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Mother's Day

BONAIRE May 8-22, 2009; Volume 16, Issue 10
The REPORTER
Helping Bonaire Grow Responsibly

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Rincon Day
See page 10



Laura DeSalvo photo

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Flotsam and Jetsam

Four of the Frisian Islands - Vlieland, Ameland, Schiermonnikoog and Terschelling- have agreed to intensify cooperation. The fifth and largest island, Texel, will take a smaller role. The four islands will also exchange information and knowledge with the BES islands of Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius. Dutch State Secretary of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations Ank Bijleveld-Schouten signed an agreement with the Friesland Province and the four Frisian Islands last week. The new cooperation will take effect January 1, 2010.



Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said on Friday that Barack Obama must prove he wants to improve ties with South America after the two leaders shook hands at a summit last month. Chavez, a strident US critic, has reduced the frequency of tirades against what he calls the "empire" since Obama took office as US president in January, but he returned to the theme in a speech at a workers' march last Friday. Chavez, who expelled the US ambassador to Venezuela last year, approached Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the summit to discuss restoring normal ties between the two countries. Chavez has proposed sending a new ambassador to Washington. Obama critics complained that he is meeting with the leaders of problematic countries with no dramatic concessions to show for it. But, according to Obama's political analysts, they are missing the point. Obama believes direct diplomacy is a tool in America's arsenal. The

Dutch Crown Prince Willem-Alexander turned 42 last week, the same age his mother Beatrix was when she ascended to the Dutch throne in 1980. The Queen is now 71 and many are asking when she will retire and let her son, his Argentinean wife, Máxima and their three daughters move into the Huis ten Bosch palace in The Hague. Rumors about Queen Beatrix's abdication typically surface in the month of April, when Crown Prince Willem-Alexander has his birthday on the 27th and the Dutch celebrate Queen's Day on the 30th. But they have been particularly persistent this year, with many in the media speculating that the failed Queen's Day may motivate a succession soon. Peter Rehwinkel, a senator for the PvdA party and a constitutional law expert, was quoted as saying by *NRC Handelsblad*, "I have a feeling the abdication will be announced sooner rather than later." Unlike some European monarchs, the Dutch royals tend to make room for their successors well ahead of their own death. The Netherlands has been a monarchy under the House of Orange-Nassau since the French were driven out of the United Netherlands in 1815, but royal powers were limited to a parliamentary constitutional monarchy in the 1848 Constitution. Still, Queen Beatrix has been deeply involved with the running of government.



Dutch Government photo

US and Venezuela are major trading partners despite differences in political philosophy and harsh rhetoric.

An HIV patient in the Netherlands Antilles pays 33 times more for medication than in the neighboring countries. This appears from research done by the organization, Doctors of the World. In Haiti, for example, the treatment of a patient for a year will cost a little over \$400. The same annual treatment in the Netherlands Antilles will cost nearly \$15,000.

Her Royal Highness, Princess Máxima of The Netherlands, the Chairwoman of the Oranje Fonds, a charitable trust, announced that Bonaire's Stichting Project which helps disadvantaged youngsters, is one of the recipients of the Appeltje van Oranje award for 2009. The award will be turned over personally in the Hague on May 12. For more information call Jonne Boesjes, 030 - 2339344 or go to the website: www.oranjefonds.nl

Bonaire now has a bicycle police team. The team is made up of officers Edwin van der Giessen, Luenshela Soliano,



German van Leeuwen photo

James Mercera and Lionel Winklaar. They have received special training beyond what a policeman usually receives. Bike police can be especially effective in many situations, as witness the recent attempted assassination attack on the Royal Family when the bike police were first on the scene. The team's first deployment was during the Rincon Day festivities (photo above). For more information contact the police department's communication office at 717-8015 or 788-3983.

Concerned over the rapidly spreading swine flu, the World Health Organization (WHO) has upped the influenza pandemic alert to phase 5, just one step short of declaring a bona fide global pandemic. The situation in Mexico, where the flu was first reported, has been improving with fewer and less serious cases being reported. "All countries should immediately activate their pandemic preparedness plans," said WHO Director-General Mar-

garet Chan, calling on government ministries and manufacturers of vaccines and antiviral meds to mobilize resources immediately to deal with the rapidly evolving swine flu outbreak. As we go to press there have been about 800 reported cases of swine flu in 19 countries, not including Mexico which has accumulated as many as 2,400 cases, over 150 of them fatal.

The Netherlands Antilles and Bonaire governments are keeping a keen eye on the situation and will offer the islands all essential support with regard to the worldwide expanding swine influenza said Minister Omayra Leeflang (Public Health, PAR). Last year the Public Health Care personnel of all island territories followed a Rapid Response Team Training in the Curaçao Hilton Hotel on April 3rd and 4th, as how to effectively intervene with a possible expansion of viruses such as the current H1N1-swine influenza virus. The detection, confirmation, research, prevention, and reporting of (potential) epidemics were discussed in detail.

DeFreewieler Scooter & Bike Sales & Repair is now selling classic Bikkel Dutch bikes, starting at NAf 850. They're located at Kaya Grandi #61, across from INPO. They also carry all kinds of great bike accessories and biking clothes.

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Jong Bonaire Searches For Former Members

Scenes From 1999 at Jong Bonaire



Queen Beatrix and others with then Gezaghebber Richard Hart



MCB making their first donation for the computer room. They have continued to sponsor over the years



Richard Hart laying the first block for the new classroom building

The after-school program at Jong Bonaire will be celebrating 10 years of operations later this year and is planning a big reunion of former members. As a result, Jong Bonaire is trying to find all its former members to join in the big celebration and reunion party.

“We want to find all the young people who have ever been members at Jong Bonaire so they can help us celebrate,” says Bilha Thomas, who is organizing the search. “We know there are many in Holland, Curaçao, Aruba and other places. And there are many who are here on Bonaire. We want to find them and find out what they are doing, and invite them to our party.”

To accomplish the search, a special reunion page has been added to the Jong Bonaire website <http://www.jongbonaire.org/reunion.html>. At the website, former members can sign in and add their name to the list. The search team will also be trying to find former members via telephone, posters and word of mouth. “This is an important point for Jong Bonaire and we want everyone to be a part of it,” said manager Jona Chirino. “There are over 1,000 people that we need to find.”

Chirino urges all former members or their parents to use the website or to **contact Jong Bonaire at 717-4303** or stop by the center and sign the register. Former members are also urged to tell their friends to register so the reunion will be as nearly complete as possible.

Plans are now being made for the celebration and Jong Bonaire would like to have several ex-members participate in the planning. Those who sign up first could become members of the planning team.

“We want to know where these former members are and how they are doing. We also want to know how Jong Bonaire helped them when they were in high school,” says Chirino. “Some of them now have children of their own who will soon be members at Jong Bonaire. It is a very big job, but if we start now we think we can find most of them.”

The current Sentro *pa Hubentut Jong*

Bonaire officially opened for activities in September 1999. On August 23, just before the official opening, Dutch Secretary of State at the time, R. v/d Ploeg, helped Gezaghebber Interino Orphaline Saleh and officials of Radio Nederlands and Maduro & Curiels Bank Bonaire dedicate the computer room.

Highlight of the opening year came in November of 1999 when Her Majesty Queen Beatrix and her entourage visited the youth center and met the 200 members, the staff and volunteers. Also during the first year, a mural was painted on the walls of the center by Tirzo Martha and the teen members, celebrating 500 years of Bonaire History

Before the official opening in August, the youth center had a two-month trial opening during May and June where teens attended for free as the staff and volunteers tested their plans and programs. “So there are members from that period who must also be found,” said manager Chirino. “We have some of the names but not all of them.”

Efforts to start the youth center began three years before the opening with fundraising, construction and renovation of the existing buildings. Construction was not even complete until January of 2000.

In addition to the 10-year celebration for the Jong Bonaire after school program, 2009 marks the 50th Anniversary for the existence of the Stichting. Originally named Stichting Jeugdwerk Prinses Beatrix, it later changed its name to Stichting Jeugdwerk Jong Bonaire.

“This program has been important to many young people over the years and we hope that as many as possible can join us for the celebration which will be held in September or October,” said Chirino. “It would be nice if we could also find people who used Jong Bonaire back in the 1960s and 70s.”

The original buildings of Jong Bonaire, which are the gymnasium and *sala grande*, were constructed in 1959 and functioned as a youth center for a number of years. But by the 1990s they were little used and the roof on the gym had begun to collapse. With the funding from *Sede*

Antia these buildings were repaired and a new classroom building and several sport fields were added for the current youth center.

Primary funding to start the after school program at Jong Bonaire came from *Sede Antia*, but there were also large donations from Maduro & Curiel’s Bank, Radio Nederlands, SABADECO, *Stichting Katholieke Noden, Juliana Welzijn Fonds, JENA/FAJ, and Reda Social*, along with 65 other companies and individuals.

Community support has continued over the years with major funding from the Island Government, AMFO, *Samenwerkende Fondsen* and SNAYDP plus continued support from MCB, SABADECO, Rocargo and many other local companies and individuals. ■

Story by Jane Townsend and Alan Gross. Jong Bonaire archive photos





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On The Island Since... March, 2004 Ekatharina 'Katja' Kachtchienko-Abrahamsz

When I arrive at the house at night the dining table is beautifully set; there are flowers and caviar, a great white wine, grilled barracuda and a delicious salad. Everyone at the table is looking gorgeous and happy: Katja, her husband Kenneth, their little girl Koleta and Katja's Russian girlfriend who lives in Germany and who's here on vacation. We make a toast and Katja begins to tell her story:

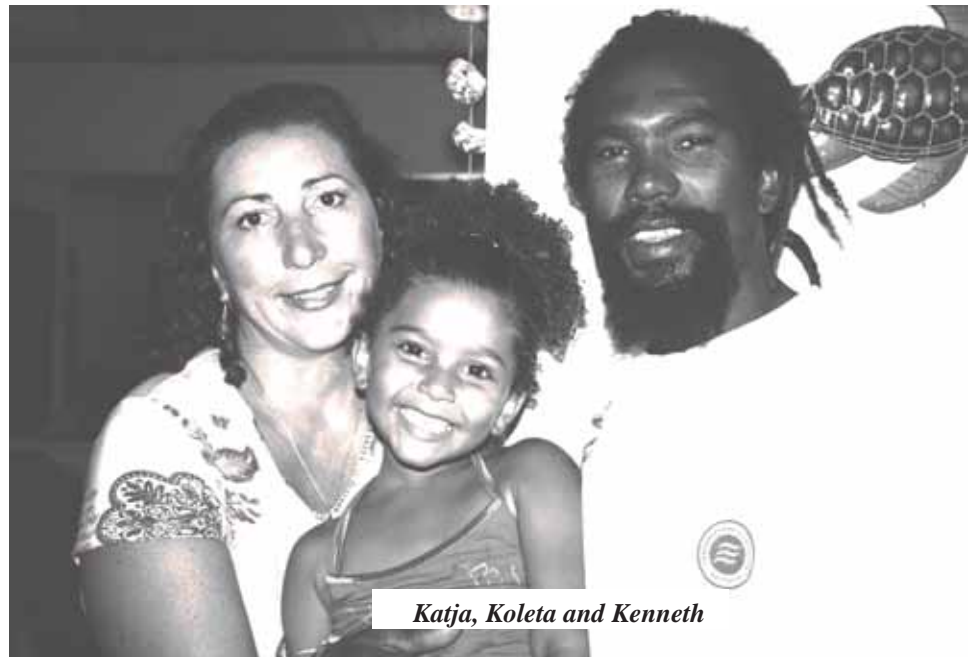
"I was born in 1968 in Russia, in Krasnodar, not far from the Black Sea. The Olympic Winter Games will be held there in 2014. We were a very close-knit family: me, my older brother and two cousins. My mom was a teacher at a music school. I played the violin for five years and the piano for five, then I studied to become a children's choir conductor. I passed and worked with a choir for a year.

