

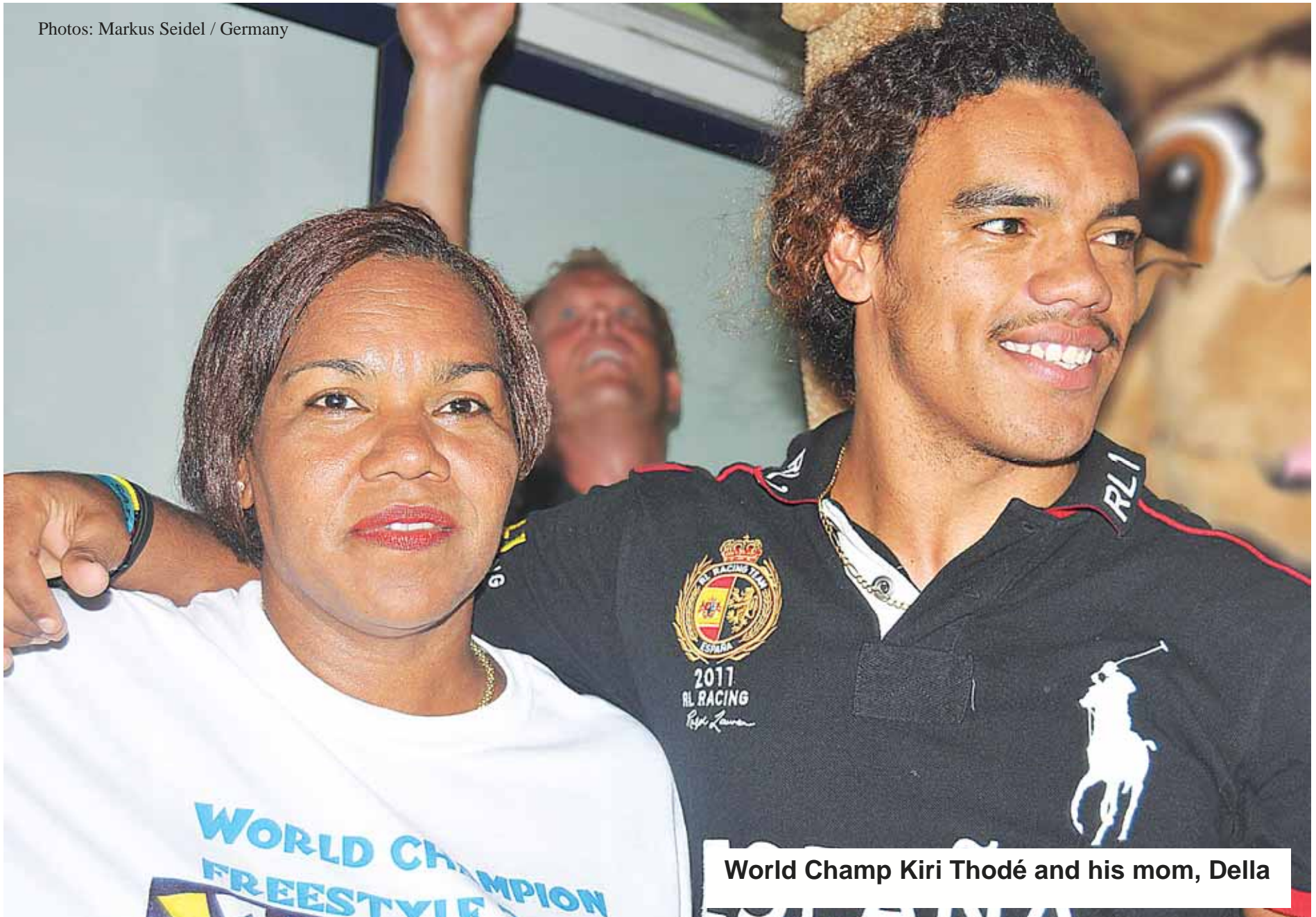
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Photos: Markus Seidel / Germany



**World Champ Kiri Thodé and his mom, Della**



**12% More People Live On  
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See Page 15

**Kiri Thode Is The 2013 Freestyle Windsurf World Champion**

Kiri Thode (23) from Bonaire won the Professional Windsurfers Association's (PWA) "Freestyle Windsurfing World Championships 2013" during the PWA world tour on the German island of Sylt.

