, March 18 & 19. Start at 9 am.

Kaya Cherokee (Use back entrance to Kaya Caribe #7)

28th Annual Kite Contest – Don't Miss It!

One of the most exciting, fun and innovative activities happens once a year on Bonaire – and it's for everyone to enjoy. It's the now famous **Kontest di Fli** – a **fantastic kite contest** where you'll see the most amazing things that people have put together and try to fly.

The Flamingo Book Store on Kaya Grandi has sponsored this kite contest for the last 28 years, and it's always surprising how creative people can be. This year it will be held on **Sunday, April 9, at the field behind Kooymans**, and will begin at 9 am. Everyone is invited to participate, starting with children from the age of 7 years. Last year, according to contest organizer Iris Se-meleer, there were 165 entries.

Prizes will be given for categories: Biggest, Smallest, Most Beautiful, Most Strange, and Most Original. All kites must fly for at least two minutes to qualify for a prize.

Contestants of all ages come from all over Bonaire and groups come from Aruba and Curaçao to try to sweep the winnings. You can stroll around and view the entries, some of which are works of art – and you may meet their makers.

Contestants vie against each other in different categories, and that in itself is a sight. Often it takes a whole team of



A kite from last year's Kontest di Fli

people just to launch one of these kites.

The ambiance is festive and exciting with the element of high competition in the air. Somber judges scrutinize and measure the kites, question their owners and make serious notes. There will be food and drinks for sale and music provided by HB disco.

If you're feeling creative or just want to have some fun yourself, enter the contest by signing up at the Flamingo Book Store, Kaya Grandi 19. Children are NAf3,50, adults pay NAf7,50

This year the contest is dedicated to Botika Bonaire. *L.D.*

Washington-Slagbaai Park Gets Even Better



Washington Park Staff and more.. in front of the guest house

Stichting Doen, the Dutch Foundation that funds environmental projects, gave a grant to the Washington-Slagbaai Park to build **one** house, but got **three** buildings for the price of one! At the Park entrance there are now three very attractive buildings, all in the Bonaire architectural style. The funds paid for the materials, and the project got done with a lot of sweat labor provided by the Washington-Slagbaai Park staff. The celebration of the completion last Friday was attended by environ-

mental activists: STINAPA board members, DROB's Peter Montanus and Frank van Slobbe, Fundashon Cas Bonaireano (Arthur Janga of FCB drew up the plans), Washington Park and Marine Park staff and the press.

The first building houses beautiful, clean new toilets for the visitors to the Park.

A second building is set up for the employees: a canteen, meeting room, locker room, storage for equipment and

(Continued on page 14)

Pet of the Week

Isn't this calico cat a darling? Just one look at those big beautiful, soulful eyes and you might lose your heart forever. "Esther" is a year and a half and already she's been a mother. But her kittens have moved on and she's been sterilized. No more maternal responsibilities for her, just time to give love and affection to a special owner who appreciates intelligence and great beauty in a feline! She's one of the nicest cats at the Shelter right now and gets along with everyone. But she has enough self confidence to get along on her own without other animal companions if necessary. She's healthy, she's had her tests for feline leukemia, she's had her shots and she's ready to go. You may meet Esther at the Bonaire Animal Shelter on the Lagoen Road, open Monday through Friday, 10 am to 2 pm, Saturdays until 1. Tel. 717-4989.



"Esther"

Many, many thanks to **Shelter volunteer Melody Hamilton** who has taken the time to photograph and list each of the cats in the cat cage. In her descriptions of each cat Melody notes identifying markings and colors and makes it so much easier to tell who from whom! This is especially important when there is a number of the same kind of cat: calicos, tabbies or black cats for example. Thanks a million, Melody! L.D.

(Washington-Slagbaai Park. From page 13) materials.

The third building serves as a guest-house. At last there is a place to stay – on the premises – for visiting scientists, internists, colleagues from other islands, visitors from NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and volunteers. The house, which can accommodate six persons, has two bedrooms with poured concrete beds, two bathrooms and a large kitchen-office area where research projects can be carried out. Right now there are two young women from England staying there who are volunteering in both Washington Park and the Marine Park. Others coming will be two men from Holland who will be helping with the environmental ordinance. Later an intern will be there who will be working with the Klein Bonaire reforestation project.

Washington Park Manager Fernando Simal hopes the day will soon come when the Park will have a close relationship with a university so that their scientists can come here on a regular basis to work on research programs that are mutually beneficial to them and Bonaire. (Build it and they will come?)