When I was 22 I went to St. Petersburg to study at the conservatory. However, the qualification standard was so high – our country has such a tremendously high standard when it comes to music and we have so many musicians – that I couldn't meet the entry conditions. I was terribly disappointed and depressed and

started working as a shop girl. I stayed in St. Petersburg for some years, then the era of Perestroika began and it became very difficult to keep my job. All the people who were not from St. Petersburg -like me - had to go back to where they came from and only people who were originally from St. Petersburg could stay. So, what to do?

Well, a girlfriend of mine from St. Petersburg had gone to Holland two years earlier. She'd gotten married there. She told me that a friend of her husband was interested in meeting me so I went to Holland in 1998. I was 30. I thought Holland was a beautiful country: very clean, lots of green and flowers – I love plants – and I liked the Dutch culture. In Holland I had a beau-

In Russia, when I was young, my favorite subject at school was geography. When I learned about the tropics it was something I could only dream of – 12 months of beautiful weather. It was unimaginable because where I'm from you have four seasons. So, one day I came to Bonaire with three girlfriends.



Katja, Koleta and Kenneth

" I stayed in St. Petersburg (Russia) for some years, then the era of Perestroika began and it became very difficult to keep my job.."

tiful time. I stayed single and worked as a shop girl at a store called Hema (something like Wal-Mart) in The Hague. After five years I got my Dutch passport.

We stayed at Van der Valk's Plaza Hotel for two weeks. We couldn't rent a car as it was too expensive, so every day we walked to town and went to the snacks to buy whatever it was we

needed. But of course we wanted to see the beautiful island and so we called a taxi from the front desk and then came Kenneth... who's now my husband! It was his other job because he also worked at the Windsurf Place at Sorobon as a windsurf instructor.

We went all around the island. He took us to Sorobon a couple of times, we went dancing at Karel's and we also went camping. He charged us very little money for the drives and did a lot of fun stuff with us, like when we went

snorkeling at Sorobon. It was my first time and I thought it was scary – all those fish and corals and I hardly knew how to breathe, so I asked him, 'Can I please hold your hand?' So, with his hand in mine I lost my fear and I immediately had a good feeling about him. When we left we exchanged phone numbers and addresses, and back in Holland I send him a postcard to thank him for the lovely time. Then he wrote me back. If I

(Continued on page 5)



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On the Island Since
(Continued from page 4)

wanted to see him and Bonaire again, he would be very happy to pay half my ticket. Six months later I came back to visit Kenneth for three weeks. He'd arranged everything and had taken a couple of days off and... we fell in love.

We had a wonderful time together as we both love nature. We even went camping on Klein Bonaire. It was just amazing. I know it's not allowed, but," she laughs, "it's hard to tell a Bonairean not to do something. We talked a lot about us - his life, my life - and I told him 'I feel like I've known you for a hundred years.' He said it was exactly the same way he felt. Three weeks passed as if it were three days and I had to go back to Holland to work and make money.

But... it was terribly hard not to be together. We phoned each other every day, we wrote lots of letters and sent many, many e-mails, and after seven months I wanted to come to Bonaire for three months, but I couldn't work it out with my job in Holland. So, I asked him if he could come to Holland for three months and if not, I would come to Bonaire for good. But, you know, my husband is a pure, pure Bonairean and he doesn't want to go anywhere, except for vacation. We decided I would come to live here. He'd rented an apartment

and he came with his belongings and I with my little suitcase - no container, no money, no stress - and we started a life together. In May 2004 I started working at Karel's Beach Bar at the Cappuccino Bar.

Then I got pregnant and we were absolutely delighted. Two months before our baby was born I stopped working and we got married here on Bonaire on March 10, 2005. Our daughter Koleta was born April 2nd, 2005. After she was born I stayed home. I just couldn't leave her at the crèche; I felt so sorry for her to be without her mama, such a little baby. But six months later I started working again at the Cappuccino Bar and every time I thought of her I had to cry. I showed her picture to all the tourists. I was so proud of her and I missed her so much."

She cuddles and kisses her precious four-year-old and looks at her husband, all smiles and shiny. Katja is sweet, laid back, tranquil, open and warm-hearted; she's grateful for everything she has. She's a lovely person.

"As long as I've been here I've only worked at Karel's. This year, April 1st, I stopped working there, but I miss my clients very, very much and also my colleagues and my Cappuccino Bar. I worked there for almost five years; it gave me a lot of experience and I think Johan and Mady

(the owners) were happy with me. I've met so many people from all over the world, from so many different cultures and that's what made the job interesting. For instance the Americans are very friendly and open and because of them my English has improved so much and they've always helped me.

To me, Bonaire is very special and exotic and I instantly liked the people. My husband Kenneth is an extraordinary person. He has lots of patience and a lot of respect. Many of the tourists he works with at Sorobon have become our friends. We still go camping. We have a beautiful big tent and we camp at different places on the island with Koleta, snacks and a barbecue. Kenneth and I are also planning on opening a lunch café at Lagun and as soon as the paper work is ready we will start there. And we're building our dream house here in the Mexico neighborhood. It will take a while, but we'll make it.

So far, I've been to Russia three times with Koleta for her to meet her family there as my parents are still alive." She laughs. "When I was there and showed them my pictures, my brother's children told me when they saw Kenneth's photos, 'We saw him singing on TV; he sings great!' They thought he was Bob Marley! But every time I miss Bonaire and I want to return as soon as possible to be with my



husband and to be on Bonaire. Of course I miss my family in Russia and my mom feels we're very far away. But I have a big love with my husband and my little daughter and I am happy.

I will stay here forever. I've come from this huge country, Russia, and now I live here on this tiny little island and I have everything I've ever wished for. I finally found my own place in

this world and Bonaire has settled deep in my heart and together with my husband and my daughter it's something I never want to lose, not ever."

Story & photos by Greta Koois-



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Bonaire Windsurfers Take On Europe

RUBEN PETERSIE STARTS THE TOUR WITH A ROAD TRIP TO LAGO DI GARDA, ITALY



Sofa Movie Lab photo

Ruben ready to go

“Let’s go. We leave for Italy in 10 minutes.” Those are the exact words they told me on a Thursday night. Of course it took a bit more time to get ready. Then it took us about five hours to drive from Munich, Germany, to Lago di Garda with the Sofa Movie Lab van which probably has all a surfer wants inside a van.

Its music system was turned up to the max while we enjoyed the nice nightly views of the Alps on the way to that lake where the wind actually starts to blow at 6am -yes, early in the morning-from the north (*peler*). Then it takes a break around 11 am, then turns around and blows less strongly from the south (*ora*) for a few more hours.

The next morning I of course had a bit of a slow, mellow morning mood. The chilly temperatures kept me under the blankets a bit longer than everyone else. The parking place at Malcesine started to look as busy as if there was a World Cup going on. I just had to get out after my morning mood was eased up as I wanted to go and have a few spins on the new chop chop fins from Unifiber.

I was always the last guy in the water but sailing the couple of hours left with a bit of sunshine from behind the huge mountains made the temperatures a bit to my taste. Me, in a thick wetsuit with booties on ...it could not be funnier than that.

After the first five minutes struggling to get used to not really feeling the board and after some runs I was able to stun and pop out some tricks. There were some good freestylers around including World Cupper Mattia Pedrani. We had a small session and some chat about music and windsurfing.

At night we would go for either pizza or pasta which are the specialties in most restaurants around the lake. It was normal to see so many tourists and surfers at this time of the year as spring just started to kick in, with warm temperatures up to 27°C degrees.

The next day the *peler* blew up to 25 knots. At 7am most of the windsurfers were already out there. I again waited until it was after 9 am so the sun would rise and temperatures would not be as cold as in the morning. I went out

with a new mast I received the day before from Reptile masts who are located in Italy. The winds were super for some hard core free styling except for the ice cold feeling of the water.

Before this session, I could not really understand how people could have so much fun sailing all covered up in the cold. I must admit that if I had no booties my sessions would have been very, very short though. Thanks to Martin from Sofa Movie Lab for the nicely fitted booties.

The rest of the days were more or less the same, waking up in the early mornings and heading to Malcesine for a cold morning session. And if the *ora* blows we drive to another spot called Pier, or else we chill and have an Italian espresso, pizza and Stay tuned for the next reports.

The kick off event of the year The Dwarf8 PWA /EFPT classix @ Podersdorf, Austria.. ■ Ruben Petrisie NB-50 sponsored by Loft sails, Reptile Masts, Unifiber and Kamoana clothing

TONKY FRANS TAKES 2ND PLACE IN AUSTRIA’S PODERSORF WINDSURF WORLD CUP

The 2009 European Professional Freestyle Windsurfing Tour at Podersdorf, Austria, took place from May 1st to May 3rd. Our Bonairean superstar, Tonky Frans, sail number NB-7, currently ranked 4th in the Freestyle world, competed in this event. In perfect windsurfing conditions he had to battle against professional windsurfers such as Rossmeier,

PWA photo



Top sailors at Podersorf. Can you ID “The Black Panther,” Tonky?

Simic and Akgazcyan. Akgazcyan was able to win all his heats in a row until he met the “Black Panther” (to use his own words), Tonky Frans.

On the final day, the weather conditions were not that good. In the final battle between the Frenchman Nicolas Akgazcyan and Bonaire’s Tonky Frans, Tonky performed a repertoire of several kinds of loops while Akgazcyan’s was based on a combination of several moves. The judges decided that Akgazcyan would take first place, Tonky, second and Italian Raimondo Gasperini, third.

After the event a super-session of 20 minutes was organized. During this super ses-

sion all professional windsurfers could show their moves. Again Tonky captured the attention of the crowd with his unique way of pulling off clean moves in a natural, relaxed way.

