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BONAIRE

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The REPORTER

Helping Bonaire Grow Responsibly

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Since 1994

Governor Welcomes Sanikolas

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- ... and much more

Extra photo

Flotsam and Jetsam

Two policemen were suspended from the force last week awaiting dismissal and an employee reprimanded for their behavior in investigating the disappearance of Marlies van der Kouwe on 20-21 of September 2008. They were accused of dereliction of duty that resulted in a delay of 36 hours in the investigation. The policemen are appealing their dismissal. The investigation of the behavior was led by a team from West Brabant, The Netherlands.

The remains of Ms. Van der Kouwe were discovered a month later. A suspect is in custody awaiting trial.

► While the BES islands are far along the road towards their new place in the Dutch kingdom, **the remaining two Antillean islands have just taken an important first step.** The Central Government, Curaçao and St. Maarten have signed a list of decisions about the phased dismantling of the Netherlands Antilles Central Government and the transfer of people and responsibilities to the new "countries of Curaçao and St. Maarten." The transfer of tasks must be implemented by the State Ordinance and can start in April 2009. Curaçao will take over the Central Government's jobs in three phases: July/August, September and 31 December 2009.

► **The Antillean High court again annulled the travel ban for convicted drug traffickers yesterday.** Current Antillean legislation does not permit such a travel ban; it's inadmissible to punish a crime by revocation of a passport, according to a treaty provision of the European Convention on Human Rights. Passport revocation was a common sentence for small time drug smugglers in Bonaire and Curaçao courts because of a shortage of jail cells. Legislation to allow such a sentence has been pending for some time but never passed.

► **Fuel prices have been lowered in Bonaire effective last Saturday.** The price of regular gas dropped by NAf 0,25; the other products by lower amounts. Prices in the US dropped about 50% since their peak a few months ago and now are less than \$2 a gallon. The new prices are slightly above the prices charged in Curaçao and are in NAf:

Regular gasoline 92 octane
2,30 per liter
High test gasoline 95 octane
2,33 per liter
Kerosene

1,20 per liter
Diesel **1,70 per liter**
LPG 100 lbs. Domestic use
72,10 per cylinder
LPG 20 lbs. Domestic use
16,00 per cylinder



► **The rain has done a number on our roads, making some places nearly impassible.** But DROB has its trucks out working to repair as fast as they can. Here's a truck on Kaya Nikiboko North pouring concrete and asphalt into one of the pot holes. According to Pedro DeJong of DROB to help complete the project they've hired extra people and companies: DECO, BWN and MNO-Vervat.

► **Congratulations, DROB Public Works Department for finishing up the culvert projects on the Rincon Road** near Mentor. No more detours through the quiet neighborhoods of Antriol and North Salina. We're sure the inhabitants of that neighborhood are relieved as well.

► **The Atlantic hurricane season, which began June 1 and ended last Sunday, delivered a total of 16 named storms,** including six consecutive tropical cyclones — Dolly, Edouard, Fay, Gustav, Hanna and Ike — to the US mainland. Eight were hurricanes, five of which were major storms of Category 3 strength or more, the National Hurricane Center says. (Category 3 storms carry winds of 111 to 130 mph, or 178 to 209 kilometers per hour.)

The tally mirrors the Center's original prediction of 16 named tempests. Still, this year was more active than usual. A typical season has 11 named storms, six hurricanes and two major hurricanes, according to the weather watchers.

► **Dutch investors are showing an increased interest in the BES islands (Bonaire,**



► **Effective immediately Bonaire will charge \$0.75 head tax to cruise ship passengers.** On October 1, 2009, the start of next year's cruise ship season the tax will jump to \$2 a head. An official letter to the President of the FCCA (Florida and Caribbean Cruise-ship Association) by the Bonaire Government said the move was forced by economics. The cruiseship passenger tax is a first for Bonaire which charges international air travelers \$35.88 (NAf 63.50) departure tax and hotel guests a room tax. The average Caribbean and Latin American cruiseship head tax is \$6 per person.

The proceeds of the tax will go towards the following, for example:

- Repair and improve the pier infrastructure (passenger amenities, ISPS safety and security, etc.)
- Repair and extend the North pier to be able to dock a mega class ship
- Add an extra mooring dolphin to accommodate mega class ships
- Maintenance of the Bonaire National Marine Park
- Product development designed to give the cruise visitor a unique experience while on Bonaire
- Promotion of the destination to cruise ship passengers.



What You'll Pay To Send that Bag

Here's a breakdown of current fees for holiday travelers:

Airline	First bag	Second bag	Third bag	51-70 lbs	Oversized
American	\$15	\$25	\$100	\$50	\$150
Including American Eagle					
Delta	\$15	50	125	90	175
Continental	15	25	100	50	100

► **All three US flag airlines that serve Bonaire with non-stop service have begun to charge Coach Passengers for checked luggage.** Carry-on's are still free.

St. Eustatius and Saba). In total some 200 appointments have been made with investors, said InterExpo 2008 Director Peter Oerlemans.

► **Air France-KLM Group said Thursday its profit plunged in the second quarter** as higher oil prices and financial charges weighed on the airlines'

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Greenery Opens With Fanfare

On Tuesday November 4th a group of 14 Dutch students and four teachers arrived on Bonaire as part of the "Thrill Project," an organization in Holland which sets up projects with the goal of having HBO, MBO and VMBO higher level education students work together. "Thrill" took care of the main portion of the sponsoring.

Bram Vermeer, one of the Dutch instructors who organized, managed and participated in the project, said, "The greenery project was set up in connection with Bonaire's Stichting Project. It has been a big project and I've been in it from the beginning. It has been a great experience and I've learned a lot.

On Bonaire you can't take anything for granted. Money is an issue and when it comes to supplies and materials it's a completely different story compared to Holland. All the drawings, plans and material lists were made in Holland in advance, but when we arrived on Bonaire it became immediately clear that we had to adjust everything to



Stichting Project's Mick Schmit backed by his staff addresses the group.

the local situation.

We were 18 people- students and instructors from three different schools in Holland - Windensheim College in Zwolle (HBO education), Landstede Harderwijk (MBO education) and Arcus College in Lelystad, (VMBO education). Some of the students had never been away from home so long, others had never been on a plane or abroad and we all had to live and work together for a period of three weeks - it was intense. The cooperation has been excellent. Also thanks to the guidance and help of Stichting Project. It has been a very

good experience and exchange in many ways and a great experience for all of us.

We built a professional greenhouse at the Stichting Project location and we remodeled the garden of Stichting Project's teaching restaurant, 'De Bonaireaan.' I hope we accomplished something that the youngsters of Stichting Project will benefit from, and I really hope it will give the kids new impetus and ideas which they can use later on in their professional lives. Besides all the work we also got the opportunity (thanks to local sponsors) to see and ex-



Education Commissioner Silberie and students open the Greenery

perience the island in many different ways through various activities which we all enjoyed tremendously."

The official opening of the greenery took place on the 24th of November in the presence of Deputies Dammers and Silberie, local supporters, sponsors and friends of Stichting Project and all the Dutch and Bonairean children and their instructors. In his speech Mick Schmit, Manager of Stichting Project, thanked the Dutch group for their excellent work and perseverance, and two

youngsters of the youth board of Stichting Project thanked the Dutch children in short speeches.

After the ribbon was cut by Deputy Silberie along with a Bonairean and a Dutch student, the party started. The entire atmosphere was one of unity, mutual understanding and, not in the least, happiness and gratefulness for the interaction and the goals that were achieved.

■ Story & photos by Greta Kooistra

Invitation- It's for REAL!!



De opening van ons nieuwe kantoor en ons 5 jarig bestaan zal worden gevierd op **vrijdag 12 december van 6 tot 8 uur**. Kom en geniet samen met ons van een hapje, drankje en muziek!!

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On The Island Since... October 28, 2008

Mechtild Thodé

"I was born in the east of Holland, in a place called Goor. I have two sisters and I am the youngest. My mom was a homemaker and my dad comes from a textile family. I was raised Catholic – but I don't think I'm still a Catholic. In Aruba we used to go to an ecumenical service. Because of my husband we also got interested in Buddhism- in meditation, the way you see life - and especially to see people as part of the creation, not the center. We're just another link in the chain and if one link breaks, all creatures on this earth will have a problem. There is a difference though, because we humans have manipulated nature; that's why our responsibility is so great. We find Jesus, as a person, the way he thinks, very Buddhist like.

Our children were christened at home; the thought behind it was to welcome them into the community but not to connect them to a particular church. Every church has many rules and we find that faith cannot be captured in rules, but, on the other hand, I do understand that people go to church to be together

and to support each other through faith. We do take our children to church – to give them the feeling I experienced in my childhood and to show them the way, to give them the opportunity to make a choice.

Well, when I was 18 I went to the art academy in Utrecht, a city in the middle of Holland. I wanted to become an illustrator. I still do, and if I'd had more guts at the time I'd have taken the theatre side as I love to sing. But then I was too young; I wasn't ready for it. At that age there are so many things to cope with. That's why I really understand when young people from here who have to go abroad to complete their studies have to deal with the culture shock, the language and the climate. They are alone and at the same time they have to prove themselves and achieve their goals.

At the art academy they did see some potential in me and when I failed my first year I was allowed to do it over again, but I said 'No, no, I'm going to do something entirely different!' I went to the Catholic teacher's



college. I remember thinking, "Here at least I can talk about my grandparents!"

When you are a teacher it all comes together: theatre, creativity, singing and dancing. A classroom is like a miniature society; you're trying to teach the children how to deal with each other and with the environment they're living in.

In the fourth year of my studies I went as a trainee to Aruba and there I met Glenn, my husband." She laughs: "It went fast! I was 22 and he was 25. He was a great dancer and windsurfer, always at the beach and into sports and lots of fun. I could talk about anything with him. After my trainee period I went back to Holland and applied for

a job with the Catholic school board in Aruba and it took only a couple of days, then I was accepted. It was 1991. During my first year I learned Papiamentu. Later on that year Glenn told me, 'You're talking in your sleep!' But what am I saying? I asked And he answered, 'Bai sinta!' (Sit down!). I loved my

(Continued on page 5)

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On The Island Since
(Continued from page 4)

job, I was in love and I had wings! My Aruban colleagues supported me tremendously and very solid friendships came out of it. That's why Aruba is so dear to me."