Simal explained that he and his staff (a chief ranger, three rangers and two maintenance workers) have brought the Park up to a certain level with all their projects (the museum, the signage, the new trails, etc.). "Now," he says, "we have a decent crew and it's time for us to do nature management. So companies will be hired to work on roads and fencing. And we'll make nature management our priority. That's what we are supposed to do."



Entrance to one of the rooms

Stop by yourself and see how Washington-Slagbaai Park just keeps on getting better and better: new trails, a comprehensive museum, an outdoor dining area, new toilets, a gift shop, even a whale skeleton. L.D.

Who's Who on The Bonaire Reporter

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DINING GUIDE

See advertisements in this issue

RESTAURANT	PRICE RANGE / WHEN OPEN	FEATURES
Bella Vista Restaurant Sea Side Restaurant at Buddy Dive Resort 717-5080, ext. 538	Moderate. Breakfast and Lunch Dinner during Theme nights only. Open every day	Magnificent Theme Nights: Saturday: Beach Grill; Monday: Caribbean Night; Friday: Manager's Rum Punch Party and All-You-Can-Eat B.B.Q
Bistro de Paris Kaya Gob. N. Debrot 46 (half-way between hotel row and town) 717-7070	Moderate Lunch and Dinner Closed Sunday	Real French Cooking in an informal setting Superb dishes prepared with care and love by a French chef Owner-operated Eat in or Take away
Cactus Blue Blvd. J. A. Abraham 16 (half-way between town and Divi Flamingo) 717-4564	Moderate Dinner Closed Sunday	Trend setting décor and menu Bonaire's newest hot-spot to eat and drink. Margaritas a specialty Owner-operated for top service
Calabas Restaurant & Chibi Chibi Restaurant and Bar At the Divi Flamingo Beach Resort. Waterfront 717-8285	Moderate-Expensive Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner Open 7 days	Get a view of the beach and turquoise sea while enjoying a breakfast buffet or à la carte lunch and dinner at the 'Chibi Chibi' restaurant & bar. Inspiring vistas and the highest standard of cuisine.
Croccantino Italian Restaurant Downtown at Kaya Grandi 48 717-5025	Moderate-Expensive Dinner Closed Monday	Bonaire's Most Romantic Restaurant where dining is a delight! Tuscan chef prepares exquisite dishes with authentic ingredients. Be served in a garden setting under floating umbrellas or in air-conditioned comfort. Take out too.
The Great Escape EEG Blvd #97—across from Belmar 717-7488	Moderate Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner Breakfast every day; Lunch, Dinner Tues-Sun.	Bar-Restaurant poolside—under the thatched roof. Cuban cuisine. New kitchen. New cook Happy hours 5 to 7 every day.
The Last Bite Bakery Home Delivery or Take Out 717-3293	Low-Moderate Orders taken 8 am-4 pm; Deliveries 6-7:30 pm, Closed Sunday	Enjoy a delicious dessert or savory baked meal in the comfort of your home or resort. This unique bakery offers gourmet class items -always from scratch- for take out or delivery only.
The Lost Penguin Across from MCB Bank in downtown Kralendijk Call 717-8003.	Low-Moderate Breakfast, Lunch, Early Dinner until 6 pm Closed Tuesdays & Wednesdays	Watch the bustle of downtown from this street side Caribbean-style bistro owned and run by a European educated Master Chef and his wife.
Pasa Bon Pizza On Kaya Gob. Debrot ½ mile north of town center. 780-1111	Low-Moderate Open from 5-11 pm Wednesday-Sunday	Bonaire's best. The Real Thing! Freshly prepared pizzas made with the finest ingredients. Salads, desserts. Eat in or take away. Nice bar too. Call ahead to eat-in or take out 790-1111