The next stop for Tonky Frans is an Austrian slalom PWA event. Stay tuned for the report of this particular event. For eight consecutive years Tonky has been ranked in the top 10 of the world in Freestyle.

■ Sapphira Coffie



Tonky flips

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BONAIREAN VOICES

THE BONAIREAN WOMAN

During the 80s the Bonairean social infrastructure was set up by a small group of social workers who focused on the needs of the community, from all the corners of the island and from an intensive feedback of networking with volunteers. After their studies in Holland these social workers came back to Bonaire with an intense motivation to rebuild and enhance the social and cultural development of the island. Networking with people from all walks of life was begun, and the team moved into all areas of Bonaire. Those families in need knew where to go. Teachers and sport leaders worked with each other to close the gaps in order to spare the worst for Bonairean children and teens.

Nereida "Nerry" Gonzalez (52, and born in Bonaire) was one of the social-cultural workers who studied in Holland from 1977-1982 and came back with the determination to contribute to a positive and healthy community. She was based at the Department of Social Affairs from 1982 until 1989.

The feminism movement, which highlighted the position of women, was also a strong focal point during that time. Nerry was a member of the UMA (*Union Muhe-nan Antiano*), a feminist organization based in Curaçao but with "wings" in all the Dutch Caribbean islands. The needs in the streets, especially of women, had to be voiced. A monthly women's magazine named *BOSERO* was sold for NAf 1. Workshops, conferences, all kinds of community projects and health issues were brought up during the 80s. Even through theater plays (teatro FORO) consciousness was being raised. International commemorative events such as International Women's Day and the Day of Non-Violence Against Women were organized and were enthusiastically attended in Bonaire.

The rights of women were brought up and discussed, and mainly due to this and after demonstrations and even court cases, the Central Government abolished two discriminatory laws against women. As a result female Government workers were allowed to keep their jobs after marriage. Previously, female government workers were dismissed after they married. The other was equal pay for equal work. Up until 1989 male government male workers earned 25% more than female workers doing the same job.

Bonairean women were very interested in their "Women's Agenda," a UMA project on which Nerry worked with a lot of enthusiasm. The Bonairean contribution to this project was substantial. Women were photographed working in the Bonairean textile factory, Cambes, women

cooking on the **Bonairean confo**, women working in the hospitals and the *Kas di Sosiegu*, women selling fish, and more were shown in these agendas. Nerry is still getting requests every year from some older women for such agendas. All these projects strongly influenced women's consciousness and their position, and women were prepared to reveal incidents of rape, violence and other abuses. One could say that the silence imposed by the rules, roles and restrictions, from both the cultural and religious context was broken.

From 1984 to 1989 Nerry also studied at the University of the Netherlands Antilles established in Curaçao. The government allowed her to travel twice a week to Curaçao for the courses at the University. After she graduated in 1989 she worked as a legal advisor in the Legal Department of the government until 1991. From September 1991 until April 1997 she worked at the PDVSA oil Refinery in Curaçao as a legal advisor but she was travelling back and forth to Bonaire every weekend as her life partner, Robby Beukenboom, was still living in Bonaire and active in politics.

Since May 1997 Nerry has been the General Island Secretary, a function which requires one to have a law degree, considering the general and multiple scope of the work. She is administrative head of all the department heads of the Island Government. The Island Secretary is the only civil servant whose tasks are established in the Island Constitution and is therefore appointed by the Island Council. She is also the executive secretary of the Island Council and heads the administrative services secretariat of the Island Council. Nerry is a responsible and a hard working woman who does her job with great pleasure.

Reflecting on the past, and considering the times that have changed, Nerry is now of the opinion that a change of identity is needed to create the peaceful life that we want for ourselves, our families and our world. Today we see the move to educate communities and people in need in different areas in a more "resource management" way, teaching people to deal with their own resources instead of giving material aid. However, this shift is not enough. "We all need to access the power in ourselves and to recognize the virtues within in order to impact the world outside. By discovering our inner strength we can tap into our creativity, become fearless and will manage to solve our problems which we all will undoubtedly have to encounter."

Nerry recommends using the world around us as a mirror to check our progress. As we change our thinking and our inner capacities, our world will change

accordingly. If our intention is pure, we will see this in our physical environment, in our personal hygiene, at home and in the work place, in our personal and professional relationships, even in our physical health and wellbeing, yes, in our happiness and our prosperity. And from this position we will be much more inspired to contribute

positively to children, to the youth, to adults, to humanity. What we give, we will receive. When we change, the world will change.

Currently Nerry is a member of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual organization (B.K. Center) and continues to empower women and the community from a more spiritual-educational approach. Projects that have been presented from the Bonairean B.K. center have been: The Four faces of Women, Self-Managing Leadership and Positive Thinking.



Bonaire Information Service photo

Most words in this article were inspired by Nerry Gonzalez herself as a member of the Brahma Kumaris center. ■

Siomara E. Albertus

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



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Flotsam and jetsam (Continued from page 2)

► **Raymond Boekhoudt** has been named the new plant manager at the Cargill salt company



► **Last week City Shop** donated an **Aspire personal computer** to the Pelikaan School. In the photo Hamoudy Dabboussi and his daughter, Thaline, hand it over to Mychel Cornelissen, the teacher who handles Information Technology at the school. The computer will be used in Thaline's classroom.

► **Bonaire Basics** will host two, six-week yoga classes which will consist of a combination of Hatha Yoga and Power Yoga, with the emphasis on Hatha, using breathing techniques (pranayama) and body exercises (asanas). Hailing from an ancient tradition originated in India, Yoga has long since provided people with a refuge away from the everyday confusion, entropy and stress. Mica Brouwer, a very experienced instructor, will guide the class. The first class began May 5, the second will begin May 7. Each six-week session (one day per week) costs NAf 105. Call 788-1058 for more details.



Marion Wilson and Sara Matera of BONHATA (ends), present a check to Morela Wanner and Ruth Domacassé.

► Bonaire's Hotel and Tourism Association (BONHATA) held its quarterly breakfast meeting at Kontiki. Along with great ambience, networking and a fine breakfast, they donated a check to the Princess Wilhelmina Fonds Bonaire (Cancer Society) for NAf 1,600. This was money raised at a fundraiser earlier this year.



► **Divi Flamingo Beach Resort & Casino** celebrated their Employee "Give Me 5"



James and Vicky at Sunshine Homes

Me 5 " program for the first quarter of 2009. Over NAf 600 was given to the employees who exceeded hotel guests expectations. Guests register that employee's name on a comment card. Each mention gives the employee \$5, accumulated over the quarter.

► **Bonaire Sunshine Homes** will host its 3rd Annual "Open House" on **Saturday May 16th**, from 9 am to 4:30 pm at their office on Kaya Libertador Simon Bolivar 26, across from Scarlet's-Flower Shop and Lee's Bar.

If you have a rental property, apartment, storage space, business or land this event offers free accurate and trustworthy advice without any "obligation" for you to get an idea how much you can rent your property.

Their clientele includes SELIBON, WEB, the Regional Service Center, the BC, Dutch Defense Force, FCB, SGB, Bon Fysio, MNO, Mariadal Foundation and many more.

► The Palacios Family has announced that their harbor-side restaurant, **Patagonia Argentinean Restaurant, will re-open for lunch beginning Tuesday, May 5.** The lunch menu will be similar to the extensive offerings available at dinner, along with some occasional specials. **The restaurant will be open from 11:30am until 2:30pm every Tuesday through Friday.** For additional information, visit their web site at www.patagoniarestaurant.com. Email Patagonia_restaurant@hotmail.com



► **Don't forget the classical concert this Saturday, May 9**, performed on Bonaire's new grand piano. The concert will be at the Plaza Resort in the Cacique Hall at 8 pm and is organized by the Classical Music Board Bonaire. The entrance fee is NAf 35., which includes an intermission drink.

If you want to attend the concert please call 717-4496 or 717-5767 or email, guusgerritsen@bonairelive.com or hansfaas-sen@gmail.com.

There are only 175 seats available.

► **Remember readers, The Reporter is brought to you FREE through the support of our loyal advertisers.** Be sure to visit them and say, "The Reporter sent me." ■ G./L.D.

► **As part of Earth Day (known as Dia di Mama Tera in Bonaire) observances there was a major tree planting in Washington Park** under STINAPA's direction. Commissioner Elvis Tjin Asjoe (at right) had the honor of planting the first tree. Concurrent with Earth Day was the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Bonaire Marine Park and the 40th of Washington Park. Go to the website www.stinapa.org to see the "anniversary" calendar, where you will find additional festivities and their respective dates.

Bonaire has numerous other organizations which are concerned about the environment. They include: L.V.V., DROB, Selibon, STINAPA, Bonaire Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire, Bonaire Nature Alliance, *Mangasina di Rei* Foundation, Donkeys Help, and the parrot preservation organization, *Salba Nos Lora*.



► On May 2nd some of the current and past *Bonaire Reporter* staff members (above) got together to celebrate **your newspaper's 15th anniversary at Kunuku Shimaruku.**

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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 12.** Supplied by *Molly Bartikoski-Kearney*

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

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Pet of the Week

One of the managers of the Bonaire Animal Shelter, Monique, is shown holding "Coco," an adorable cuddly pup. Not only is his coloring an unusual chocolate brown with caramel accents but he has gorgeous green eyes. What a looker. He's only about two months old. He was brought into the Shelter by a Good Samaritan who brings in pups who are unwanted and/or abandoned. This lady is known as "the dog woman," an animal lover. Lucky for Coco that she found him because now he's in a safe and loving place with good food and tender care. Coco is in perfect health, having been examined by the vet. He's been tested, wormed and has had his shots. The Shelter adoption fee of NAf 105 for dogs includes all this as well as sterilization when he's old enough.



Monique with "Coco"

Stop by for a visit at the Shelter on the Lagoen Road. They're open Monday through Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm and 3 to 5 pm. Telephone: 717-4989. ■ L.D.

BonQuiz #6

Test your knowledge of Bonaire

What was this coral stone construction used for?

A long, long time ago, and not so far away, the southern shores of Bonaire were bustling and bustling with trade. Salt was the product being exported. The southernmost parts of Bonaire were economically important for the island. And I'll tell you why. The Netherlands had been getting their salt from Portugal, but this ended when Spain went to war with Portugal in the 1500s. The Dutch needed to find a place where they could find salt again as it was vital in preserving and curing meat. The "pyramids" on the south shore - red, white, blue (the Dutch flag's colors) and orange (the Royal family's color) - were mainly used by the arriving ships to locate the salt pond where harvesting was taking place at that time. Even though these pyramids were erected to be used as markers, they were also used on occasion to tie the vessels to, and abrasions at the bottom of the markers are still visible. The object in the photo is circular and is made out of coral. There are two of these between orange and red pan. One of these lies in the parking lot near the *Skol di Musika* in town and should be returned to its original spot! ■ Story & photo by Christie Dovale



Find the answer on page 16.