Mechtild Thodé is a very special lady, a sparkling personality, honest, pure and joyful and so easy to talk to. She has the extraordinary gift - and that's her nature - of seeing things in the right perspective, without any prejudice, just completely open minded.

I was a teacher for five years and then I went into guiding children with a visual handicap at the regular schools. I did it for two years, then we left for Holland with our baby girl of two weeks, Evita, born in 1998. Glenn was going to do promotion research in Groningen. He did his education on Aruba where he became a jurist. Then there was a project of two professors from Groningen who were teaching on Aruba and who wanted to create a local staff of graduate judicial instructors on Aruba; that's why we went. I was very happy to be close to my family again. In 2000 our second daughter, Gabriela, was born in Groningen.

After four years we went back

to Aruba and – she smiles – I must say that had I had a choice then I would have stayed in Holland. I'd noticed that I was very Dutch... I loved to ride my bicycle through wind and rain and all weather and Holland also has a lot to offer when it comes to all aspects of creativity, and of course my family was very important to me. Luckily we also have our family on Aruba: Glenn's father and his mother and his three sisters. I remember telling Glenn, 'If we didn't have them there, I would have never

“When Glenn was asked to become the Governor of Bonaire I immediately said ‘yes,’ without thinking of myself. I know he has always loved Bonaire.”

gone back to Aruba.’

In 2002 Glenn started working at the University of Aruba as a professor and as the dean of the judicial faculty, and I picked up my job again. What I wanted badly, for myself and for others, was to work part time, but it wasn't possible. I worked for five years and then I stopped. I wanted to do a good job, at work as well as at home, but I couldn't do both.

When Glenn was asked to become the governor of Bonaire I immediately said 'yes,' without

thinking of myself. I know he has always loved Bonaire. He has such good memories of his childhood and he wanted the same for his children. I have a lot of faith in his capacities. He is someone who doesn't think of his own interests at all. He is such a good guy. He accepted the position and he came here to guide the process of the constitutional changes, especially in the interests of the Bonairean people. He told me, 'I will go to the cemetery where my grandparents are and I will tell them: I'll try to

do good for your island...' She smiles, her eyes are very bright: Well, how can you stop someone...

I also see how important it is. He's a jurist and he's especially interested in constitutional law and there's something else. A year ago he attended a meeting in Holland where they were discussing the constitutional changes and he got very worried because, according to him, very little was being discussed about the interests of the Bonaireans.

So, now we're here and it went

fast. The children are going to Papa Cornes School because it's very important to us that our children go to school with the local children, as ours are also locals. Good education should be available for every child, only then can you create a healthy society. To me it's extremely important that every child gets an equal chance when it comes to education because we all have to live together, and what I want for my children – to grow up to be happy and independent members of our society – I also want for every other child.

I don't know yet what I'm going to do on Bonaire. I want to sing in a choir and Lena Domacassé (the ex-governors' wife) introduced me at Kas di Arte and – yes – I want to be on the board, but my priorities lie with the children of Bonaire. I was just asked to fill in, temporarily, at Papa Cornes School and I think that's great because I love my profession and at the same time I can find out more about "Foundation Education" – which we didn't have in Aruba.

As the wife of the governor and as a Dutch woman I hope to create a bridge between the people who were born on Bonaire and the people who were born in Holland because in the end we all belong to the Kingdom of the Netherlands. I really want to help, but I am very careful.

That's who I am. I'm sure that because of my position I can make a difference in this community, especially when it comes to social causes.

After having lived for 17 years on Aruba I've learned to see the value of enjoying every day and every moment of life. Of course it is very important to take things seriously – but to laugh like the Antilleans taught me to laugh – that's at least as important!" ■

Story & photo by
Greta Kooistra




Thanks to Louise Rood who wrote the many Profiles of Bonairean residents who were making a difference on the island. Louise will be devoting her energy to other projects and doing more traveling and will not be able to continue her every-issue series. However, she promises to return with special feature articles.

In this issue we welcome the return of Greta Kooistra who is resuming her *On The Island Since...* series first begun in 1991 on these pages.

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Flotsam & Jetsam (Continued from page 2)
 earnings. The parent company of the French and Dutch airlines reported a net profit of 28 million euros for the July-September period, down 96% cent from 736 million euros a year earlier when earnings were boosted by asset sales.

► **Obese people have the right to two seats for the price of one on flights within Canada**, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled on Thursday. The high court agreed that people who are "functionally disabled by obesity" deserve to have two seats for one fare. The airlines had lost an appeal at the Federal Court. The court's decision not to hear a new appeal means the one-person-one-fare policy stands.

► **The Central Bank of the Netherlands Antilles has lowered its official interest rate on loans** by .75% from 2.50% to 1.75%. The decrease was infused by the recent lowering of the US Federal Reserve's Federal Funds Rate, the decrease of the tariffs on the foreign money market and its effect on the domestic money market.

► **The Dutch national debt is at its highest level** due to the rescue packages the government has given to the financial sector to help it cope with the worldwide credit crisis.

The national debt has increased by 9% to 283 billion euros in the last two months. In September when the government presented its budget for next year, the cabinet believed the national debt would be at its lowest level since records were kept.



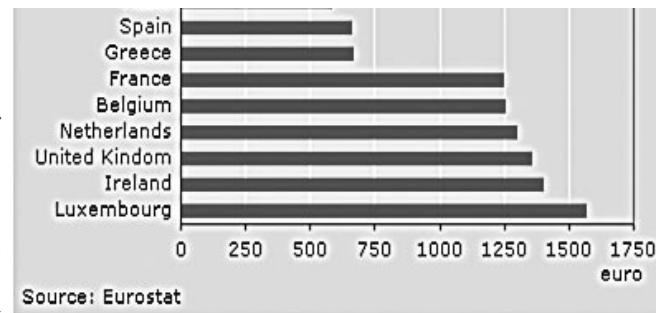
Photo Herman van Leeuwen

► **Dos and Bertie Winkel presented their new book, "Colors of Bonaire,"** at Addo's Book store last Sunday. During the coming three weeks they will be at Buddy Dive every Friday evening to sign their books.

► A new fitness center is opening next week on December 8th. The **Health and Fitness Center Bonaire** will feature fitness group exercise. It's equipped with Technogym workout machines. Find it at Kaya Grandi 38 (enter on Kaya L.D. Gerharts).

► The **RE/MAX Paradise Homes' long awaited opening of its brand new office building and celebration of its fifth anniversary will be on Friday, December 12 at the new Kaya Grandi office.** The celebration had to be postponed due to the torrential rains that dampened all of Bonaire. Join them to celebrate with drinks, snacks and music on the 12th. See their invitation on page 3.

► **The minimum wage in Bonaire is rising to NAf 7, 21 (\$4.07)** per hour as calculated for a 40-hour week, NAf 1.248,77 per month). You can compare that to the US Federal minimum wage of \$6.55 going up to \$7.25 in July 2009 and Holland's €7, 82 per hour (\$9.97) minimum wage, which is more than double that of Bonaire. The Dutch minimum wage, which is related to the age of the worker, is considered the fourth highest in Europe.



► **There is a new Internet connection option on the island** that works almost everywhere, even on your boat or in your car. **MIO Internet, "Inet,"** is the fastest wireless broadband available. Load the software. Plug the mouse-sized device into a USB port and you're done. No wires or router needed. Right now it's operational from the MIO towers at Flamingo TV and Seroe Largo



but will be expanded to the other two MIO towers as well. Cost is about NAf 125/month. See the MIO ad at the bottom of this page for more info.

► **Eveline Mind Body and Spirit is opening on Kaya Korona**— see her ad on page 2. The shop on Kaya Korona has many items to satisfy your spiritual side.

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BONAIREAN VOICES

RELIGION IN SCHOOL PART I

We have heard there are three things that people don't like to talk about: their **Age, Politics and Religion**. But the truth about the last item, religion, is that through the centuries religion has governed peoples' lives, and still when babies are born there's always some kind of religion ruling their lives. If you ask someone what their religion is you might get all different kinds of answers. Some may say... my money is my religion; others will say I'm Catholic, or Adventist, or Evangelist or even Buddhist, and we can continue to mention a lot more.

Religion is often described as a way of life or a belief system about the ultimate power. But when you see the photos of the two buildings in this article which one you will choose? Of course this is your choice and we must respect it. This is all that matters: **Respect** for all the people surrounding us no matter what religion they practice. In my last article the director of the SGB high school, Mr. Serapio Pop, talked about going back to the basics - teaching our school kids the values and discipline of being part of a community. And teachers too need to respect schoolchildren's opinions. So I decided to see how this is done in the basic or elementary schools.

I interviewed Mrs. Nilva Wout (49), director of the RK (*Rooms Katoliek Schoolbestuur*) office for the Catholic elementary schools (Kristo Bon Wardador, San Bernardo, Papa Cornes and Colegio Luis Beltran). The SGB (high school) and public schools like Watapana and Reina Beatrix have their own school boards.

Nilva Wout said, "We have religion classes every day for 20 to 30 minutes for all levels, and of course these classes are

given in the Catholic tradition. We have catechists and/or teachers giving these lessons. There are a lot of children who are not Catholic attending the Catholic elementary schools because their parents find that we give more discipline. This discipline is based more on qualified rules and values that help the child become an independent functional citizen who gives a positive contribution to our community. A lot of children get some kind of religious teaching at home, but some don't get anything. And these are the children who, when they get into SGB and confront peer pressure, having to make a decision for the best or the worst, often can't make the best decision and end up going the wrong way. All schools need to have an open mind to

guide children in a good direction. Our Catholic schools have reflection days for the sixth graders to prepare them for high school's challenges. There's a 'Youth Explosion,' a group of young people organizing spiritual activities where most of the SGB kids may participate. There are a

lot of children interested in religion but not many teachers to feed their needs. The big gap between the elementary schools and SGB exists in the continuity of religious teachings. Schools need to take the initiative to do their part in this matter. Parents also have the right to demand that



St. Bernardus Roman Catholic Church



Baranka Church of the Restoration

religion be taught in schools. In our Catholic elementary schools we teach every child to have **respect** for all children even those who are not Catholic. We can see that this is getting a plus point for our children. They like to contribute to the school's rules, values and norms. And that's why continuity is very important. All schools must practice the same standards."