SHOPPING GUIDE

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Good prices on regulator repair, dive computer H.Q.</p> <p>Dive Friends Bonaire (Photo Tours Divers-Yellow Submarine) -low prices - on the seaside at Kralendijk, at Caribbean Club, Caribbean Court and the Hamlet Oasis. Join their cleanup dives and BBQ.</p> <p>WannaDive - They make diving fun while maintaining the highest professional standards. In town at City Café and at Eden Beach.</p> <p>FITNESS Bonfysio offers comprehensive fitness programs to suit your needs whether they be weight loss, sports or just keeping in shape. Convenient schedule.</p> <p>Fit For Life at the Plaza Resort Mall. Classes in Pilates, Aerobics, TaeBo and more. Professional trainers, fitness machines and classes for all levels.</p> <p>FURNITURE, ANTIQUES The Plantation Has lots of classy furniture and antiques at very competitive prices. Stop in to see great teak furniture and Indonesian crafts.</p>	<p>GARDEN SUPPLIES AND SERVICES Green Label has everything you need to start or maintain your garden. They can design, install and maintain it and offer plants, irrigation supplies and garden chemicals. Incredible selection of pots.</p> <p>GIFTS, SOUVENIRS AND LIQUOR The Bonaire Gift Shop has a wide selection of gifts, souvenirs, liquor, dive watches, digital cameras, things for the home, T-shirts all at low prices.</p> <p>HOTELS The Great Escape Under new management. Quiet and tranquil setting with pool and luxuriant garden in Belnem. Cyber Café, DVD rentals, restaurant and bar.</p> <p>METALWORK AND MACHINE SHOP b c b- Botterop Construction Bonaire N.V., offers outstanding fabrication of all metal products, including stainless. Complete machine shop too.</p> <p>Nature Exploration Outdoor Bonaire for individually guided kayaking, hiking, biking, caving, rapeling/abseilen and more reservations : 791-6272 or 717-4555 E-mail : hans@outdoorbonaire.com</p> <p>PHOTO FINISHING Paradise Photo in the Galleries Shopping Center offers fast, fine processing for prints, slides, items and services . Now-full digital services.</p> <p>REAL ESTATE / RENTAL AGENTS Harbourtown Real Estate is Bonaire's oldest real estate agent. They specialize in professional customer services and top notch properties.</p> <p>Re/Max Paradise Homes: Lots of Choices— International/US connections. 5% of profits donated to local community. List your house with them for sale.</p> <p>Sunbelt Realty offers full real estate, rental, and insurance services. If you want a home or to invest in Bonaire, stop in and see them.</p> <p>REPAIRS Bon Handyman is here if you need something fixed or built. Ultra reliable, honest and experienced. Electrical, plumbing, woodworking, etc. 717-2345</p> <p>RESORTS & ACTIVITIES Buddy Dive Resort offers diving, Adventure Fun tours including kayaking, mountain biking, cave snorkeling and exploration.</p>	<p>RETAIL Benetton, world famous designer clothes available now in Bonaire at prices less than those in US. For men, women and children.</p> <p>SECURITY Special Security Services will provide that extra measure of protection when you need it. Always reliable.</p> <p>SHIPPING Rocargo Freight Air and sea shipments in/out of Bonaire. Customs agents. Professional and efficient. FedEx agent.</p> <p>SILKSCREEN, EMBROIDERY CesMar—Local company offers top quality, fast service for monogramming, silk screening, embroidery.</p> <p>SUPERMARKETS Visit Warehouse Bonaire to shop in a large, spotless supermarket. You'll find American and European brand products. THE market for provisioning.</p> <p>WATER TAXI Get to Klein Bonaire by Ferry. Ride the <i>Kantika di Amor</i> or <i>Skiffy</i>. Hotel pickup.</p> <p>WINDSURFING The Bonaire Windsurfing Place can fulfill all your windsurfing dreams and more. They offer expert instruction, superb equipment on a fine beach. Lunch and drinks too. BBQ and windsurf videos Wednesday nights.</p> <p>WINES Antillean Wine Company. You've tried the rest; now try the best: best prices, highest quality wines from around the world, kept in a cooled warehouse. Free delivery.</p> <p>YOGA Yoga For You. Join certified instructors Desirée and Don for a workout that will refresh mind and body. Private lessons too.</p> <p>ATTENTION BUSINESSMEN/WOMEN: Put your ad in The Bonaire Reporter. Phone/Fax 717-8988, Cel 786-6518</p>
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On the Island Since...

1997

Monica Ordosgoitia

I first came here to visit my mother who's now been here for 17 years. At the time, 12 years ago, my son Dany was a baby; my relationship with his father had ended, and I stayed for a year. Then, back in Colombia I was always thinking about Bonaire, but I had a good job selling tickets for this big bus company, 'Transportes Rapido Ochoa,' and I'd been working there for 10 years. My mother, however, was pushing me to come back to Bonaire. She'd say, 'It's better for your future, for Daniel's education. In Colombia there's no future for anything.' So, I was always thinking, maybe yes, maybe no. And I was afraid because I only spoke Spanish. Then the bus company got in serious trouble because guerillas would set the buses on fire and people got scared and didn't want to travel by bus anymore. I lost my job. It was very difficult to find another one; I thought now it's time to go to Bonaire.