BonQuiz appears regularly in *The Reporter*. It's prepared by Christie Dovale of Christie Dovale Island Tours. Contact her to arrange a tour, Phone 717-4435 or 795-3456 or email: christie-dovale@hotmail.com. Comments and suggestions are welcome. ■





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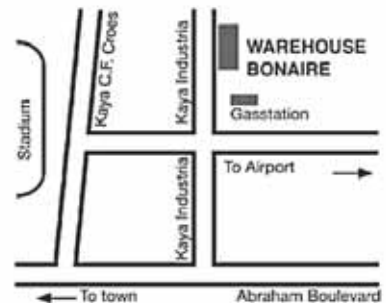
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Rincon / Queen's Day 2009

This year's commemoration of Queen's day was overshadowed by an attempt on the life of the Dutch royals.

Seven persons died as a result of a car attack during the Queen's Day celebrations in Apeldoorn last Thursday. A disgruntled Dutchman, Karst Tate (38), who deliberately drove his car at break-neck speed through the crowd of specta-

tors in an admitted assassination attempt on the royal family, died of his injuries in the hospital the next day. Four Antilleans were injured along with many Dutch people. Wilfrido Plantijn from Curaçao, and six other members of the Antillean folkloric dance group *Eksploshon Kultural* (Cultural Explosion) from the city of Almere were standing at the road barrier through which the driver of the black Su-

zuki Swift crashed in an attempt to hit the bus with the royal family during the Queen's Day festivities. The speeding car, already dented apparently from catapulting bystanders into the air, passed within a few meters of the open-topped bus carrying Queen Beatrix and her family down a parade route, then smashed into a stone monument.

In a somber televised address on Thurs-

day, following the deaths of the people at the royal parade in Apeldoorn, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands told the Dutch people that she was "speechless that something so terrible could have happened." Queen's Day events were muted throughout the Dutch Kingdom as a result. Flags were flown at half-mast.

In Bonaire the activities were slightly more subdued than usual. ■ G.D.



Marian Walthie photo

Commemorating the slavery days

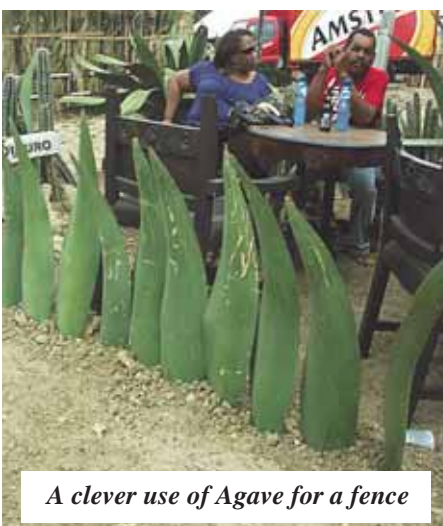


The friendly Caribbean Homes traveling sign was visited by its young model

Marian Walthie photo



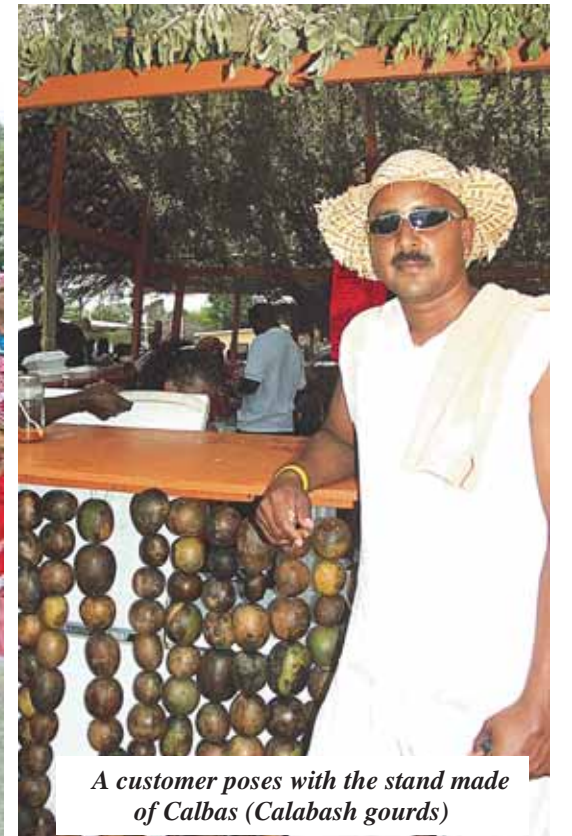
The Lions roared and served great food



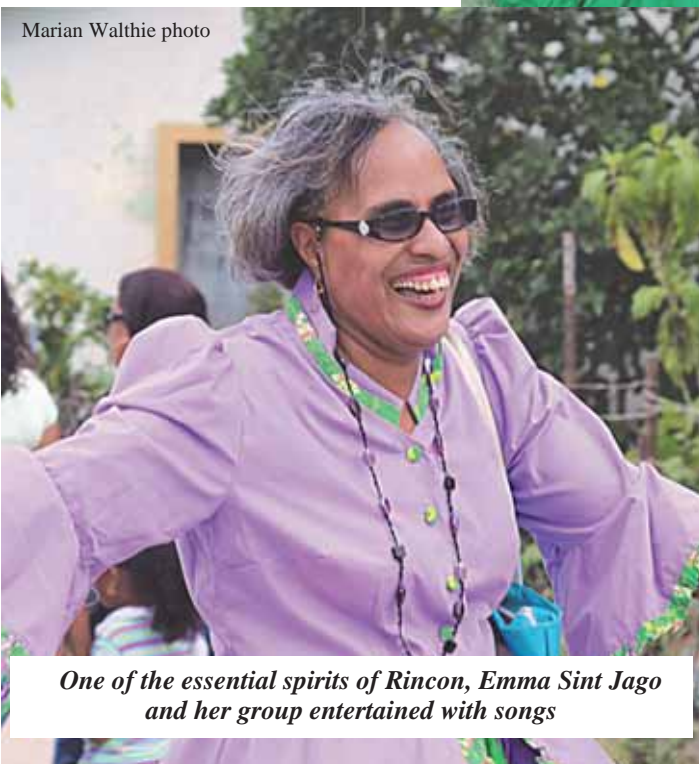
A clever use of Agave for a fence



Who would ever guess this group is from Rincon?



A customer poses with the stand made of Calbas (Calabash gourds)



Marian Walthie photo

One of the essential spirits of Rincon, Emma Sint Jago and her group entertained with songs



Marian Walthie photo

Two young ladies in traditional dresses



Marian Walthie photo

The end of a perfect day

First Hamburger Competition Bonaire's

A lively group of competitors, judges, and spectators gathered at Roomer's Hotel on Friday, May 1st for Bonaire's First Annual Hamburger Competition.

Inspired by cook-off competitions viewed on the Food Network, it was the wish of organizer and BBQ-aficionado, Edward "Eddie" Thielman, to hold a similar event on Bonaire. After he approached several friends and family with the idea, all were enthusiastic and eager to participate.

Contestants were:

Pierro "Tio Peto" Cicilia, with his La Cubana burger
 Marc "Karkey" Abdul, with his Mc Abby burger
 Mira "M&M" Mann, with her Paradise Patty burger
 Milka "Oma" Martis, with her BES burger
 Michele "Turtle" Celestijn, with his Roomie burger

The day of competition the sun was shining, the BBQ was hot, and the atmosphere was vibrant with the "Ozone Trio" chanting customized songs for each contestant. Rivalry was fierce, but all in fun as there was a great sense of camaraderie amongst the participants.



The Contestants



The Ozone Trio pumped up the spirit

The judging panel had five judges who evaluated the burgers based on Appearance, Taste, Doneness (properly cooked), Use of Ingredients, and Originality/ Inventiveness. Upon presenting their burger to the judging panel, each contestant was asked to describe the inspiration for their burger. According to the judges, all burgers were delicious, but only one could be declared the winner. After the scores were tallied only six points separated all burgers!

It was an honor to have Bonaire's Lt. Governor in attendance to announce the results and hand over the prizes. The winner of Bonaire's First Hamburger Competition was Pierro Cicilia's "La Cubana" burger with a total of 83 points. Inspired by his trips to Cuba to visit the family of his wife, he became appreciative of the extraordinary way in which a burger is served in Cuba. Since it is a rare occasion that the average Cuban is able to afford to eat a hamburger, both the burger and the plate are adorned with as many ingredients as possible to make it an entire meal. Second place went to Michele "Turtle" Celestijn (81 points) and Third place to Milka "Oma" Martis (79 points).



"La Cubana" winning burger

Immense thanks go to: Roomer's Hotel for sponsoring the location and runner-up prizes; Bonaire Gift Shop for sponsoring first, second and third place prizes;

Future Distributions for sponsorship of t-shirts for the organizers, judges and competitors; Unbelievable Restaurant for sponsoring dinner certificates for the first, second and third place burgers;

BoTV and The Bonaire Reporter for their coverage.

The event was deemed a great success and Eddie's wish was fulfilled. Plans are underway to organize a bigger competition with more categories in the very near future - stay tuned for details! ■ Story & photos by Nydia Thielman

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Decorated by the Queen

Four Bonaire residents received royal decorations this year to help mark the occasion of the Queen's Official Birthday, April 30. They were honored for their valuable contributions to the island's community and other outstanding achievements.

Lt. Governor Glenn Thodé, Queen Beatrix's representative on Bonaire, made the awards at a reception at his residence in Playa on April 29. Honored were:



Walter Valentino Coffie - Knight in the Order of Oranje Nassau.

Walter Coffie was born on Bonaire on October 2, 1943. After serving for 16 years as a civil servant with the police corps he was named head of the Civil Registry (*Bevolking*) a post he held until his retirement.

From 1980 he served as a supplementary official in the Public Ministry and as a member of the supervisory commission of the

House of Detention.

Mr. Coffie was always active in the Bonaire community, serving as Secretary of the Football Board, Vice-president of the Bonaire Protestant Community and was instrumental in the restoration of the Protestant Church in Playa, as well as many related activities. His perseverance and dedication are a model for all.

He is the father of *Bonaire Reporter* author Sapphira Coffie.



Cecilia Evers-Fernandes Pedra -Member in the Order of Oranje Nassau

Cecilia Evers-Fernandes Pedra was born on Aruba on November 22, 1948. Even though not born on Bonaire, because of her honesty, integrity and positivism she is considered an inspiration to the Bonairean community, especially youngsters.

In 1997 she helped found the *Ban Boneiru Bek* (Let's Return to Bonaire) Foundation to stimulate repatriation of Bonaireans living

overseas, especially in Holland, to return to their roots. She's not a stranger to Bonaire, having served for 30 years in various functions at the SGB High School.