In my next articles we will see how other schools are dealing with this matter. ■



Siomara E. Albertus

Send your comments to *The Bonaire Reporter*, P.O. Box 407, Bonaire, or email reporter@bonairenews.com.

DO YOU SUDOKU?

	6			4	1		2
	7		5			6	3
4			2	8			
	4	8					1
			6	5	8		
	9					8	2
				7	5		1
	5	9			2		4
1		6	9				7

To solve the puzzle, enter the numbers 1 through 9 to the partially filled in puzzle without repeating a number in any row, column or 3 x 3 region. **Answer on page 9.** Supplied by *Molly Bartikoski-Kearney*

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Island View

TRAVELING

Vacation is nearing and many are planning their temporary escape from Bonaire, and many are planning their own temporary escape to Bonaire. These days you can sit for hours behind the computer and plan your whole trip on the Internet. You can watch pictures beforehand so you know exactly what to expect. While doing that you can enjoy your marvelous plans with great anticipation. And then the day arrives when you have to go to the airport and start your journey.

I used to love the idea of getting on a plane and taking off to new adventures. I still love the arriving part, but it is the part in between taking off and arriving that horrifies me now. Ever since they started to change the security rules I hate traveling by plane. I just put on my "stupid face," try not to think too much about it and just grin and bear it.

Certain rules will never make sense to me. For example: you cannot take a bottle of water with you because one person of all the millions of travelers decided to become very creative with a bottle. Or this one: you have to take off your shoes for a security check because one person tried to blow up a plane with a shoe. If you try to take

your nail clipper with you, you will lose it. But you can take a pen, a walking stick or shoe laces with you on a plane, all perfectly good tools to hurt somebody if you wanted to. When are they going to reverse those rules, can anybody tell me? Oh, they were not temporary measures? Of course these are small nuisances in the whole scheme of things.

What annoys me the most is the fact that as soon as you pay for your ticket, you become not only a traveler but also a suspect. As you wait in a long line to have your luggage X-rayed and your papers checked, you are viewed suspiciously, as if you committed some crime.. when your only offense is wanting to leave an island for some good times. That notion is real pain in the neck.

It is very humiliating to be pulled out of a queue to have your backpack checked for explosives. Or, when you handed over your passport, you were given a complete body check just because your nationality says "Dutch." Here you are, a normal citizen living a normal life, and then suddenly you have to spread your arms and legs and a complete stranger is touching you. That is really something to look forward to as you plan for that much-

needed vacation. And it is always very important to never ever make fun of the whole situation. Then you are in danger of missing your flight.

Of course there is the argument of needing these protocols for our protection. It may be so. But is the emphasis on nail clippers and bottles of water really going to help? The time for all these security checks is still increasing. Not so long ago you had to be through customs one hour before take-off, now it is almost two. There is a limit, I hope. What will happen if somebody decides to make a weapon out of his shirt or pants? Will they have to be taken off as well as the shoes? That would make traveling certainly very interesting.

In all the aggravations of traveling by plane there is something to look forward to. There are of course your adventures abroad. And when you come back to Bonaire you do not have to stand in line when you return from your vacation, because you can stand



at the "ingezetenen." Even after the indignities of flying, being able to enter via the short "residents" queue always still brings a little smile to my face, even though I too will have to wait for my baggage to appear on the belt, just like all the others. There is a hint of malicious delight looking at a long queue which you can skip, I know. But after being asked whether I had fruit, nail clippers, explosives, water, money, a criminal record as carry-on, and after that being touched by hands with latex gloves, that delight at the end of my trip is very sweet. ■ Mary Ann Koops



Koops teaches Biology at the SGB High School. Her insightful commentary appears regularly in The Reporter.

Pets of The Week

Here's a rare opportunity for someone who wants a very healthy half purebred Labrador pup. Right now at the Bonaire Animal Shelter there are five full-of-fun puppies who were brought in by someone who attests to the fact that the mom was a pure bred Lab who had a rendezvous with an adventurous street dog (*kacho di kaya*). The result was five adorable puppies, all of whom are real friendly and nice. They're about nine weeks old, very social as they've been living with other dogs and cats and playing with the staff and volunteers of the Shelter. As are all the other adoptees these pups have been examined by the vet, had their shots, worming and tests and will be sterilized when they're old enough. All this for the dog adoption fee of NAf 105. Stop by and meet them at the Shelter on the Lagoen Road, open Monday through Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm and 3 to 5 pm. Tel. 717-4989.



It's Parvo season again so make sure your dogs, especially puppies, have been inoculated. This is a killer disease so keep an eye on your young dogs. Symptoms include throwing up, bloody diarrhea and lack of energy. It's very contagious so keep your puppies and dogs safe from other dogs.

Christmas is coming and a perfect gift that can make everyone happy is a Bonaire Animal Shelter T-shirt. They're NAf 12 for kids. Tank tops are NAf 15 and Tees are NAf 22. There's a fine selection at the Shelter itself, at Carib Inn and on cruise ship days (see Happenings

section) they're sold at the Animal Shelter stand at the crafts market at Wilhelmina Park.

According to the staff at the Shelter, gift giving should not include animals – as the gift. People need to pick out their own pets and although the thought might be nice it's not fair to the pet or the person who receives it. Choosing a pet is a serious and responsible matter and the owner must be ready and able to take on the training and care of a new dog or cat. There have been cases at the Shelter where a pet was given to someone who couldn't do that and the pet had to be returned; stress for all, especially the pet. ■ L.D.



Find these hand painted signs by Germaine Nijdam for sale at the Shelter's gift shop

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Almost Holland

Closing in on becoming a Dutch "town"

The Dutch Government and the BES islands of Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius completed months of political consultations in The Hague in mid-November and came up with an action plan will be executed in 2009 and 2010:



- Improve the quality in education. This includes school books and other educational material, school buses and tackling of urgent problems in the schools and study financing for students.
- The BES islands will soon be able to count on 24-hour, 7-day availability of emergency transport for the sick.
- A care facility will be established in 2009 to finance the implementation of a health care insurance which will be taken over gradually from the current health care providers such as the Social Insurance Bank, SVB.
- A center for youth and family will be established on the three islands to facilitate the implementation of the policy in this area. Dutch Minister of Youth and Family Affairs, André Rouvoet, announced on November 20 that he is making 6 million euros available for this.
- The principle of social benefits (*onderstand*) will be anchored in a law with the point of departure that the level is acceptable in the Netherlands.
- Mental health care, care for addicted persons and care for physically challenged persons will receive special attention because of the backlog in that area.
- A new foster home for youngsters will be built on Bonaire to replace the current one.
- A team of social workers will be formed in 2009/2010 to assist youngsters on the three islands.
- The Netherlands will continue to deploy Royal Dutch *Marechaussee* (Military Police) on the BES islands in 2009 and 2010 to assist the local police forces. Police officers will be recruited both locally and in the Netherlands.
- Priority will be given to establishing a joint call center for emergency services.
- Priority will be given to improving the jail cells and developing and training police. The Dutch Government is making available an addi-

tional one million euros for police on the islands, specifically for better equipment and vehicles.

- Bonaire will get a mountain bike police surveillance team.
- Dutch probation officers will continue to work in Bonaire.
- The Netherlands will provide new equipment for the fire departments in January 2009. In general the fire departments will be improved and a cooperation agreement will be signed with the municipality of The Hague.
- The system of the current old age pension, AOV, will be replaced one-on-one by the Dutch AOW. Social welfare and pensions will be executed by Regional Service Centers.
- A pension fund for civil servants will be set up, and legal rights of civil servants defined. The Dutch Government has reconfirmed that federal and island civil servants working on the islands will become Dutch civil servants. (*Rijksambtenaren* in Dutch).
- The official currency of the BES islands will be the US dollar. The US Federal Reserve has already given this arrangement its OK. Parties will cooperate to prevent excessive price hikes as a result of the introduction of the dollar.

More definition is necessary for:

- Legislation to regulate taxes, excises and Customs. The Dutch State Secretary of Finance will visit the BES islands in the first quarter of 2009 to



Bonaire Commissioner Nicolaas and Dutch State Secretary Bijleveld

Anthony Nicolaas and the seven-person Bonaire BES week delegation pushed for a legal basis for the BES islands' status to be added to the Dutch constitution. But, because an amendment to the constitution requires a complex and lengthy procedure,* a compromise was found in the existing procedures via an Explanatory Note in the Kingdom Charter. This way, explained Nicolaas, the people of the BES islands are guaranteed that the position of the islands is secured in the future no matter which coalition forms the Dutch Government. A stipulation will be added to the Charter that will secure the BES islands' constitutional basis when the Netherlands Antilles disappear as a country and to accommodate the new status of "Country" Curaçao and "Country" St. Maarten as well. In Bonaire's opinion, the basic legislation defining the BES role as a "public entity," the WOLBES, as a piece of legislation by itself would not sufficiently protect the new communities. In the Explanatory Note to the Charter it would be stated that the Dutch Constitution would be applicable to the BES islands, once they have become a public entity. "That gives us the protection," explained Nicolaas. The Explanatory Note would go into effect in 2010 or 2011 when the BES islands become a public entity.

* The Dutch constitution can be only modified in two readings. After the first reading the House of Commons must be dissolved and there must be new elections. Afterwards the constitution can be modified. ■ G.D.

reach a political agreement on the new tax regime.

- The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs must submit proposals in 2009 for a general emergency number and international codes for telecommunication.
- The postal service.
- The use of ID cards for travelling within the Kingdom.
- The role of the Lt. Governor in admitting foreigners to the BES islands.
- Talks will be held with Curaçao and St. Maarten to facilitate air traffic control and meteorological services at the airports.

More still is to be done, but this is a substantial start. ■ G.D.

SOLUTION TO DO YOU SUDOKU?

Puzzle on page 7

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648 329 517
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593 417 826
324 875 961
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HOTEL CONSTRUCTION ON BONAIRE POSTPONED PART II

The opinions expressed are solely those of the author.