It was easy because I could stay for three months visiting my mother. She introduced me to several companies, then I got a job at Karel's. It was the only place that gave me the opportunity to get my permit. They believed in me; I didn't speak English, Papiamentu or Dutch – not one word! I went to work behind the bar and I started repeating what people would say. Americans would say, 'Hello, how are you!' I'd repeat it and I'd do the same in Dutch: 'Hallo, goedenavond, hoe gaat het!' It was funny! Now I speak English very well and a little bit of Dutch. I learned everything on the job. From Karel's I went to the Cappuchino Bar on the pier, then to Buddy Dive, later on to the Flamingo Airport cafeteria. But I got tired of all this bumping around and I went back to Karel's because that was my first job and they were my first family and I'll always appreciate and respect them for what they did for me.

Then this very big and beautiful private motor yacht came to Bonaire. I met the captain and the crew at the bar. The owner was Venezuelan and the crew was all Americans. The captain offered me a job on the ship, and I said, no way! I am no swimmer! I am scared of the ocean! But the crew told me it was a good opportunity and a good offer. 'Think about it,' they said. I had only two days to say yes or no. I started worrying a lot about Dany; he was only nine and we'd always been together. I told him, 'I can get a job on a yacht, what should I do?' He said, 'It's your decision. If you want to go... do it!' So, I answered, 'I think it's good for our future; I'll take the job.' 'When are you leaving?' Dany asked, and I said,

tomorrow in the morning.' 'What!!! And where am I going to stay now?' he asked, and I answered, 'You stay with grandma and I'll go and try it, but if I don't like it, I'll come back soon.'

So I went and left him. It was a very difficult moment in my life and... my first sailing experience. I boarded the ship at Harbour Village and we left for Venezuela; 18 straight hours at sea and I got sick as a dog! We spent several months in the Caribbean, then we went to Fort Lauderdale where we stayed for a year. I will always remember it as one of the best times of my life and whenever I have the opportunity, I'll do it again!

After two months I could visit Dany, and he said, 'If you're not coming back to me, I'll go back to Colombia.' So I took him to his father in Barranquilla; that was the first time he'd lived with his dad.

"...guerillas would set the buses on fire and people got scared and didn't want to travel by bus anymore. I lost my job. It was very difficult to find another one; I thought now it's time to go to Bonaire."

We talked a lot on the phone and I thought about him all the time and missed him terribly. One day he started crying on the phone: 'I miss you so much, I want my mother.' It made me feel very bad. I had to make a decision: my son or my job. It wasn't easy because I had a good salary and it was a good opportunity, but I said 'Sorry' to the captain and left for Colombia. I picked up my son and we came back to Bonaire. Then I had a real problem with Immigration, but I explained my situation, that I really hadn't been living in a country anymore as I'd stayed on the boat. Well, in the end I got my permit. Again I started working for Karel's.

Then, one day as I was working, I see this man who impresses me immediately. It was a mutual attraction and he was going to be my beautiful and perfect husband. I'd never thought I'd marry someone from a different culture. He's a serious person, intelligent, quiet; he always looked like a 'Sir.' I'd met many people at the bar and many had spoken nicely to me, but only he came into my heart.

In the beginning the relationship was a



Monica Ordosgoitia

bit rocky and he went back to Holland three times, but after the third time he asked me to marry him. It was true and honest love. We got married on Bonaire. He didn't like me to work at night anymore, and that's logical, so I started working for Cappuchino's in the daytime. I went to Colombia with him and showed him my place, my family, my father. He didn't like it very much; Barranquilla is totally different; it's a very busy and big city with four million people. And the people from Barranquilla are different too; they work hard all week, but from Friday night till Sunday night they like to drink and dance and party! He didn't like to party, but he liked my father although they couldn't communicate because Rob doesn't speak Spanish.

I love my husband so much and I believed when I married it was going to be for the rest of my life. I respected him and I always took very good care of him and the marriage. For four years we did everything together, but... life has changed... in one second life changes, then you have to be strong and try to understand what happened. I'd have a lot of pain if this relationship ends, but on the other hand, I always believe that everything happens for a reason. Still, my idea of a good marriage is that you need to love and respect each other in the good and in the bad moments and that you always need to try and remember the good things you did for each other. When it's real honest love you have to push your energy and try what's possible. I still believe in myself; I am not going to change because I'm having a difficult time."