In May, 1983, she became a member of the Guardianship Council and in July 1991, its President. She is involved in many activities which improve the opportunity, education and ability of her fellow human beings. She is the mother of *Bonaire Reporter* writer Mary Ann Koops.



Allerd Stikker-Member in the Order of Oranje Nassau

Allerd Stikker was born on April 15, 1928 in Noordwijkerhout, Holland. During his life he exhibited enthusiasm and dedication in helping people in third-world countries, receiving high marks at the national and international level. His organization, The Ecological Management

Foundation (EMF) launched in 1990, was a non-profit effort to support various projects of reconstruction of historic monuments in China, in addition to providing sanitation and clean water.

In Bonaire beginning in 1990 Mr. Stikker provided financial and practical support for various projects to protect Bonaire's natural environment. His support for Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire and initiatives to begin the Bonaire Nature Alliance are still fruitful. As a retiree he sets an example for other *pensionados* to use their experience to help Bonaire.

she gained valuable on-the-job training in the hospital and collected certification whenever available. Finally in 1976, overcoming many obstacles that were out of her control she obtained her "care nurse" diploma and began working as a "district nurse" for the Bonaire government for the next 25 years.

In her work in Rincon Mrs. Domacassé especially focused on those residents suffering from problems with sight and hearing and set up procedures to give them necessary assistance. She was a source of information for *Servicio pa Asuntunan Sosial* (SASO-Social Services) and maintained close contact both with the organization and her patients. Her discreet and courteous service maintained the dignity of her patients.

In 1987 she was named Woman of the Year.

Mrs Domacassé is the prime mover behind the Pasadia Co-CaRi center and is currently on the board. ■

Nominations are now being solicited for next year's round of Royal Decorations and can be sent by individuals or organizations to the Royal Decorations Advisory Committee (RODAC).

Special forms are available from the committee chairman, Robert Sances, or any committee member. Nominees must have carried out voluntary activities that impacted the community for an extended period of time and must still be active at the time of nomination. ■ G.D.



BONAIRE Heineken JAZZ FESTIVAL 2009
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SOLUTION TO DO YOU SUDOKU?

Puzzle on page 8

485 972 316
192 563 748
376 418 592
719 256 483
623894 175
548 137 269
231789 654
867 345 921
954 621 837

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The Reporter In...**

**Greenbriar Resort
West Virginia**

Here's a photo of Howard and Kim Harrison of Ashland, Kentucky, USA, and Sand Dollar Resort, Bonaire, while standing in front of the Greenbriar Resort, located in White Sulfur Springs, West Virginia, USA.

Howard and Kim are subscribers of the printed edition of *The Bonaire Reporter* that gets mailed to them every month. ■



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*, Box 407, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles (AN). E-mail to: info@bonairereporter.com.

KRALENDIJK TIDES (Heights in feet, FT)

Remember: Winds and weather can further influence the local tide's height and time

DATE	Time	Ht.	Time	Ht.	Time	Ht.	Time	Ht.	COEF
5-08	0:08	2.0FT.	9:45	0.8FT.					85
5-09	0:47	2.0FT.	10:45	0.8FT.					86
5-10	1:25	2.0FT.	11:44	0.7FT.					84
5-11	2:04	2.0FT.	12:24	0.7FT.					80
5-12	2:46	1.9FT.	13:01	0.7FT.					74
5-13	3:28	1.8FT.	13:35	0.7FT.					67
5-14	4:06	1.8FT.	13:59	0.8FT.					59
5-15	4:55	1.7FT.	14:17	0.8FT.					50
5-16	5:39	1.6FT.	14:30	0.9FT.					42
5-17	2:59	1.4FT.	6:27	1.5FT.	14:32	0.9FT.	22:40	1.5FT.	36
5-18	4:17	1.3FT.	7:28	1.4FT.	14:20	1.0FT.	21:56	1.6FT.	35
5-19	5:31	1.2FT.	8:17	1.3FT.	14:04	1.0FT.	21:55	1.7FT.	40
5-20	6:25	1.1FT.	9:33	1.2FT.	13:52	1.0FT.	22:09	1.8FT.	50
5-21	7:30	1.0FT.	10:38	1.1FT.	13:40	1.0FT.	22:32	1.9FT.	62
5-22	8:23	0.9FT.	23:05	2.0FT.					75



Reward: For information leading to the return of Charlie, our Fila Brasileiro, age 1. Missing since April 7 from the neighborhood of Kaya Opal, Republiek. He wears a black collar with studs. He or she who brings him back safely to us can count on a good reward! Please be good to him!
Please call us with any information: **701-5539 or 786-3933 or 717-3258**



Missing Cat: Missed dearly by us and all five of our male cats: our female calico cat "Zappa". Zappa is about one year old, dark with ginger spots ("schildpad"), she has a tail like a squirrel and is very friendly. We live in the area of Belnem. Please call if you have seen Zappa: **786-7440 or e-mail: bimaro@flamingotv.net**

The Bonaire Reporter Back In Time To 1996 Comemorating 15 Years

JOIN US TO GO BACK IN BONAIRE'S HISTORY TO 1996 – 13 YEARS AGO.

Some of the top stories in 1996 were the threat of development to Klein Bonaire, the bank robbery, the investigation into the Parker Project-Point Hotel scandal and problems as Bonaire's population reaches 14,000.

The Port Call newsheet grew as the island did. It went from four pages to six to eight pages by the end of 1996. "Spot color" was added to its printed edition in January. It was available by subscription: \$25 for 12 issues mailed anywhere in the world. In February the first actual photo (in black in white) appeared. New columns were introduced: "Dive Site of the Week by The Crab;" "Our Man off Playa," "Marine Park Roundup," "Bonaire's Yachting Tourists by Carol Neymeyer, Dr. George Buckley's series on "Little Known Facts of Bonaire's Marine Life and Reef," a series of stories by Capt. Don and "Sea Scene" with Kralendijk Tides.

During the year the number of yachts in port varied from 41 to a record 111 in October. Bonaire became known as the place for yachts to hide from hurricanes.

Here's a retrospective of some of the news as it appeared in Port Call (previous name of The Bonaire Reporter) in 1996.

Jan.5

-Web lowers rates as of first of year for hotels only: 22.7 NAf cents per kilowatt hour for electricity and 8.1 NAf per cubic meter of water... significantly lower than homeowners' rates.

Jan. 12

-**"The Liners are Coming"** – Fastest cruise ship built in last 25 years, *Oriana*, will visit Bonaire. Six luxury liners will make their initial call, thanks to Bonaire Cruise Association (shipping agents, businessmen, TCB, BON-HATA, Kralendijk Port Services & Bonaire Tours). Bonaire Shipping Manager Gustowski has **two ships a week as his goal**.

-**The Central Bank of the Netherlands Antilles is broke.** (The IMF bailed them out later)

-**Bonaire's population is now more than 14,000.** (In 2008 the Bonaire population has finally returned to this level)

-1,435 people moved to Bonaire in 1995. (1,652 arrived in 2008)

Jan. 19

- A **sales tax** is in the works, the **room tax** is set to rise, surcharges on parcels arriving by sea or air. **Prices at gas stations** are slightly higher.

-BOPEC (oil terminal) and ARM (Antillean Rice Mills) shipped record amounts of their products.

-**More foreigners than locals married** in Bonaire last year: 77 non-islanders (69 were Dutch cou-

ples) versus 73 locals

- **Coast Guard** for the Netherlands Antilles set up, primarily for the purpose of drug interdiction.

-**Gas pump shock:** prices rose about 10% . Per liter - Unleaded-NAf 1.173; Regular- NAf 1.148; Diesel-NAf 0.453

-**Bonaire rated #1** Diving from shore in the world says *Rodales Scuba Diving Magazine*. Bruce Bowker's Carib Inn rated top dive operation on Bonaire; Bon Bini Divers managed by Susan Davis is runner up.

Feb. 9

-Winners of **"What Bonaire Doesn't Have and Doesn't Want" Contest** – Many of the entries had a message: The relatively unspoiled Bonaire environment must be preserved, protected and improved. Several focused on the negative impact of the automobile on the island. Some entries: 24 hour convenience stores, 6 lanes of anything, advertising from planes, bridge to Klein Bonaire, commuter traffic, gun shop, hurricanes, iguana farm, jetski rentals, Marine land, McDonalds, parking meters, parasailing, refineries, sales tax, segregation, spearfishing, steel mill, subways, the Marlboro Man, topless bars, traffic lights, turtle soup. Ann Joseph and associates wins the contest

-Island Council says that the NAf 120,000 in **dive tag fees collected by Stinapa will be for Marine Park use only**. Money from the diving fees had been diverted for other uses, but legislation says the \$10 fee will be for the exclusive use of the Marine Park.

-Newly paved **tourist road** along the west coast

-**TCB says 60,000 tourists** (US-45%; Europe-34%) took vacation in Bonaire in 1995. (It wasn't until 2007 that tourist arrivals again matched those figures)

-Big thanks to ZeeZicht and Karel's Beach Bar for providing **dinghy tie up and trash disposal to visiting yachts**. (Stopped in 2008)

Feb. 16

-**"Bank Robbers Escape by Speedboat."** On Thursday, February 8, shortly after 8 am, five heavily armed men entered the main branch of MCB in Playa, told everyone to lie down and emptied the cashiers' tills. The vault time lock hadn't opened yet. A woman customer entered the bank and a gunman shot her in the leg. A security guard was hit over the head and knocked to the floor. An employee phoned police but management was reluctant to call in armed response because of the possibility of a hostage situation developing. They got NAf 39,000 and \$4,000 plus the customers' money.

Feb. 23

-**Klein Bonaire in Peril-** Klein Bonaire Development Company, a consortium of unnamed investors, has requested a permit for construction of a resort on the east end of the island. (This is the start of a

five-year long effort to have Klein Bonaire reserved as a wilderness area for the use of Bonaireans.

-Complaints about **too many cars on Bonaire**. Traffic jams are becoming common at peak hours and parking a problem.



Port Call photo shows baby Christopher Romijn with caption, "Get Klein Bonaire back for Christopher"

Mar. 8

-Get Klein Back! On September 1, 1868, the Dutch government sold it to Angel Jeserun and ever since it's been in private hands, one of which is **Maurice Neme**. It is the moral obligation of the present Dutch government to correct the mistake of the past

Mar. 15

-**Saving Klein Bonaire** –Support grows. Marine Park Manager reports inquiries from Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife, private individuals sympathetic to preservation. Minister of Tourism Jopie Abraham opposed to any development on Klein. *Extra* newspaper believes the Dutch government must buy it back and return it to the people of the Antilles. (Is what ultimately occurred in 1999.)

-**New taxes coming:** 50% increase in room tax will hit next month. Being considered by Island Council are an increase in the airport departure and new taxes on tourists arriving by boats.

-International Fishing Tournament will mark **Bonaire's first Tag and Release tournament** – only required for billfish under 200 lbs.