Part II... continued from the last edition

As far as the Bonaire Hilton Hotel & Spa is concerned, the groundbreaking, announced by the Hilton Hotels Corporation in December 2007 and applauded with enthusiasm by the local government, has never taken place and for a long time it seemed that nothing would happen at the hotel site at all. However, several months ago, Silvousa, the largest local construction company, which was to build the hotel, started to work there and the building activities are now in full progress.

During my recent visit to the site I learned, to my surprise, that the contractor's current activities had nothing to do with the Hilton Hotel but concerned the large residential project called Azul Development. In theory, the hotel, if and when it's built, can still be a part of the Azul Development project, in the north-east corner of the site, bordered by two roads. The parts have been now reversed. Originally the Hilton Hotel was a center point of the Azul project. The owners of the residential houses built next to it had all the advantages of being neighbors of the famous hotel. Now the potential buyers are being told that these houses have nothing to do with the Hilton Hotel. It is a completely different situation from the case of the Divi Sunset Resort where the condos form the essential part of the project, as had been done in all the Divi Resort projects on Aruba. Another difference is that the planned Divi Sunset Hotel has

almost double (275) the number of rooms of the Hilton (144 rooms and suites).

It is obvious that after the misleading announcement of the hotel groundbreaking the Azul developers themselves came to the only logical conclusion that the site was absolutely not suitable for construction of a first class hotel resort. Without any further announcement about abandoning the construction of a Hilton Hotel they started instead to construct one of Bonaire's biggest residential projects. It is possible that in the future the houses will be built on the area originally planned for the hotel as well.

The reason for Azul's decision may be that residential properties can often be sold at a greater profit than building and above all operating a Hilton hotel at this site. The Azul Development project consists of 78 "casitas" (*rijtjeshuizen*), attached two-story houses, built on common foundations. For the contractor, each row is just one building. Each house has a small garden, small swimming pool and a

boat mooring. The casitas will be built along the shores of two peninsulas, Las Salinas in the north and Los Jardines in the eastern part of the site. The largest number of houses will be constructed on the island between these two peninsulas, called simply La Isla. Next to the casitas individual lots for construction of 15 villas cover the area on the tips of the peninsulas and of the island. The largest lot on La Isla, with an area of 637 square meters, is offered at a price of \$637,000, (\$1,000 per sq.m.) For this price the buyers get a long-term lease on the land which will remain with the government since the whole site has been long leased to Azul. In addition, as long lease holders they have to pay a yearly fee for the lease (*erfpachtcanon*). The casitas themselves are being offered at a typical price of around \$630,000.

It seems that in about four years the problem of disposing of waste water from big shorefront hotels will be solved by the completion of the municipal sewage system. In that case the Divi Sunset resort, which is scheduled to be completed before that, will need a wastewater alternative like its own system or participation in the haul-away action plan.

While we have been speaking all the time only about two planned big hotels, Divi Sunset and the Hilton, it seems now to be almost certain that a third big hotel will be built on the site of the existing eyesore

ruin of the Esmeralda hotel at Punt Vierkant. Because of the Dutch regulations, which will now certainly be applied also to Bonaire, an incomplete structure must be completed or demolished. Entrepreneur Niek Sandmann, who received the land with the Esmeralda ruin in long term lease, decided eventually to act after many years of doing nothing in this matter. According to the Papiamentu language newspaper, *Extra*, Sandmann, seeing the imminent danger, submitted drawings for the completion of the hotel to DROB (Government Planning and Public Works). However, it may have been too late because the government recently made the decision to take the land back from him and give it in lease to another developer. It was reported that Sandmann's lawyers are trying now to reverse the decision of the government.

Unlike Hilton, the new big hotel at Punt Vierkant will be built on a spacious oceanfront lot. Compared to Divi Sunset, there will be fewer environmental problems because no artificial sand beach has to be constructed directly on the shore. During the hotel construction the developers of the Esmeralda hotel had already excavated a lagoon between the hotel and the sea. A similar scheme has been successfully applied in case of the Harbour Town (now Renaissance) Hotel on Aruba. ■

Jiri Lausman

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Lions Windsurf



Lions Club photo

On Sunday, November 23, the Bonaire Lions Club organized a wonderful family day with games and a BBQ at Sorobon beach for its members in conjunction with the Lions Annual windsurfing tournament. Results of the Eighth Lions Club Windsurfing Competition:

New Kids Boys Slalom

- 1 place Nathan Finies
- 2 place Serginho Finies
- 3 place Yavis Chirino

New Kids Girls Slalom

- 1 place Anais Pauletta
- 2 place Mavelly Velandia

Kids Slalom

- 1 place Amado Vrieswijk
- 2 place Jurgen Saragoza

Big Kids Slalom

- 1 place Dylan Robles

- 2 place Youp Schmit
- 3 place David Lee Winklaar

Girls Slalom

- 1 place Amber Jasperse
- 2 place Daniela Simal

Woman Slalom

- 1 place Monique Meijer
- 2 place Andrea Simal
- 3 place Mabel Simal

Juniors Slalom

- 1 place Bjorn Saragoza
- 2 place Hendryck Balentien
- 3 place Ezri Heymans

Men Slalom

- 1 place Elton "Taty" Frans
- 2 place Evertson "Choco" Frans
- 3 Place Jeager Sint Jago

Master Slalom

- 1 place Constantino Saragoza
- 2 place Sebastian Schonderfer

Freestyle

Lions Princess

- 1 place Anais Pauletta

Lions Kid

- 1 place Amado Vrieswijk
- 2 place Rover Drullaart
- 3 place Youp Schmidt

Lions Prince

- 1 place Bjorn Saragoza
- 2 place Hendryck Balentien
- 3 place Atchuendro Finies

Lion King

- 1 place Demenson "Kiri" Thode
- 2 place Everon "Tonky" Frans
- 3 place Elton "Taty" Frans

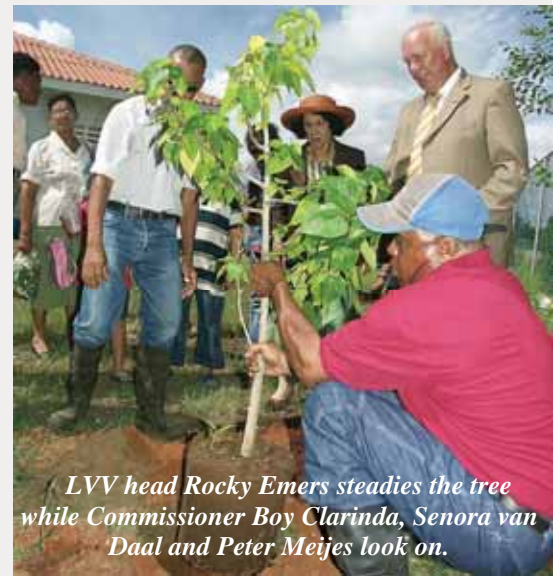
Thanks to all who helped and sponsored. ■ *Press release*

National Tree Planting Day

On a recent Saturday at the Amboina Centro di Bario National Tree Planting Day was celebrated with the planting of seven trees. On hand for the festivities was Peter Meijer from the Dutch Elizabeth Funds and Senora Von Daal from a Curaçao environmental group. Senora Von Daal presented a gift tree, a Koely Dryf, from the island of Curaçao to the community of Bonaire. The Bonai students were there as were representatives from DROB, STINAPA, LVV and SKAL.

Holland has been planting trees annually for the 50 years and they want to encourage the Dutch Antilles islands to continue the practice.

The sun decided to come out from its cloud cover to shine brightly as the volunteers planted each of the trees. So today the Amboina Centro di Bario has a line of typically Bonairean trees to show off: Kalbas, Mata Santu, Shimaruku, Tamarind, Sia



LVV head Rocky Emers steadies the tree while Commissioner Boy Clarinda, Senora van Daal and Peter Meijes look on.

Blanku, Mahogany and Taki. L.D.



Johanna Pieter of BONAI models a preservation T-shirt

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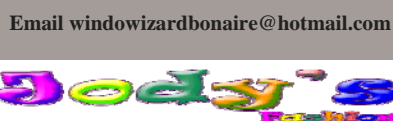
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8th Annual Bonaire Eco Swim Saturday

Preparations for this event are in full swing and this year there will be five categories of races taking place – the usual 10k, 5k, 3K and 1K swims with a new race for this year – a 2k/2 person relay swim.



Eco Swim photo

Last year's Eco Swim start

All the courses will start and finish at Capt. Don's Habitat and will be swum along the north coast of Bonaire, allowing swimmers the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of Bonaire's tropical reefs. Swimmers will be allowed to use mask, snorkel and fins.

While there will be several "elite" swimmers competing again this year, the race is for fun and is designed for all who wish to swim at their own pace, simply for the joy of swimming in the pristine waters of Bonaire. Awards will be given to top male and female finishers in all of the races.

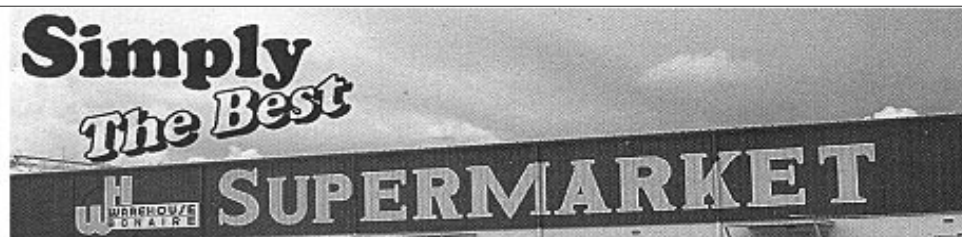
The official registration will take place on Friday December 5th between 3 and 5:30pm. The registration fee for all residents of the Netherlands Antilles is NAf 25 for adults and NAf10 for kids when showing a Sedula. This includes the registration fee, a pasta dinner, T-shirt, swim cap and a bag.

For entry forms, drop by the BONHATA office between 2-5pm at Kaya Soeur Bartola 15 B (behind the Sentro Dental dentist office) and talk to Diana Sint Jago or email diana@bonhata.org. Remember – this is not necessarily a competition! Just come and join us and have some fun in the 8th Annual Bonaire Eco Swim!