Monica Ordosgoitia is a great girl; she's funny and pretty and smart and

melancholic, but a very strong personality. "By telling my story I want to be an example for other women. When you open your heart to your man then it's possible to forget about the differences, even when he doesn't speak your language. It's difficult in Bonaire to believe in people because they come and go and you really don't know anything about their family or their past. You need to trust and look them in the eye and when you honestly believe 'this is my man' then everything is possible. This is the only reason I tried married life.

Now I'm working at City Café; it's a good job and I'm happy. People of the tsunami have real serious problems and the children in Iraq have real serious problems, but one problem in your life is only one problem and you need to be strong and go for the solution; don't get scared! My son is the most precious person in my life and he gives me the power to always look at the future, never at the past. And when you fall you get up and you learn not to be afraid of anything.

This is my home. When I lived on the boat I saw many places, but no place like Bonaire. Sometimes you hear Latin people say, 'One day I'll go back to my country,' but for me Bonaire is my country. My son is in 2nd VWO high school and he speaks four languages fluently. He's safe and he gets a good education and for me... I will stay open and friendly and wait for my good love." story and photo by Greta Kooistra



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bye for now, T.C.



Last Friday popular Bonaire F & B personality, "TC" Panecaldo, said good-bye, at least for a time, to her friends on Bonaire at the Manager's Cocktail Party at Buddy Dive. She will be joining her friend, Rocky, at left, at his fishing resort in Alaska. Moogie, at right, put it all to music.

Readers are invited to send their photos of their anniversaries, engagements or weddings to The Reporter. The photo and text will be printed free of charge.

Picture Yourself In The Reporter Bagdad, Iraq

Sergeant First Class Jim O'Ferrell of Richmond, Virginia, now serving in the US Army, writes, "Since you like to see a reader enjoying a copy of *The Reporter* in unusual locations, I thought I'd send you a picture of me with my copy in Baghdad, Iraq.

I didn't get to come to Buddy Dive this year since I'm rather busy over here, but my family did have a chance to chill on the island. I've dived Bonaire before with them so they knew I'd appreciate this February (only two



WIN GREAT PRIZES! Take a copy of *The Bonaire Reporter* with you on your next trip or when you return to your home. Then take a photo of yourself with the newspaper in hand. **THE BEST PHOTOS OF THE YEAR WILL WIN THE PRIZES.** Mail photos to Bonaire Reporter, Kaya Gob. Debrot 200-6, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles (AN). E-mail to: picture@bonairereporter.com. (All 2006 photos are eligible.)



BONAIRE SKY PARK*

*to find it, just look up

WHY DOES THE SUN RISE AND SET OVER THE MIDDLE OF SOME ROADS ON THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING?

Greetings, Skyparkers. Spring officially begins next **Monday, March 20th**. And as most of you readers know, every year on the first day of spring the **Sun** rises and set exactly over the middle of all roads on Bonaire running exactly due east and due west. But in case you're one of those who doesn't know why, let me elucidate.

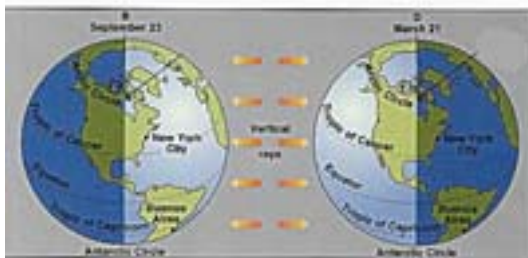
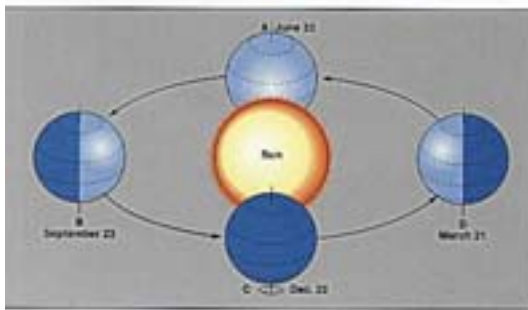
The first moment of spring is really an astronomical moment in time, the precise moment our Sun lies smack dab on the **Celestial Equator**. That moment this year is 1:26 pm Sky Park Time, on Monday, March 20th.