-Bonaire Shipping's Steve Gustowski's aim of **two cruise ships in Bonaire a week** was exceeded.

- **The Bonaire Windsurfing Place set to open next month** – a partnership of Patun Sarogosa, Elvis "Piskichi" Martinus and Roger's Windsurfing of Aruba.

-Late season cold front causes swells, mild wind reversals and heavy rain, causing beach erosion, smashed private piers in Belnem area and damaged corals on the west side of Bonaire and Klein Bonaire.

April 1

-**First April Fools edition of Port Call.** (last edition was in 2007)

-**Another English language weekly, Arco**, by Michiel Bijkerk,

begins.

April 19

-Five convicts break out of Bonaire lockup, arm themselves and hotwire the fishing boat, *Alsiking*, to sail out of Lac Bay. They ran into shoals and went hard aground. Leaving the engine running, they jumped overboard and disappeared. The boat was severely damaged but the convicts were apprehended.

May 10

-**TCB reports:** In 1980 – 4,700 divers used Bonaire's reefs; in 1990, 16,500; then 1995, 25,000. "The government should control the developers and make laws to protect the underwater life. Bonaire's fringing reef is the keystone of its economic life. A sewage treatment plant must be built, limits put on the number of motor vehicles, upgrade the Marine Park organization and more."

-Maritime **Museum's inaugural Board of Directors got together to revitalize the campaign to set up a maritime museum** for the island. (The campaign failed and the museum was never realized.)

May 24

-The sail-fishing boat *Eagle* to be rebuilt as the first project of the Bonaire Maritime Museum. (Unfortunately the money needed never materialized and the *Eagle* continued to deteriorate and the scraps had to be hauled away.)

-A special team of investigators on the island **trying to get to the bottom of the Parker Project-Point Hotel scandal**. Five years ago the Government of the Antilles, with the backing of Holland, guaranteed a loan to Robert Parker, a hotelier from the US, to build a 5-star resort hotel near the airport in the area locally called Flamingo Paradise. The project was built by Stephany Construction, an Italian firm. An international staff was hired and brought to the island. Training of local people was begun. But completion dragged on. Then, just before the hotel was to open, Parker pulled out, saying he'd run out of money and had sold to new owners, who turned out to be his cronies who proceeded to shut the project down. Large debts were left unpaid to local businesses, employees were owed salaries, and there seemed no way to collect. The hotel, filled with furniture and looking complete to a quick glance, remained closed for years until it was purchased last year (1995) at a fraction of its construction costs by the Dutch van der Valk hotel chain and opened as the



Perhaps the last remaining part of the Eagle-a bow fitting from The Reporter memento box.

Plaza Resort. When Parker pulled out the government was left having to pay the loan to the lending Swiss bankers – approximately NAf 18,000 a day. The new sales tax is to pay off this debt.

-**Bonaire's new and only movie theatre opens** and will show first run movies.

-**Internet on Bonaire very expensive** because voice line toll charges apply: \$24 per hour! *Port Call* spearheads an effort to reduce toll charges to \$1/hr or less. They need an estimate of use to convince Telbo.

June 21

-**(Fundashon Preservashon Klein Boneiru (FPKB)** set up to save the small island from development. (In 1999 the FKPD prevailed and "transferred" Klein Bonaire to the Bonaire Government with the proviso that it never be developed)

-Permission has been given to dredge and clean out Lagoon.

July 12

-**New sales tax is law.** For example, tax on restaurant meal is 6%

-**TCB petitions American Airlines to fly to Bonaire**

July 19

-MCB bank introduces free touch-tone banking and bill paying by phone -Telebanking.

-Trouble in the streets of Curaçao due to new sales tax

July 26

-**New doctors** – resident surgeon Dr. Bender, visiting surgeon from Curaçao, Dr. van der Veen, and Dr. Trieste, resident anesthetist. **Operating room at San Francisco Hospital finally a reality.**

August 16

-**Klein Bonaire Video being shot by Matt Sellars, news director of WCIV-TV** -Charleston, N.C. ABC Network Affiliate. (The video caught the attention of environmental officials in Holland and was considered key to obtaining support from the WWF and the Dutch government.)

-AKZO-Nobel of Arnhem, The Netherlands, **sells its salt industries to US company, Cargill.**

Sept. 13

-Economist Theo Tijssen, one of the original directors of BOPEC and an executive with Bonaire Trading, will begin working for the Island Government as a consultant. **Mr. Tijssen favors economic separation of Bonaire from Curaçao and operating Bonaire on a US dollar standard.** (That is set to happen next year)

-**New law passed** to make business of government more open to the people: *Lei di Gobernashon Transparante*. (Really?)

Sept. 27

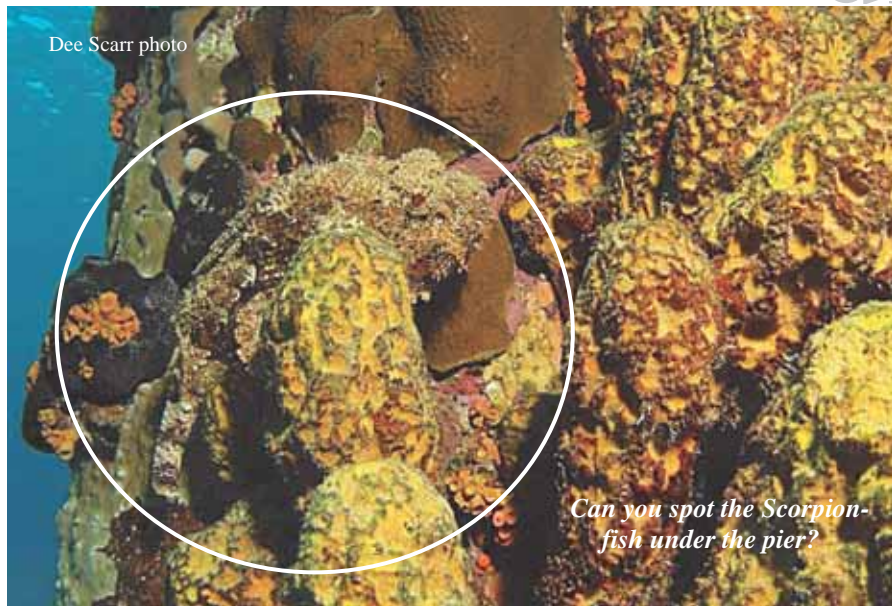
-Thousands of comments condemning any plan to develop a resort on Klein Bonaire are being channeled to the TCB office by *Rodales Scuba Diving Magazine*

Oct. 4

-Buddy Dive opens the island's

(Continued on page 16)

Bonaire's Incredible Pier



Dee Scarr photo

Can you spot the Scorpion-fish under the pier?

DIVING BONAIRE'S CHICU MERCELINA WHARF (AKA NORTH PIER AKA TOWN PIER AKA OLD PIER)

Open Letter to Bonaire Divers:

Bonaire's Old Pier is one of the best-known individual dive sites in the world, for good reason. More than 200 pilings host flourishing communities of attached life, all in water shallower than 35'. Resident sponges display colors from purple through red and on to yellow and green, and their shapes include single and multiple tubes, flat encrustations, and mini-volcanoes. Brilliantly-hued orange cup coral clusters fill in much of the piling surfaces between sponges. Reef-building corals, Christmas tree worms and other critters take up the space that's left. Residing in the nooks and crannies of the encrusted pilings are the mobile residents: arrow crabs and decorator crabs, banded coral shrimp and red backed cleaner shrimp. Four different octopus species reside beneath the Pier, along with more spotted drums than I ever see on a reef. Fairy basslets flutter alongside pilings in water as shallow as a few feet.

I first dived the Pier on October 8th, 1980. The more unusual sights I've seen there include a manta ray, a southern stingray, and a spotted eagle ray, spotted spoon-nosed eels, squid mating and the female depositing her egg clusters. The only black brotula I've ever seen in the wild. The first umbrella snail I've ever seen, and, a couple of years later, a pair of them mating. A diver wearing a Halloween mask over his scuba mask.

Pier diving supports its own mini-economy: dive masters earn extra income by guiding divers in this remarkable habitat. In each of the past few years, thousands of divers have explored the underwater world of the Pier.

Pier diving has also caused unexpected expenses for the Harbormaster's Office: just the cost of paper and fax materials for dive permits—required for international security since 2005—actually pushed the HMO out of budget last year!

Tropical Depression/Tropical Storm/Hurricane Omar changed all that. Omar's waves smashed into the underside of the Pier, partly dislodging pipes and cables that had carried utility lines to ships at the Pier. After Omar, ships could no longer get water, electricity, or telephone lines at the Old Pier. Cables, wires, and even

pipes dangle above the bottom and/or rest on the bottom. For safety reasons, our Harbormaster's Office closed the Pier to recreational diving after Omar, until the area is cleared. The decision has been made to clear the pipes and cables as part of soon-to-begin renovations, which are expected to be completed next year.

I'm worried that this could be a good time to prohibit diving at the Pier entirely. After all, from the government's perspective, prohibiting all diving at the Pier is easier than allowing any diving there. No longer would employee time or other expenses be incurred. A prohibition also eliminates any issues with divers distressed at not being permitted to dive the Pier because of unexpected ship arrivals or other schedule changes.

My response to these (not-yet-heard) arguments is that allowing folks to dive the Pier has real value to Bonaire: **The Pier is an incredible dive, so it enhances the Bonaire experience for hundreds of divers a year.**

Realizing that **this incredible dive takes place beneath a functioning commercial Pier** enhances people's opinion of the wonderful marine environment surrounding our island, and of the wonderful work of the BNMP in protecting it. The fact that **permitting diving beneath this commercial Pier is part of Bonaire's International Shipping and Port Security Plan emphasizes Bonaire's commitment to divers.** It would have been very easy for Bonaire to ban diving under its commercial piers as part of its

ISPS plan.

The regular presence of divers, who can report conditions, gives multiple underwater eyes to the Harbormaster's Office and to the BNMP. On at least one occasion, evidence provided by divers enabled the BNMP to fine a ship that had dumped over 100 pounds of broken glass and other trash while docked at the Pier. Marine Park rangers and volunteer divers removed the debris.

Taking those last two sections into account, it should be no surprise that I think the time for action is wa-a-ay before the renovations are completed. I think the time for action is **now.**

We who want to dive the Pier must make it clear we support the Harbormaster's Office.

We must make it clear we are willing to



Dee Scarr photo

A Flame lobster checking out divers.

pay a fee to dive the Pier.

We must make it clear we are willing to act to maintain and protect the life beneath the Pier.

Those of us who are interested in working toward these goals should work together, don't you think? We can combine our ideas and talents and come up with a program that will help everyone.

If you're interested in joining the cause of keeping Pier diving open on Bonaire—regardless of whether you're a working instructor or guide, a resident of Bonaire, or a visitor -- please contact me by e-mail by May 31, 2009:

dee@touchthesea.com. Once we know who we are we can begin preparing for action.