A very big thank you to the sponsors for this event this year:

Dutch Antilles Express, Capt. Don's Habitat, Sand Dollar Condominium Resort, Maduro & Curiel's Bank, Rum Runners Restaurant, Samur Sailing Charters, Bonaire Marine Park, Divi Dive, Bonaire Dive & Adventure, Budget Car Rental, Bonaire Sailing Foundation, Aqua Moon Adventures, Swim Paddles and the Bonaire Hotel and Tourism Association. ■

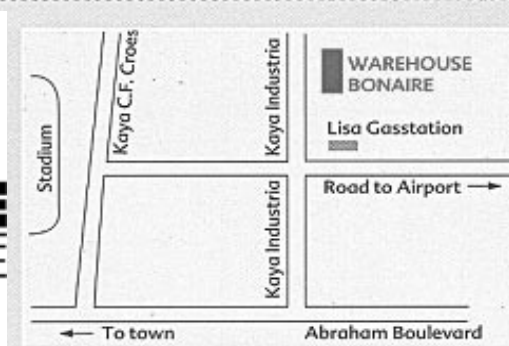
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Bonaire Reporter December 5-19, 2008

Karate Kids Collect

Members of BonKarate collected two medals at the recent Dutch Caribbean Karate Championship organized by the Nederlands Antilliaanse Karate-do Bond and the Curaçaoese Karate Bond. Participating were teams from Aruba, Surinam, Bonaire and Curaçao. Representing Bonaire were Marvellous Maingot, Leonard Janga, Theursten Winklaar, Dylan Loozen, David-Lee Winklaar, Everone Vrutaal and Kia-San Silberie.

Kia-San Silberie won third place in the young woman's class and Everone Vrutaal in the young men's class in a very high level of competition. All competitors exhibited good sportsmanship and set their sights on more medals next time.

"Sensei" Silberie thanks Desiree Silberie and Henrique Winklaar for their help in the finals and during their stay in Curaçao and especially the parents of the competitors for their confidence in him. ■

Peter Silberie



Medal Winners Kia-San Silberie and Everone Vrutaal

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The Four Day Walk

About a dozen participants began the Vierdaagse Bonaire, Four Day Walk at Flamingo airport on Thursday, November 27, at 7 am. The roads were still damp and a light rain was falling, but the walkers and a lone bike rider set off south around the southern tip of Bonaire heading for the first day's destination at Sorobon. The unusually wet "rainy season" certainly seemed to sabotage the start because the starters were far fewer than the 252 participants the organizers said had signed up.

At the opening ceremonies the President of the Stichting Vierdaagse, Coraline Perret Gentil, thanked the many people and organizations who made the first Bonaire 4-Day Walk a success. Sponsor Caribbean



Homes was on site with their support staff. Others joined the walk during the remaining three days. The youngest participants were Widjay de Windt (4), Immanuel Regales (7), Sean Perret Gentil (10) and Milton Frans (12).

The oldest (and fastest) was the North Salinja "Roadrunner," Nazario Alberto (60). Special recognition was given to the family of Jayshaleigh Cicilia, Jane Nancy Cicilia and Linda van Luyk, three generations of Four-Day walkers.

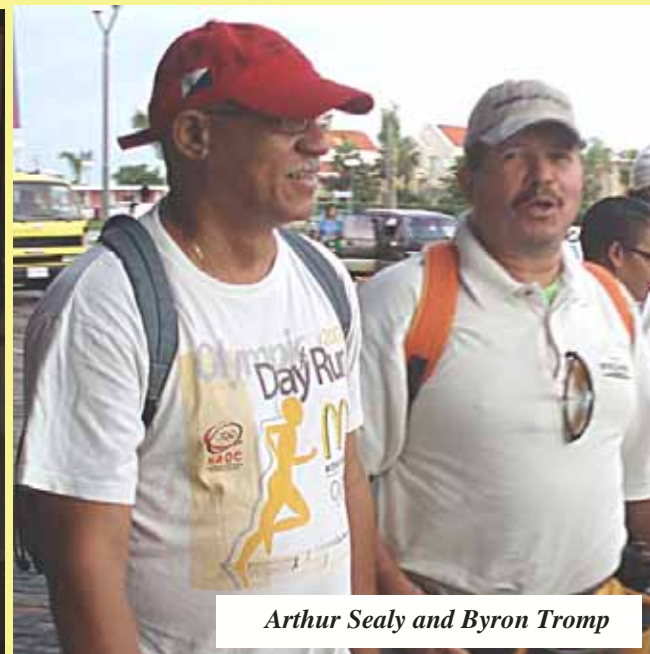
Arthur Sealy and Byron Tromp were given the prize for great dedication. Months before the event they could be seen walking Bonaire's roads in preparation.

These and other participants walked or biked all or part of the 125 km. over the following four days ending in downtown Kralendijk. Proceeds will benefit the Center for Children in Poverty Foundation. ■

G.D.



Nazario Alberto



Arthur Sealy and Byron Tromp

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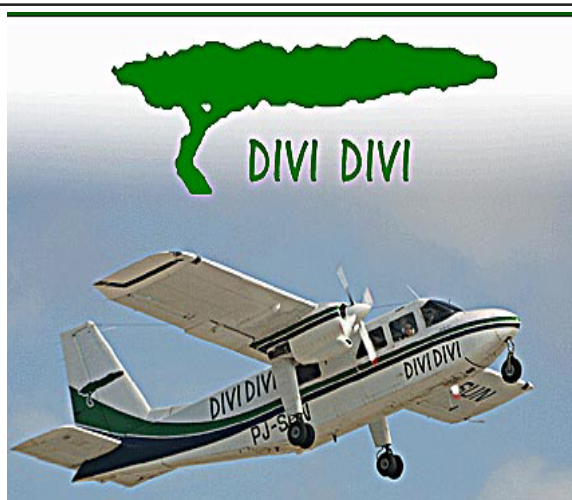
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KRALENDIJK TIDES (Heights in feet, FT)

DATE	Time	Ht.	Time	Ht.	Time	Ht.	Time	Ht.	COEF
12-05	1:33	1.0FT.	9:43	1.5FT.	15:21	1.4FT.	17:23	1.4FT.	47
12-06	1:11	1.0FT.	9:03	1.6FT.	16:31	1.3FT.	18:25	1.3FT.	43
12-07	0:58	1.0FT.	9:13	1.8FT.	17:41	1.2FT.	19:46	1.2FT.	44
12-08	0:53	1.0FT.	9:36	1.9FT.	18:26	1.0FT.	21:17	1.1FT.	52
12-09	0:49	0.9FT.	10:05	2.0FT.	19:22	0.9FT.	22:45	1.0FT.	63
12-10	0:15	0.9FT.	10:42	2.1FT.	20:12	0.8FT.			76
12-11	11:28	2.2FT.	21:02	0.7FT.					87
12-12	12:10	2.2FT.	21:58	0.7FT.					97
12-13	13:00	2.2FT.	22:41	0.6FT.					102
12-14	13:51	2.1FT.	23:20	0.6FT.					103
12-15	14:43	2.0FT.							100
12-16	0:34	0.7FT.	15:42	1.9FT.					92
12-17	1:05	0.8FT.	16:38	1.7FT.					82
12-18	1:25	0.9FT.	8:48	1.5FT.	13:21	1.4FT.	17:45	1.5FT.	70
12-19	1:33	1.0FT.	8:42	1.6FT.	15:18	1.2FT.	18:49	1.4FT.	57

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Letters to the Editor

ILLITERACY REVISITED

Dear Editor,
I often enjoy reading the educational articles of Mary Ann Koops, and learn from them. However, I was very surprised to read in the article regarding illiteracy on Bonaire, that the first reason for it is "almost all children speak another language at home than at school (Papiamentu at home, Dutch at school) which is a handicap." Ms. Koops referred to a research that has shown a vulnerability of such people to becoming functional illiterate. I'd like to know more about this research, because I don't think such a conclusion has been definitely reached. Moreover, a web site of American Speech-Language-Hearing Association says, "Most children have the capacity and facility to learn two or more languages. Research suggests there are advantages to being bilingual, such as, linguistic and metalinguistic abilities and cognitive flexibility, such as, concept formation, divergent thinking and general reasoning and verbal abilities. According to the 2002 US Census, more than 7.5 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 (about 14 %) speak a language other than English at home and the number of bilingual speakers is expected to increase in the coming years." In addition, I am personally familiar with at least three other cultures where children routinely have spoken different languages at home and at school without demonstrating any handicap caused by this. First, Jewish children for generations spoke Yiddish at home, plus some Hebrew while learning Torah, and some other language at school, it being Russian, English, Polish, whatever. Second, in former Soviet republics, like in Azerbaijan where I grew up, many children spoke their native language at home and Russian at school. Third, in Israel that is a country of recent immigrants many children spoke their parents' language at home and Hebrew at school. None of these societies has shown any increased vulnerability to functional illiteracy. It is not clear to me that a bilingual growing up can be blamed.

Genady Filovsky

Reply from article author Mary Ann Koops:

Supporting information came from the Dutch language website <http://www.lezenenschrijven.nl/analfabetisme/herkennen/>. The point was indeed that children in an environment with a limited supply of books, magazines and such are more vulnerable to become functionally illiterate. On top of that, when you have to learn to read and write in a language that is not your native tongue, it makes you even more vulnerable. In the cultures Genady speaks of there are a lot of books in their native tongue available to read for a growing child. Here on Bonaire, the books have only started to appear in the last 20 years. And we need a lot more. But it also remains true that children of a different background from the country where they obtain their education are more vulnerable to becoming illiterate. For example, you see it among the children of the immigrants in the Netherlands.

Mary Ann Koops



Freewinds leaving Curaçao

CRUISE SHIP VISITS

Dear Editor:
(In reference to the article on cruise ship visits in the last issue) These ships average 1,000 to 3,500 passengers, the majority of whom spend very little time, money or effort to improve our Island. Currently, there is not even a head tax per passenger which could bring a huge amount of revenue to Bonaire, perhaps useful for the sorely needed sewage treatment plant now sought by the Government and STINAPA. Divers, ECO tourists and airline passengers pay tax. Why not cruise passengers? The *Freewinds*, on the other hand, with no more than 250 passengers aboard, has been

coming here for many years and during every visit provides special services, shows, fund raising campaigns and other assorted projects which have greatly benefited Bonaire and it's people. Bonairean youth, the elderly, music and education programs, to name a few I've been witness to, have all benefited from the time, effort and energy of the caring Captain, crew and passengers on the ship. Give them, rather than the standard wastewater-dumping criticisms they usually receive, a HIP HIP HOORAY --- for their dedication and persistence in giving back to our community. Unlike other cruise ships, these folks have always contributed financially, physically, intellectually and emotionally to a large variety of Bonaire's ongoing projects. What about daily runoff from many of our hotels? How many of them, after all the talk and meetings, are actually working like our Captain Don's facility, to reduce the amount and transport it away from the sea, (perhaps a temporary solution, but a start), or contribute financially towards the whole new plant we sorely need?