But what, you may ask, is the Celestial Equator? And what does it have to do with the middle of the road? Well for simplicity's sake let's simply imagine that we can take our **Earth's** equator and extend it way out into space so that it draws an imaginary line completely around the night sky, thus dividing the heavens into two halves, which we call the **northern celestial hemisphere** and the **southern celestial hemisphere**.

Now if we could dim our Sun way down like a light bulb on a dimmer and keep track of its position against the background of stars day after day all year long we would notice that on the first day of spring the Sun is smack dab on the celestial equator. Then if we kept track of it day after day we would notice that it would move a little bit farther north of the equator each day until on the first day of summer it would reach its highest point north of or above the Celestial Equator. Then it would slowly move a little bit farther south each day until on the first day of autumn it would once again be smack dab on the Celestial Equator. Thereafter, it would continue to travel south of the equator until it would reach its southernmost point on the first day of winter. And then it would seemingly reverse and start to travel north again until once again on the first day of spring it would be smack dab on the Celestial Equator.

Simply try to remember that each year the Sun is at its northernmost point on the first day of summer and at its southernmost point on the first day of winter. And that on the first day of spring and fall it is always smack dab on the Celestial Equator. But how does all of this look from Earth?

Well, the Sun, as seen from Earth on the first day of summer, rises and sets at its most northern points on the horizon, and on the first day of winter it rises and sets at its most southern points on the horizon. But on the first day of spring and fall when the Sun is on the Celestial Equator it always appears to rise exactly due east and set due west. So if you're driving to and from work at sunrise and sunset on a due east/west highway the Sun will rise exactly due east over the middle of the road and set exactly due west over the middle. And if it doesn't then your due east /west highway is not running true east and west. It's a perfect way to check directions. It's that simple. So put your sun visors down next Monday! *Jack Horheimer*



THE STARS HAVE IT

For the week: **March 12 to 18, 2006**

By Astrologer *Michael Thiessen*

ARIES (Mar. 21- April 20) Romance can develop; however, it will most probably be short-lived. People you live with will not be terribly happy with you regardless of what you do this week. You will be relentless when it comes to getting yourself back into shape. Luck is with you, regardless of the financial venture. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

TAURUS (Apr. 21- May 21) Travel will be on your mind; however, be careful and proceed with caution as minor accidents will cause delays. Get involved in volunteer work that will bring you satisfaction, not an empty wallet. Lovers will be less than accommodating, and decisions regarding personal direction a necessity. Take a look at the possibilities of starting a small part time business with friends or relatives. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21) Try to make your lover understand that you need to do things with your friends. Disappointments are likely if your mate embarrasses you in front of friends. You will be able to pick up on future trends if you keep your eyes peeled for unique ideas. Too many opportunities and too many changes going on. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) Problems with large corporations or institutions are apparent. You can expect opposition from family as well as colleagues. Think twice before you pursue an unrealistic endeavor. Family members may want you at home, when your heart is telling you to spend time with someone you recently met. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

LEO (July 23-Aug 22) You will have a childlike approach this week, big hearted and full of spunk. Love could develop with someone of a different cultural background. You'll be able to break bad habits if you put your mind to it. Put something away in case of an emergency. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23) Be careful; you may say something you'll regret later. You will be extremely sentimental, and if pushed by others you may hold a lasting grudge. Try to calm down and listen to your partner's complaints. Compromise may be necessary. Don't forget to read the fine print. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23) Don't let your emotional upset interfere with your professional objectives. Stop telling others about your problems. New methods and innovative technology will make your job far easier than you anticipated. You can become obsessed with detail and must be sure to divide your time appropriately. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22) You will easily blow situations out of proportion. Be cautious when dealing with coworkers. Situations you can't change should be forgotten for the present. Depression may result if you don't get to do things your own way. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 -Dec. 21) Don't evade issues or twist the truth around. You need a change of pace. Trips will be more than adventurous. Accommodate others but not before you do your own thing. Do the proper safety checks before you go out. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22.- Jan. 20) Depression may result if you don't get to do things your own way. You'll feel much better when your slate is clean again. You can enjoy doing things that include children. You may find your nights sleepless due to bad dreams. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19) Your diplomacy will be of utmost importance this week. Try to satisfy both of your needs. Expect to have more people on your domestic scene. The personal problems you may be having are interfering with your productivity. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20) Be careful not to reveal private information. Escapist tendencies may lead to overindulgence. You may experience setbacks due to additional responsibilities with loved ones. Unpredictable events will disrupt your routine. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

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