Hope to hear from you! ■

Dee Scarr

Underwater naturalist Dee Scarr is the recipient of numerous awards for her coral reef conservation efforts. Her "Touch the Sea" guided dives are legendary. Catch her multimedia show at Captain Don's Habitat Resort Mondays at 8:30 pm.



Bubbles from the Biologist



STCB photo

Releasing a tagged Green sea turtle

To all of you New England snowbirds out there: **Did You Know...**that the same sea turtles that can be seen off the coast of Bonaire travel thousands of miles each year to feed in the frigid waters of the North Atlantic? That's right, tropical climates are not the only place you can go to enjoy these gentle creatures. Of the four species of sea turtles that visit Bonaire, the Leatherback sea turtle is by far the largest and most hearty of them all.

They can grow up to 3 meters long (9 feet) and weigh up to 700kg (1,540lbs.). That's as much as three full-grown donkeys! After nesting in the Caribbean, Atlantic Leatherbacks begin their long journey north to the rich feeding grounds off the coasts of places like Massachusetts, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. They have even been spotted as far north as the St. Lawrence River near Quebec. Leatherback sea turtles are the only reptile that can live in the cold temperatures found in those regions. Although the turtles can withstand these harsh environments, many do not survive the nets of the North Atlantic fishing fleets. That is why it is important for everyone to know that turtles need to be protected in every part of the ocean if we want to continue enjoying their presence on our tropical vacations. ■

Marylou Hildebrand

Hildebrand is a senior at the University of California, San Diego, majoring in ecology, behavior, and evolution. She is currently studying at the CIEE Research Station and can be seen snorkeling every

Wednesday with Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire, looking for sea turtles of course.



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WHAT'S HAPPENING

HAPPENINGS

Sculptress Josephine Ebing Exhibit in the garden of Kaya Grandi 85. Ebing's show will be open from 10 am to 12 noon and from 3 to 7 pm.

Friday, May 8—Mama Modelo Bonaire, *Un Show Espectakular*, by A.D. Productions, 8:30 pm to midnight, Jong Bonaire, NAf 15. 786-9090, 516-9090.

Saturday, May 9, Piano Concert. Livio Hermans plays Bach, Chopin, etc. Plaza Resort, NAf35, 717-4496, 717-5767. More on page 3

Saturday, May 9—Open House at Bonaire Sunshine Homes, 9 am to 4:30 pm. Snacks, drinks, games. Kaya Lib. Simon Bolivar. See page 2.

Saturday, May 9—AWC Wine Tasting. Snacks and tasting of six wines for \$10 (NAf17,50) per person. Tel. 560-7539. **At the Antillean Wine Company's warehouse** on Kaya Industria, 7-9 pm.

Sunday, May 10 -(Mothers Day)

June 4-7—5th Annual Bonaire Heineken Jazz Festival.

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. NAf10 per selling table. (NAf 5 goes to up-keep the park). NGOs can have a free table. More information and reservations for a spot call **Vicky Bissessar - 786 1592.**

• **Wine Tasting at Antillean Wine Company's warehouse** on Kaya Industria, **second Saturday of the month, 7-9 pm.** Snacks and tasting of six wines for \$10 (NAf17,50) per person. Tel. 560-7539.

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

Mondays

• **Soldachi Tours of Rincon**, the heart of Bonaire, 9 am-noon. \$20-Call Maria, 717-6435-best island tour value

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

Monday-Dee Scarr's Touch the Sea Slide Presentation, Capt. Don's Habitat, 8:30 pm. 717-8529

Tuesday —Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire presents the *Sea Turtles of Bonaire Slide Show*. Every 1st & 3rd Tuesday, Buddy Dive Resort, 7pm—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 7pm.

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 December 25th. and January 1st. **Call 788 - 9015 or 796 - 5681**

CLUBS and MEETINGS

AA meetings - every Wednesday at 7pm. Phone: 786-4651 or 786-7971

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. 717-2066

Toastmasters Club meets every two weeks. For more information call Cruxita 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 Salina, 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:

The Bonaire Reporter
Email reporter@bonairenews.com
Tel:790-6518, 786-6125
or 790-8988

BonQuiz Answer

They were originally used as moorings to secure the ships when they were loading the salt



Question on Page 9

(Look back to 1996 Continued from page 14)
first drive-through dive tank fill station.

Nov. 1

-Animal Shelter may be shut down due to lack of money. Massive fund raising:



BBQ, *Port Call* sponsors Batman to boost the Shelter at party at Club Nautico, t-shirt sales, donations.

Nov. 15

-Animal Shelter reopens and is accepting dogs once again.

Nov. 22

-Dutch Parliament members meet with local conservation organizations and other groups to hear their concerns. **They especially focused on the problems of sewage discharge into the island's aquifer.**

Bonaire Marine Park's goal is to ensure the island's coral reefs, sea grass beds and mangrove stands are used in a sustainable manner. At the top of the list is the handling of waste disposal, particularly sewage. **It's imperative that proper tertiary sewage treatment facilities are put in place as soon as possible.** (That may become a reality in 2014 if current plans hold)

Nov. 29

BonaireNet., N.V., licensed as the first Internet Service Provider (ISP) on Bonaire. Headed by Hans van den Ende the company plans to start operating in January 1997.

-Marine Park Concerns: More than 27,000 divers came to Bonaire in 1995. Gross revenues from dive tourism in 1994 were \$34 million. The reef can safely handle 200,000 dives per year or 5,000 dives per site per year (1993 research done by biologists Scura and van'tHof). At Lac special pains must be taken to protect it as Lac is the cradle of much of Bonaire's marine life. Lac Bay and the peninsulas of Kai and Sorobon should be zoned as protected land as soon as possible.

Dec. 13

-This year the government granted 1,651 work permit petitions to people from 37 countries. Leading were 343 Venezuelans, 338 Dutch, 328 Dominicans; 195 Colombians, 160 Peruvians. Others from Guyana, US, Jamaica, Surinam Switzerland and other countries. 100 petitions were rejected for various reasons. 878 of the permits were for working in the hotel sector.

Dec. 20

-Foundation to Preserve Klein Bonaire (FPKB) to offer to buy Klein Bonaire, funds to be provided by individual donations and contributions from nature conservancy organizations. The FPKB will seek Island Government support.

-Crime on the rise in Bonaire. TCB head Ronnie Pieters chaired a meeting between business owners and a panel made up of the Island Governor, the police chief and a government consultant. On the job less than a year, the police chief said he plans to hire an additional 20 policemen to augment the 50 already on the force. The governor said he believes rapid population growth was a factor and that a lot of crime is drug related. ■ *Compiled by Laura DeSalvo.*

Readers are invited to add their recollections and perspective for this "look back." Send a letter to the editor: laura@bonairereporter.com

SHOPPING and DINING GUIDE

AIRLINES

Divi Divi Air. Bonaire's "on time airline" with 16 flights a day between Bonaire and Curaçao. Your first choice for inter-island travel. Now flying to Aruba.

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.

BEAUTY PARLOR

Hair Affair. Expert hair cutting, styling, facials and facial waxing.

BICYCLE / SCOOTER/ QUADS

De Freewieler rents bikes, scooters and quads. Professional repairs on almost anything on two wheels. Sells top brand bikes. Have your keys made here.

INTERNET AND CELLULAR SERVICE

MIO offers by far the clearest, most reliable phone signal on the island PLUS WIRELESS HIGH-SPEED INTERNET almost everywhere on Bonaire.

DINING

De Bonairiaan Restaurant is a unique restaurant run by the students of the Stichting Project with their advisors. Each day a different menu.

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Reservations 717-7725

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www.philipscooking.com call 701-1100

DIVING

Carib Inn is the popular 10-room inn with top-notch dive shop and well stocked retail store. Best book trade on Bonaire. Good prices on regulator repair, dive computer H.Q.

ScubaVision - Document your Bonaire vacation above and below the water with a custom DVD by Bonaire's top videographer, Hendrik Wuyts

WannaDive - They make diving fun. In town at City Café, at Eden Beach and Windssock Apartments .

FITNESS

Fit For Life at the Plaza Resort Mall. Classes in Pilates, Aerobics, TaeBo and more. Professional trainers, fitness machines and classes for all levels.

Top Health Bonaire Fitness and Health Center Modern workout rooms and machines, professional trainers and low prices make it easy to lose weight and get fit.

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. Now in new expanded location off Kaya Industria.

PEST CONTROL

Professional Pest Control. Call Peter to get rid of all those nasty pests like termites, fleas, ticks and ants that want to invade your home. Call now and save your investment in your home.

PHOTO FINISHING

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REAL ESTATE / RENTAL AGENTS

Bonaire Sunshine Homes is the realtor with a local touch. Ask them to show you the good value homes they list. Call them if you are thinking of selling your home.

Bonaire Partners—Rental and Property management specialists. If you have a place to rent call them

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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.

RETAIL

Benetton, world famous designer clothes available now in Bonaire at prices less than those in US. For men, women and children.

Best Buddies and Pearls—Stunning fresh water pearl jewelry, fashion, gifts, t shirts. Wonderful service, free gift wrap.

SECURITY

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SHIPPING

Rocargo Freight Air and sea shipments in/out of Bonaire. Customs agents. Professional and efficient. **FedEx agent. What would we do without their superb services?**

SUPERMARKETS

The Island Supplier (TIS)-Enjoy shopping the "Caribbean Way" – fresh, open air feeling with reasonably priced produce, frozen meats, canned goods, wide selection of beverages and juices. Good rum selection.

Warehouse Supermarket on Kaya Industria—

Biggest air conditioned market with the, largest selection and lowest prices on the island.

WATER TAXI

Get to Klein Bonaire by Ferry. Ride the *Kantika di Amor* or *Skiffy*. Hotel pickup. Easiest landing on Klein Bonaire with built-in ramp

WINES

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Zach Antoni And His Fully Powered Dream Car

The 46th of a series of Bonaire Reporter articles by J@n Brouwer, featuring some of Bonaire's interesting vehicles that are "on wheels."



Zach Antoni, next to his beloved property, the metallic gold sprayed Chrysler New Yorker. Zach has been an employee at Sand Dollars for almost 20 years but is now the owner of his independent maintenance business. Just recently Zach (telephone: 700 - 2824) started his own "eenmanszaak" (one-man business). He knows a lot about working with wood, stones, paint, tiles. He is a welder and a pipe fitter too.

Bonaire/Antriol p' Abao – Zach Antoni from Antriol p' Abao is the very proud owner of a completely original and fully equipped Chrysler New Yorker built in 1988. For almost 20 years Zach worked as a maintenance employee at Sand Dollar. And for almost 20 years he also maintained the beautiful Chrysler New Yorker. The car had been imported by the owner of Sand Dollar, Milton Wisberg, an American, a long time ago from the United States of America. A badge on the rear of the car still informs us: "Venice, Florida."