New construction of large apartments and condominiums on the waterfront where single-family dwellings previously existed is also creating major runoff problems. It is much more important now to focus on limiting and monitoring the current construction boom and carefully supervising and supporting plans for speeding up new sewage disposal projects in order to save our most spectacular asset - the reefs. STINAPA, the current Antillean Government and the soon-to-come Dutch Government should make this top priority for 2009. We don't have much time left!

I grew up in Florida and have watched over the past sixty-plus years the effects of over-population, over-building, over-fishing and wastewater runoff, to name a few. It has been so devastating that there is little left to admire of what was once the beautiful peninsula of Florida and it's surrounding beaches, clear waters and wooded landscape. After 20-plus years on Bonaire, I now see similar problems occurring here.

PLEASE, no more petty arguments and finger-pointing. We must ALL work together now to save our beautiful, unique Bonaire and it's surrounding reefs for the generations to come!

Judith Schmidt



CRUISE SHIP "DEPOSITS"

Dear Editor:

Is it really true that the ship *Freewinds* leaves their sewage here on the island - to the tune of 18, 9-cubic-meter truckloads a day? (*Bonaire Reporter* November 7-21, 2008) And they're here for 27 days during the next season? How can this be on this small island where we're so worried about saving the reef and desperately needing a sewage system for our own people? How come the other dozens of cruise ships don't have to dispose of their waste while in the Port of Bonaire? Can't *Freewinds* do the same?

A Disgusted Resident



INCOME TAX PENALTY

Dear Editor:

Here is something your readers should know. If you don't file your personal income tax form (the form is called *Aangiftebiljet Inkomstenbelasting*), or if you file it too late, you can be penalized.

For the first time the penalty (*Definitieve aanslag Inkomstenbelasting*) is NAf 250, the second time you are too late it will be NAf 500, the third time it will be NAf 1,000, and from then on it will be NAf 1,500.

The Bonaire tax-inspector, however, uses different figures, based on old laws. He uses the amounts NAf 500, 1500 and 2500, which are NOT CORRECT.

If you get a penalty for filing your form too late or not at all, you have to write an objection letter, and until the inspector has lowered the penalty, don't pay the penalty.

People have to write to the *Eilandsontvanger* (Island Collector of Taxes) also, and tell them they have made an objection, and they don't want to pay until the inspector has responded to the objection.

R. Sanders

Jim Madden Drenched



Jim and Jane Madden, Bonaire residents and volunteers and supporters of the Bonaire Animal Shelter, decided the best way to celebrate Jim's 60th birthday would be to have a big party and ask guests to donate something to the shelter instead of bringing a gift. Over 100 guests attended the event at Don Paranda on Sunday afternoon November 23, including members of the Bonaire Bikers Motorcycle Club who gave Jim the traditional BBMC dousing with a bucket of water in honor of his birthday. Great food and a "motorcycle" birthday cake were provided by Norca and her staff, while the attractive bartenders Zutje and Sharon of Wil's Tropical Grill generously poured the libations. The most exciting part of the entire event actually happened the day after the party when Jim proudly presented the Bonaire Animal Shelter with over NAf 1150 in donations from his guests. Jim and Jane thank everyone who attended for making his 60th birthday such a wonderful success. ■ Jane Disko-Madden

Bubbles from the Biologist

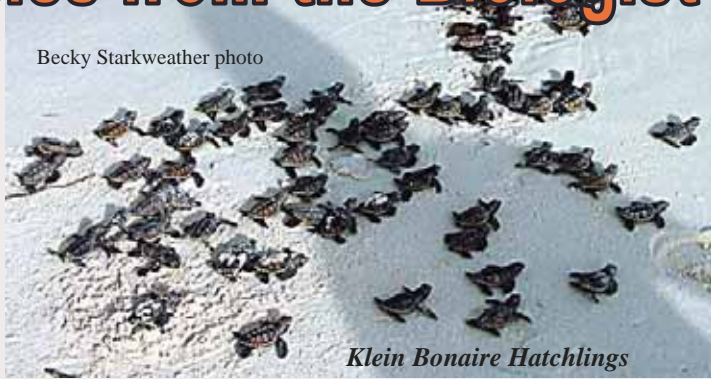


Did You Know...

that a sea turtle's gender is determined by the temperature of the eggs during incubation? For most reptiles, the temperature during the first trimester is the determining factor. If the eggs are above 30° C then they will develop into females, and below 30° C they become males. This dependency on temperature could have a huge effect on the turtle population in the future. With global warming raising the global temperature, the majority of the hatchlings are becoming female! As the temperature becomes higher and higher, males will become more and more rare-putting the turtle population in danger! ■ *Kelsey Burns*

Burns is currently an intern at CIEE research station, having graduated with a degree in Marine Biology from James Cook University, Australia. She wants to work toward her PhD and study larval ecology or ichthyology.

"Do what you can to lower your carbon footprint. Use less electricity. Unplug chargers that aren't being used and turn off lights/fans/aircos when you leave a room. Walk or bike instead of driving a car when possible, and because our fresh water is made through a process that uses diesel fuel, try to use less water (Don't let it run when washing dishes or brushing your teeth)." ■ *Caren Eckrich*



Becky Starkweather photo

Klein Bonaire Hatchlings



Picture Yourself With The Reporter Faenza, Italy

Alessandra and Monica Donati write, "After our wonderful second holiday of two weeks in Bonaire (the first one was in June 2007), we send you, with great pleasure, our photo with *The Bonaire Reporter* from our town Faenza - Emilia Romagna - Italy. You can see the monumental fountain and the cathedral in the background. We really miss Bonaire! Greetings from Italy to all the staff of Bonaire Dive and Adventure, Den Laman and *The Bonaire Reporter*! ➔



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How the Turtle Got Its Shell

Ever wonder how a turtle got its shell? You're not the only one. Evolutionary biologists and paleontologists have long been stumped by the question. But a recently unearthed turtle fossil, the oldest on record, may hold the answer. Researchers reported in *Nature last week* that the fossil indicates shells evolved as an extension of turtles' backbones and ribs.

Scientists have been in the dark until now because all fossilized turtles previously discovered had complete shells. But this 220-million-year-old fossil is an ancestor of the modern turtle at a stage when its shell was still evolving.

An international team of paleontologists led by Chun Li of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing analyzed the 16-inch- (40 centimeter-) long fossil, which was discovered in Guizhou Province in southwestern China. They conclude that the bones belonged to a Trias-



sic turtle ancestor, which they named *Odontochelys semitestacea*, meaning "toothed turtle with a half shell." The newly discovered species sported a shelled belly and a little extra bone on its spine, supporting the theory that turtles' shells formed over eons as their backbones and ribs grew. The main competing idea is that hard, bony plates in their skin (such as those in the skin of modern-day crocodiles) fused together. The authors say that this turtle species probably lived in water and that their stomach shell kept them safe from predators below while they were swimming. ■ *Scientific American*

Illustration of *Odontochelys semitestacea* courtesy of Marlene Donnelly



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WHAT'S HAPPENING

HAPPENING SOON

Saturday, December 6 - The 8th Annual Bonaire Eco Swim— More info, page 12 or visit <http://www.aquamoonadventures.com/>

Sunday, December 8 - Bonaire Health & Fitness Center opens—A new fitness center for the public. Contact Frits Volmuller fvolmuller@gmail.com

Sunday, December 21— Winter Solstice

Sunday, December 21 - 8am Mountain Bike Tour, Washington Park, 7:30 am at Park entrance. Pre-register at Bonaire Wellness Connexions by December 20. NAf. 15 per person (includes drink + fruits). Information: BWC at 717-4241 or +599 785 0767

Cruise Ship Season is back:

Arts & Crafts Markets at Wilhelmina Park on Cruise Ship Days, usually 10 am to 2 pm:

Thurs., Dec. 4 – Emerald Princess, Caribbean Princess

Fri., Dec. 5 – Wind Star

Sun., Dec. 7, 8 – The World

Tues, Dec.9-Ventura

Wed., Dec. 10 – Sea Princess

Thurs., Dec. 11 – Sea Cloud

Fri., Dec. 12 – Ocean Village 2, Enchantment of the Seas

Mon., Dec. 15 – Aida Aura, Artemis

Wed., Dec. 17 – Summit

Thurs., Dec. 18 – Caribbean Princess

Fri., Dec. 19 – Enchantment of the Seas.

Mon., Dec. 22 – Grand princess

Tues., Dec. 23 – Seven Seas Voyager, Sea Princess

Wed., Dec. 24 – Summit, Queen Mary 2

Fri., Dec. 26 – Enchantment of the Seas, Emerald Princess

Sat., Dec. 27 – Rotterdam

Sun., Dec. 28 – Oceana

Mon., Dec. 29 – Aida Aura

Wed., Dec. 31 – Enchantment of the Seas, Summit

REGULAR EVENTS

- By appointment – **Rooi Lamoenchi Kunuku Park Tours** \$21 (includes tax). Discounts for residents and local people. Tel. 717-8489, 540-9800.

- **Parke Publico** children's playground open every day into the evening hours.

Saturdays

- **Rincon Marshé**—6 am-2 pm. Enjoy a Bonairean breakfast while you shop, fresh fruits and vegetables, gifts, local sweets, snacks, arts, handicrafts, candles, incense, drinks, music. **Big Marché first Saturday of the Month**—www.infobonaire.com/rincon.

- **Flea Market at Parke Publico every first Saturday of the month, 3 to 7 pm.** Everyone welcome to buy and to sell. NAf5 per selling table. More information and reservations for a spot call 787-0466

- **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 Koeke for more information—796-7870.

Mondays

- **Soldachi Tour of Rincon**, the heart of Bonaire, 9 am-noon. \$20-Call Maria 717-6435

Thursdays

- **Flamingo Rockers at "Admiral's Hour"** for yachtsmen and others, Vespucci Restaurant, Harbour Village Marina. HH drinks, gratis tapas, 5-7 pm

Fridays

- **Harbour Village Tennis, Social Round Robin** 7-10 pm. \$10 per person. Cash bar. All invited. Call Elisabeth Vos at 565-5225

FREE SLIDE/VIDEO SHOWS

Sunday— Creature Feature— John and Suzie Wall of Buddy's Digital photo center present a multimedia slide presentation about Buddy's House Reef - pool bar **Buddy Dive**, 6:30-7 pm, 717-5080

Tuesday—**Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire** presents the *Sea Turtles of Bonaire Slide Show*. Every 1st & 3rd Tuesday, Buddy Dive Resort, 6:30 pm—717-3802.

Tuesday-- Bonaire Land and Ocean presentation by Fish-Eye Photo staff, 7pm on the big screen inside the Sunset Bar and Grill at Den Laman Condominiums.

Wednesday— Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire presents the *Sea Turtles of Bonaire Slide Show*, every 2nd & 4th Wednesday at Bruce Bowker's Carib Inn (717-8819) at 6:30pm.

BONAIRE'S TRADITIONS

Kas Krioyo Rincon—Step into Bonaire's past in this venerable old home that has been restored and furnished so it appears the family has just stepped out. Local ladies will tell you the story. Open Monday thru Friday, 9-12, 2-4. Weekends by appointment. Call 717-2445.

Mangasina di Rei, Rincon. Enjoy the

view from "The King's Storehouse." Learn about Bonaire's culture. Visit homes from the 17th century. Daily. Call 717-4060 / 790-2018

Bonaire Museum on Kaya J. v.d. Ree, behind the Catholic Church in town. Open weekdays from 8 am-noon, 1:30-5 pm. Tel. 717-8868

Washington-Slagbaai National Park, Museum and Visitors' Center. Open daily 8 am-5 pm. Closed on some holidays. 717-8444/785-0017

CLUBS and MEETINGS

AA meetings - every Wednesday at 7pm; every Sunday at 5pm. Phone: 786-7699 .

Al-Anon meetings - every Monday evening at 7 pm. Call 790-7272

Weekly Bonaire Talker Gathering and Dinner at Gibi's - Tuesday - 6:30 pm - call 567-0655 for directions.

Bridge Club - Wednesdays, 7.30 pm) All levels, NAf2,50. Call Joop 717-5903 for venue.

Darts Club plays every other Sunday at City Café. Registration at 4, games at 5. Tel. 717-2950, 560-7539.

JCI - First Wednesday of the Month—Junior Chamber International Bonaire (JCI Bonaire, formerly known as Bonaire Jaycees) meets at the ABVO building, Kaminda Jato Baco 36 from 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Everyone is welcome. Contact: Renata Domacassé 516-4252.

Kiwanis Club meets at APNA Plaza, Kaya International, every other Tuesday, 7 pm. Tel. 717-5595, Jeannette Rodriguez.

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 510-0710.

Rotary lunch meetings Wednesday, 12 noon-2 pm - 'Pirate House', above ZeeZicht Restaurant. All Rotarians welcome. Tel. 717-8434

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

CHURCH SERVICES

Protestant Congregation of Bonaire: Kralendijk, Wilhelminaplein. In Papiamentu, Dutch, English, Sundays, 10 am.

Rincon, Kaya C.D. Crestian, in Papiamentu, Sundays, 8:30 am. Children's club, Saturdays, 5 pm, in Kralendijk

Sunday School, Sundays, 4 pm, in Rincon. Bible Study and Prayer meetings, Thursdays, at 8 pm, Kralendijk.

New Apostolic Church: Centro di Bario Nord Saliña, Sundays, 10 am. Services in Dutch. 700-0379 .

International Bible Church of Bonaire, at SGB High School auditorium (Kaya Frater Odulfinus, off Kaya Korona.) Sunday services in English at 9 am; Sunday evening prayer meeting at Pastor's home, 7 pm. Fridays, 6 to 8 pm, Light & Life Club, children 5 to 12 yrs. Tel. 717-8332.

Catholic: San Bernardus in Kralendijk – Services, Sunday at 8 am and 7 pm in Papiamentu, 717-8304.

Our Lady of Coromoto in Antriol,

Saturday at 6 pm in English. Mass in Papiamentu on Sunday at 9 am and 6 pm. 717-4211.

Assembly of God (Asemblea di Dios): Kaya Triton (Den Cheffi). In English, Dutch & Papiamentu on Sunday at 10 am. Wednesday Prayer Meeting at **7:30 pm**. 717-2194

Ministerio di Kristu Hesus Services Sunday mornings at 10 am at Jong Bonaire Youth Center in English, Dutch and Papiamentu. Preaching the full gospel. Contact: 786-2557.

Prayer and Intercession Church, in English. A full Gospel Church located temporarily at Kaya Alexandrit # 20, Santa Barbara, Republiek. Services are held on Sunday mornings from 10am until 11:30am. Bible studies in English are on Monday nights from 7 to 8 pm.

Contact: 717-3322

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Kaya Sabana #26, Sundays: 9 am Sacrament Services (Translation to English and Papiamentu upon request) 10:20 Sunday School, 11:15 RS/YM/YW/PH Primary held from 10:20-12 noon Visitors Welcome: 701-9522 for information

Send event info to:

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APPLIANCES /TV/ ELECTRONICS/ COMPUTERS

City Shop. the mega store, has the island's widest selection of large and small home appliances, furniture, TV, computers, cell phones and more. Fast service and in-store financing too.

BANKS

Maduro and Curiel's Bank provides the greatest number of services, branches and ATMs of any Bonaire bank. They also offer investments and insurance.

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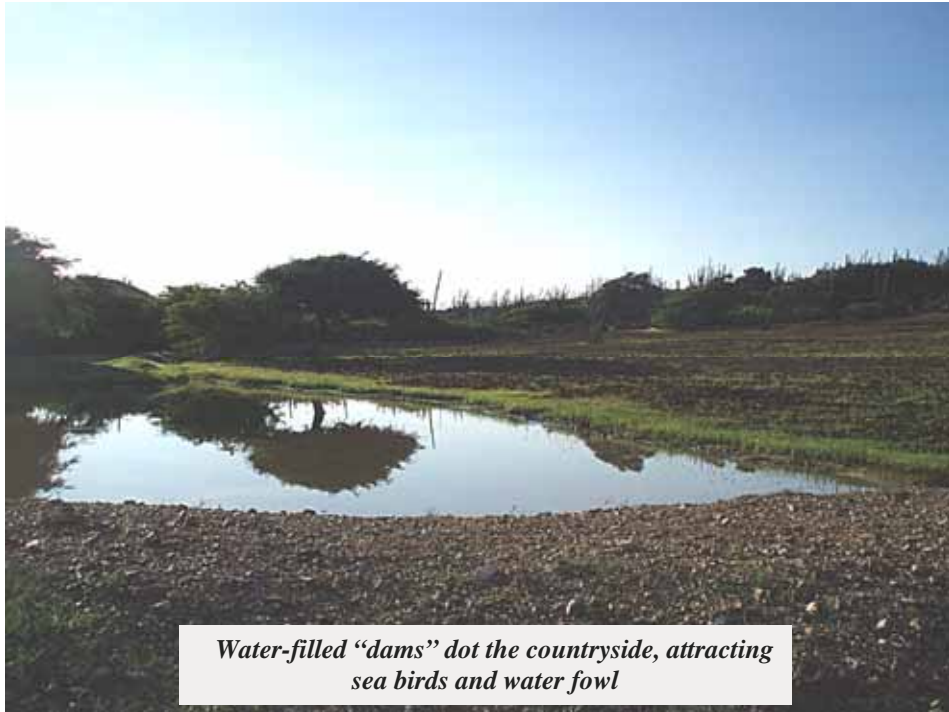
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Soldachi Tour Walk



Water-filled "dams" dot the countryside, attracting sea birds and water fowl

On a recent Saturday a group of about 40 persons, mostly residents and a few tourists, were given the opportunity to walk through the countryside near Rincon with Soldachi Tours' Maria Koeks. Meeting early at 6 am in the center of Rincon we intrepid walkers were driven to the area of Morotin in the northwest corner of Bonaire where the new wind turbines are being installed. It was a perfect day, fresh and cool. We had a stop at Piedra di Boneiru where one can be re-born as a true Bonairean by resting in the rock's "womb." The two agile girls who climbed up into the womb are Bonaireans already, so we can only imagine that they wanted to really make sure. We passed kunukus with fields plowed, ready for sowing the sorghum seeds, and "dams," lakes that are filled by rain and home to water birds. Meandering through the countryside of Bonaire is always an exceptional experience, but at this time of year with everything so green and lush it was particularly sensuous—the fragrances, the sounds of nature, the visuals.

Maria's surprise at the end of the walk was a visit to the MoTan kunuku of the Dammers family where we were hosted with coffee, juice and homemade sorghum pancakes. MoTan kunuku is an outstanding example of what a kunuku can be. They have a spacious covered patio attached to the simple house, a herd of goats, a filled-to-the-brim "dam," a windmill generated well for water, a grove of mahogany trees and a shade house where they grow their own vegetables.

Soldachi Tours operates on a regular basis, especially on Saturdays during the Rincon Marshe (open air market). Their aim is to share the beauty and history of Rincon and the surrounding area.. This recent walk was a



Senor and Senora Dammers at their kunuku, MoTan

special one that Maria offers once in awhile to those of us living on the island. *The Reporter* will let you know when the next one will be. In the meantime for more information, you may call Maria Koeks at 796-7870. ■ L.D.



Roosje, a true Bonairean, in the "womb" of Piedra Di Boneiru

Dennis Kellner, Mountain Climber *Where is he now?*

In November of 2005 Dennis Kellner reached the top of Mt. Everest, the highest point on earth, and brought *The Reporter* with him for a photo. The picture was so spectacular that it appeared on the cover of the Reporter in the July 28, 2006, issue. At that time Dennis, a semi retired contractor, had already summited Denali (aka Mt. McKinley, 20,320 feet) in Alaska, Aconcagua (22,841 feet) in Argentina and Mt. Vinson (16,067 feet) in Antarctica. Interestingly, Mt. Vinson, which was discovered in 1953, has been summited by fewer people than have been in space.