So because of the fact that Zach maintained his boss' car for years and years he knew about every part of the car, about almost every bolt and nut. He dreamed about being the owner of the car and one day he asked his boss whether the car was for sale. Mr. Wisberg decided to sell the car to his loyal employee!

Now Zach Antoni is the proud owner of this unique Chrysler New Yorker. The car is still in very good and completely original condition. Of course the fluids have been changed several times and also the tires and the battery have been replaced, but even after 68.000 kilometers all the parts of the car are still the same parts as in 1988, the year when the Chrysler left the factory.

Zach's Chrysler was made in 1988, a member of the ninth generation. The metallic gold sprayed four-door, V8-engine car is equipped with a distinctive Landau vinyl roof. Zach's New Yorker is fully loaded. All Chrysler New Yorkers are

very complete, but this one has all the options a buyer can think of. Naturally there is the impressive V8-power source. The amount of cubic inches is unknown and not important. The fuel system is electronically controlled. Unleaded fuel only. Then there are the power brakes, the power steering, the power windows, the power mirrors, the power seats and the power antenna. ("power" stands for electrically controlled and activated) And of course there is the still very well functioning air conditioning. Four massive doors give entrance to the interior of the vehicle. Seats and suspension are very soft, driving and automatic gear change are smooth. Zach loves driving his luxury vehicle. The dashboard is covered with wood print. The steering wheel feels comfortable; the radio-cassette combo is original and still functioning after some 21 years. No dents or scars on this well maintained vehicle.

Zach maintains the car, the car gives a lot of love back to the owner. Then he slides the key in the ignition. The engine starts immediately and runs very soft and smoothly. We roll through the streets of Bonaire. The whispering sound of the air conditioning overrules the sound of the engine and the super silent exhaust system. This is the ultimate luxury. No music from any radio station needed. Just add fuel. ■

Story & photo by J@n Brouwer



I lost my voice. I couldn't speak normally for about a week. If I still tried to communicate verbally, I would succumb to fits of coughing. Do you know how annoying that is? Nobody can understand you on the phone; people start to laugh at you because you try so hard to make sense, but you fail utterly but very comically in every attempt. Or people start to finish your sentences because it takes so long for you to finish one. Then your doctor tells you that being quiet is the best way to cure this ailment. That would be the time you find out how much you want to talk in a day.

Being human means being part of a very verbal species. This is also how we define other species: how do they communicate with each other and with us. And as soon as they start to make noises, we start to translate. Of course you have to be a dolphin to understand dolphins, but we like to think we understand some of their language. That may be why we like dolphins, monkeys, dogs, etc. so much. But what if a species does not have a voice? What about the plants, bacteria, fungi, and all the animals who crawl on this earth in absolute incomprehensible silence?

What about nature, which does not have a voice? Somebody has to speak up on its behalf, because otherwise people will not be able to make heads nor tails of that. So that is what a lot of people are trying to do when they try to preserve a piece of nature on this earth. And that is what I will do next.

When people first come to Bonaire their impression might be that it is a desert island with a lot of sand and rocks, but underwater it is magnificent. Although Bonaire is far from being a desert, even a desert is nature with unexpected variety and beauty. Maybe you have to look harder but it is certainly there. There are a few places on Bonaire which can develop naturally and undisturbed. Those spots represent the essence of Bonaire to me, and I believe to a lot of people.

One of those places has already been tampered with some years back. It is the area between Hato and BOPEC. There used to be a road all the way along the coast with awesome rock formations with caves full of bats on the right-hand side. But now there is a horseshoe-like curve in that road because of the villas that had to be built in that particular spot. Maybe the people who decided to sell that piece of land did not realise the beauty of that place. Or perhaps they did not know how relaxing it is to drive, cycle or walk that road (the old *toeristenroute*) and enjoy

the nature you encounter. In the end they did not value that environment enough to preserve it.

Now some people want to add to that eyesore. Land has been given to start building a hotel and catering school along the currently existing tourist road-*toeristenroute*. It is a school where students are taught about tourism and serving the tourists, who decide to visit the island because of its protected natural environment. That would be the very environment that will be destroyed to build the school.

It would be a good thing to have such a school on this island. Students can learn about the hotel business on the island, and they do not have to leave anymore. But why have a school on that spot, so far away from Playa, from the hotels and restaurants the students are learning about? Would it not be wiser to have it close to the centre where you can find most tourists? Why have a school so far away that every morning and afternoon all the students and teachers have to commute from Playa where most of them will live?

There must be a thousand reasons to build a hotel and catering school close to the hotels and restaurants. Why not combine the practical with the beautiful? There are a lot of other sites on Bonaire where you can put a new school, without having to destroy a pristine nature area.

Now that I have my voice back, I would like to use it. In 10 years time it would be wonderful to go along the *toeristenroute* and still be able to enjoy nature as I have known it for over 30 years. The environmental and country planning is long overdue. It is time to think about where and how much you want to build, what roads you need, and, most importantly, what nature you want to preserve. And before this planning is put on paper and approved by the people of Bonaire, do not start any enterprises that will irreversibly alter the image of Bonaire. Projects like this are like rabbits: soon the area is filled with them and we are left without nature. And if you just start building without a solid strategy in your mind, a lot of nature areas will be lost unnecessarily and there will be a lot of horseshoe-like curves in the *toeristenroute*. I am getting carsick just thinking about it. ■ Mary Ann Koops

Mary Ann Koops is Antillean and a biology teacher at the SGB high school.





BONAIRE SKY PARK*

*to find it... just look up

How to Find the Closest Star to Earth (Other than our Sun) and the Fabled Southern Cross

The Bonaire Sky Park is an extra special treat for visitors who come from the "north" at this time of the year. That's because every year during May the fabled Southern Cross and the star closest to our Earth other than the Sun are visible for a time after sunset.

Look south one hour after sunset from now to the end of May. You will see four stars, which if we draw lines between them, make up the legendary Crux Australis, the Southern Cross. Just to its left and extremely close to the horizon you'll also see two very bright stars, Beta Centauri and Alpha Centauri. But to see them really well you'll have to wait a bit until the Southern Cross starts to set and Beta and Alpha Centauri replace the cross directly due south.

The star closest to the cross is Beta Centauri and it is a blue white double star, each star about eight times the size of our Sun. But its companion to its left, Alpha Centauri, is the real winner. Because in addition to its being the fourth brightest star we can see with the naked eye it is also the closest star to Earth other than our Sun, but it's still pretty far away. Indeed our Sun is only 93 million miles away, but Alpha Centauri is 26 trillion miles away!

Or think of it this way. It takes only 8 1/3 minutes for light to reach us from the Sun, but it takes 4 1/3 years for light to reach us from Alpha Centauri, which believe it or not, astronomically speaking, is close. At any rate I do have to qualify Alpha Centauri as the closest star other than our Sun because it is actually a triple star system, three stars that look like one because they are so far away. Two of them are about the same size as our Sun. The smallest however is really dinky. And in fact if we could place it where our Sun is it would give only as much light as 45 full Moons, not very bright! But this tiny component has the distinction of being just slightly closer to us than its two sibling stars. So we call this small component Proxima Centauri, Proxima meaning the closest. So in reality it is Proxima Centauri, one of the three stars which make up Alpha Centauri, that is really the closest.

Next week is a good one for all of you who get up with the chickens because you can use the Moon to find three bright planets. On Sunday May 17th, 45 minutes before Sunrise, face east where you will be absolutely dazzled and won't need any Moon to find the second planet out from the Sun, the brightest planet of them all, and the same size as our planet Earth, 8,000-mile-wide Venus. And just down to its left and many, many times dimmer the rouge gold planet we call the red planet, half the size of Earth and Venus, 4,000-mile-wide Mars. Then if you draw an imaginary curved line from Mars through Venus and extend that line toward the southeast you'll see the second brightest planet, the biggest of them all, 88,000-mile-wide Jupiter. But in case you're not sure you've found it, you're in luck because an exquisite 22-day-old, waning, that is shrinking, last quarter Moon is parked almost beside it. ■ Jack Horkheimer



The Southern Cross



THE STARS HAVE IT

By Astrologer Michael Thiessen
For May 2009

ARIES (Mar. 21- April 20) Don't let children hold you back from doing things you enjoy. Your talents are likely to be discovered. Don't count on others to cover up for your shortcomings. If they're really interested, they'll wait. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Tuesday.

TAURUS (Apr. 21- May 21) Consider selling your homemade crafts at the flea market. You may be up for some changes in your home. Minor accidents are likely if you take risks. Your personal life will still be experiencing difficulties and you are best to avoid the issues for the time being. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21) You should teach children some of your unique creative talents. Invest wisely. Your personal life could have you tied up in knots. You will have a problem holding on to your cash this month. Do not sign contracts or get involved in any uncertain financial deals. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Wednesday.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) Chances are you could get stuck with a colleague's job unexpectedly. Try to join groups of interest such as ballroom dance classes or perhaps an internet organization. Try not to get involved in other people's problems. They will not be in the right frame of mind to put up with tactless comments. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

LEO (July 23-Aug 22) You need to spend some time getting to know this person all over again. You can make gains if you look at long-term investments. Resist secret affairs that could be detrimental to your reputation. You may want to take a serious look at your goals and objectives. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Sunday.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23) Enlist co-workers in order to get the job done on time. Speak of your future goals, intentions, and commitments. Try to be reasonable. Your knowledge and good sense will help more than you think. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Wednesday.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23) Don't overspend on luxury items. Emotional deception will cause friction on the home front. Your disciplined attention to jobs will enhance your position. Take time to catch up on overdue correspondence. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Sunday.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22) You can enjoy the company of others and come in contact with an ideal mate, if you get out and mingle. Your emotional partner may make you angry this month. Changes at home might come fast and furious. Avoid scandals of any sort. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 -Dec. 21) Find ways to make extra cash. Start making things or reusing rather than buying ready made. You will be able to dazzle others with your obvious charm and your outgoing nature. Be careful when dealing with investments. Go over your finances and figure out a solid budget. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22.- Jan. 20) You can learn from those who have had similar experiences. You will get bored quickly, so make sure that you have scheduled enough activity to hold your interest. Don't overextend yourself in the process. Minor health problems may lower your vitality. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19) Get rich quick schemes will not be successful. Do your own thing and everything will settle down. Romance could develop through social activities or short trips. Set a limit on the amount you're willing to spend, and be sure to stick to it. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20) Don't get so wrapped up in being rich that you overlook the fact that your plan may not be as solid as you thought. You will be able to catch up on overdue paper work. Expect some flak. Be cautious not to get involved in office chatter that will cause problems for others. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Tuesday.

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE CLEANED BY SHRIMP?

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Tera Kora, Kaya Cauca 16

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