We caught up with Dennis recently and asked him what he'd been up to lately. "Selling my home in the Florida Keys, moving to Bonaire and building a house," he replied. "With what all of that entails it's been almost as difficult as climbing a mountain!" But, keeping to his plan to climb the highest peaks on all seven continents he's targeting Mt. Elbrus in Russia as his next attempt. "However," he says, "because of the political problems between Russia and Georgia that may not be possible for awhile. In the meantime there's Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and Kosciuszko in Australia – two of the three 'easy ones!'" When he completes this task he will be among the only 168 people in the world who have climbed and reached the highest peaks on seven continents.

Why does he climb, we asked. "As a kid I read in *National Geographic* magazine when Americans finally summited Mt. Everest. That was very exciting. Then as an adult I attended a five-day climbing school on Mt. Rainier. That's known for being the most glaciated." He was hooked. "And one of the best things about climbing," he explains, "is getting to all the great places like Katmandu, Nepal."

Training – "Six months before I start running and jogging and doing some weight lifting. I get to be the most physically fit in my whole life. What climbers have to contend with is the possibility of altitude sickness," Dennis explains, "I've been lucky so far, but it can hit at any time."

What's the scariest part? "Coming down! You're tired; the last trek to the top of Mt. Everest took me 20 hours of solid climbing. You don't want to make a mistake. It's pretty terrifying at the top when you realize you have to come down. It took me two and a half months to reach the top and one and a half days to come down."

Her husband can be away for three months at a time, but his wife Tammy says,



"I'm excited for him, I do worry, but I'm supportive. I do a lot of research ahead of time for where he's going to be." They check with the "Ice Fall Doctor" as they must have information about how the glaciers are moving. "And every day we can text message," she says.

But what about Bonaire's "soaring" peak of Mt. Brandaris? "Well," Dennis replies, "I've been too busy so far, but it's definitely on my list." ■ L.D.



Dennis unmasked

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Get Ready for the Largest and Closest Full Moon of 2008 Followed by the Largest and Closest Full Moon of 2009

Have we ever got something nifty for you to end 2008 and begin 2009. Next week, on Friday, December 12th, we will see the largest and closest full Moon of the entire year. Then on Saturday, January 10th, we'll have the largest and closest



full Moon for 2009. And believe me these two full Moons will look significantly bigger than usual. Let me explain.

On the first day of this week, Monday, December 1st, an hour after sunset if you faced southwest you would have seen an exquisite trio of the three brightest objects we can ever see in the night time sky: the brightest object being a super exquisite crescent Moon and below it the second brightest object, super bright Planet Number Two, 8,000-mile-wide **Venus**, and next to it the third brightest object, Planet Number Five, 88,000-mile-wide **Jupiter**. But as you know the Moon moves rapidly across the sky from night to night and changes its appearance dramatically. On top of which from December 1st to December 12th Jupiter and Venus are pulling apart from each other, night after night after night after night. So that by Friday night, December 12th, they will be 11 1/2 degrees or 23 full Moons apart from each other but still super bright.

The Moon in the meantime, however, will have grown to an enormous size. So on Friday, the 12th, if you turn around and look toward the east just after sunset you will see a super huge full Moon just rising, the largest and closest full Moon of 2008. And like all full Moons this full Moon has several special names. Its two most popular names are "The Moon before Yule" because this is the closest full Moon to Christmas and Christmas is Yule time and even more descriptive, "The Long Night Moon," because as we all know the **Winter Solstice**, the first day of winter, which this year is Sunday, December 21st, is the longest night of the year. And this is the full Moon closest to the solstice this year. But just how close will this Moon be?

Well the Moon is constantly moving either toward **Earth** or away from it. And it has a 31-thousand-mile range between its closest and most distant points. Way back on May 19th of this year the full Moon was at its farthest for the year, over a quarter million miles away or to be exact, 252, 472 miles from Earth. But on Friday, the 12th, it will be 30,885 miles closer, only 221, 587 miles away. Wow! And believe me you'll notice the difference in fact it will look over 12% larger.

Plus it will also be the highest riding full Moon of the year, which means that if you go outside around midnight it will be close to overhead and act like a gigantic cosmic floodlight making the landscape absolutely brilliant, especially if there's snow. But if you miss this closest full Moon of 2008, don't worry. All you have to do is wait until Saturday, January 10th, for the closest full Moon of 2009. So get out for a large lunar experience either sooner or later. ■ *Jack Horkheimer*



THE STARS HAVE IT

By Astrologer Michael Thiessen
For December 2008

ARIES (Mar. 21- April 20) Close deals that have been up in the air and move on to new ones that appear to be profitable. Changes regarding your image will bring you greater confidence. Emotional up and downs have caused doubts in your personal life. Sports, physical fitness programs, exercise in general will make you feel better and show some pretty quick results. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Thursday.

TAURUS (Apr. 21- May 21) You may want to get involved in financial investments presented to you. You can expect to experience delays or additional red tape if you deal with institutions. If you're feeling uncertain, spend some time alone and reevaluate your motives as well as your needs. You should put in some extra hours developing that creative idea you have. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21) Get involved in the activities of children. You can convince anyone of anything. Find ways to make extra cash. Start making things or reusing rather than buying ready made. You will communicate with ease this month. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) Beware of individuals who are not that reliable or well known to you. Dealing with in-laws or relatives will not be in your best interest. Don't argue with family. Implement your ideas into your projects at work. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Wednesday.

LEO (July 23-Aug 22) Difficulties will result if you have to deal with controversial groups this month. Travel will be in your best interest regardless of whether it is business or pleasure. You should avoid getting involved in the personal problems of colleagues. Things may not be as harmonious as you would like with colleagues or employers this month. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23) Try to make amends by planning a nice dinner for two. You can easily wrap up overdue personal legal matters that have caused problems for you. You can make money if you put your mind to it. You must not make unnecessary changes this month. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23) Concentrate on your job. Realize that you don't have to do everything yourself. They didn't fully understand what was expected. Spending too much time talking to friends or relatives could easily turn into a debate that could lead to estrangement. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22) Hassles with your boss are sure to erupt if you speak your mind. You may be able to impart knowledge that's innovative to those searching for a new angle. Your ability to come up with original ideas will bring recognition from superiors. Your emotions have been pulled out of shape and you need to do a little backtracking. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Wednesday.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 -Dec. 21) Don't give out any personal information that you don't want spread around. Your hard work and dedication will pay off, so stick to your guns and do your job well. You may get upset with peers or relatives. Unfortunately, your personal life may suffer from a lack spare time. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Sunday.

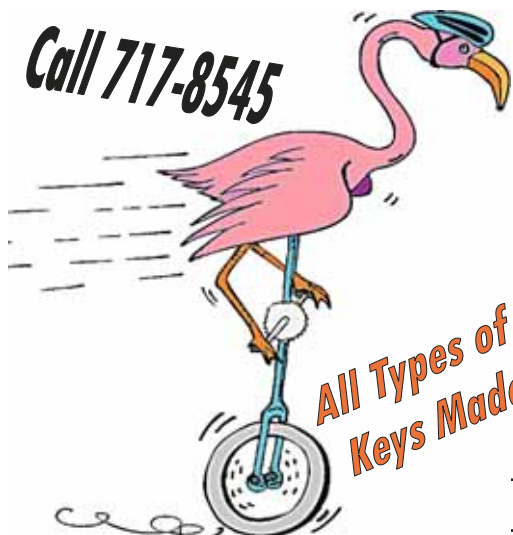
CAPRICORN (Dec 22.- Jan. 20) You should be doing something special with children. You can help them with difficult projects. You can discuss your intentions and ideas with your colleagues or friends this month. You should spend your day trying to get things completed at work. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19) Be sure to take time for old friends or relatives you don't get to see that often. Your partner may blame you for everything. Opportunities for new friendships are apparent. Try and avoid getting involved in idle chatter or gossip that might get you in trouble. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20) Don't be shy to promote your own interests. You need to concentrate on your business ventures more than on your relationship this month. Don't get talked into get rich quick schemes. You can make changes to your living quarters, but not everyone will be pleased with your efforts. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Sunday. ■

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Sanikolas Comes To Town



Marieke Timmers photo



Marian Walthie photo

Last Saturday, under long-awaited sunny skies, Sint Nicholaas (*Sanikolas*) and his assistants, the Black Piets (*Swarte Pieten*), arrived in Bonaire aboard one of the tug boats. A huge welcoming crowd of excited children and adults swarmed the pier to catch a glimpse of him and the Swarte Pieten. He was greeted by Bonaire's new Lt. Governor Glenn Thodé. Children of all ages were there, accompanied by their equally spirited parents or elders. Sint Nicholaas and Swarte Pieten's procession from the pier to Wilhelmina Park was accompanied by the soul-stirring beat of the drum corps. The Swarte Pieten cavorted through the crowd, dancing, swinging their sacks and ropes, teasing the children and throwing candies.

This was the 14th year that the Fun-

dashon Ata *Sanikolas I Zwartepiet* and SEBIKI organized the event and it was a total success. Thanks to all of them for their tireless work.

Although Sint Nicholaas is associated with gift giving and the Christian holiday, his history lies in Dutch folklore and tradition, originating more than 600 years ago when the Bishop of Madrid, Spain, gave gifts to everyone on his birthday, December 6. This bishop, it is said, originally came from Turkey with his helpers who were black (*swarte*). At that time Holland was ruled by Spain, so when Sint Nicholaas comes he arrives from Spain by boat. He always arrives in November because he has so much work to do, finding out which children have been good enough to receive presents.

This Sint Nicholaas tradition is to-



Extra photo

tally Dutch, but the people in the former Dutch colonies all over the world have embraced it, so much so that it seems to be completely accepted that this cleric, bearing gifts and dressed

for very cold weather in heavy robes, cloak and miter, does not seem unusual in such a tropical climate as that of Bonaire. ■ L.D.



Marian Walthie photo

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