The world champ's trophy 2013 was personally given to Kiri Thode by the "living windsurf legend" Robby Naish from Hawaii on Sunday. Kiri beat multiple world champ José 'Gollito' Estredo from Venezuela who could not prevent Kiri Thode from

taking away his title. This is the first time a freestyle windsurfer from Bonaire is world champ. In addition, 17-year-old Amado Vrieswijk from Bonaire is this year's best PWA world cup youngster and also received a huge trophy in front of some thousand spectators in Germany. The freestyle team Bonaire with Tonky, Taty and Choco Frans, Kiri Thode, Maxime van Gent, Youp Schmit, Amado Vrieswijk and Björn Saragoza is also the world's most successful national team in freestyle windsurfing. Most of the sailors are ranked in the top 10. ■ Markus Seidel



# Flotsam and Jetsam

## BONAIRE THE REPORTER

Following the changes on 10/10/10 the rate of inflation soared on Bonaire but declined in the following two years. **But the latest report shows it is sharply rising again. In the third quarter of 2013, inflation rate was 1.8%.**

This was higher than in the previous quarter. In Bonaire, inflation rose by 0.3% as compared to the previous quarter. The increase was mainly caused by higher prices for appliances, recreation and culture according to the report by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). Lower costs of transport pushed it down.

► A delegation from Bonaire led by Ethel Pieterella, Director of Tourism Corporation Bonaire, reported successful results from its participation in the **20th Annual FCCA Cruise Conference & Trade Show**. A new Platinum Membership status was awarded to Bonaire.

For the current 2013-2014 peak winter cruise season, Bonaire is projecting approximately 170,000 passenger arrivals, which is an increase of 20,000 passengers compared to the previous high season. About 200,000 – 250,000 total passenger arrivals are projected for the 2015 - 2016 seasons. Additionally Bonaire is contemplating arrival of approximately 30,000 extra passengers during the low season of 2015. The low season starts in May ends in October. This will be a first for Bonaire.

► These structures built over the years on the uninhabited small island of **"Klein Curaçao"** off Curaçao's south-east coast will be investigated, announced Curaçao's Minister of Traffic, Transport and Spatial Planning, Earl Balborda (PNP). Mermaid Boat Trips, which organizes day-trips there, built a considerable facility with restrooms, palapas and chairs. However, it is a nature conservation area and no permission for any construction was given. **Klein Bonaire is also a "forever wild" protected area** and several "improvement projects" there have been deflected because they are illegal. However, vigilance is required to avoid a similar development.

► From September 16, 2013, to January 5, 2014, Roald Lark and Patrick Slijkerman, Wageningen University and Research Centre researchers, will investigate the fish caught and the gear used in Bonairean waters. These students of coastal and marine management will continue the research of previous investigators. By this study, they want to get a clear picture of the extent of the fishing in the waters around

Bonaire. The students do this research at the request of the Ministry of Economic Affairs in close cooperation with the Public Entity Bonaire. For more information email: [martin.degraaf@wur.nl](mailto:martin.degraaf@wur.nl) or [pieter.vanbaren@rijksdienstcn.com](mailto:pieter.vanbaren@rijksdienstcn.com)



► On Tuesday, October 1, 2013, a fireman from Rincon, Gravey Anthonij, laid the foundation stone for the new fire station in Rincon. This was the go-ahead for the construction of the new garage. The Rincon station fire brigade is getting a new fire truck bigger than the current truck and it does not fit in the existing garage of the fire station.

The new garage is being built by **Pourier Constructions NV**, Rincon. The project supervision is executed by **Streefkerk architects + consultants**. The garage must be completed mid-December because the new fire truck is expected in Rincon by then.

► **Evy Witlox** finished first in the 13<sup>th</sup> Jong Bonaire's Klein Bonaire swim at the start of Regatta week. She swam the 800-meter circuit in 23 minutes and eight seconds. **Peter Zweers** finished next, 54 seconds after her.

There were slightly fewer entries compared to the previous year, 375 swimmers from four to 72 years-old.

► **THE HAGUE**—The growth in the size of the Dutch population is slowly grinding to a halt, although immigration to The Netherlands remains an uncertain factor, according to a new report for the environment assessment agency.



► Unable to fly, this oil covered Great Blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) was photographed standing in the shade under the palm trees at the entrance of BOPEC. **Was there an unreported oil spill at BOPEC?** Photo taken on October 12 (2013). *Sipke Stapert*

The population of the Netherlands reached 16,815,238 last Thursday. See page 15 for an update on the BES Island population.

► **THE HAGUE**—Following an already planned trip to Aruba, Curaçao, Bonaire, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Saba, from November 12 to the 21, King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima will make a introductory visits to Venezuela and Colombia. The two South America countries are important to the Dutch Caribbean islands. The Netherlands is the most important European investor after Spain in Colombia.



WASHINGTON--The Federal Reserve began supplying banks on Tuesday with billions of redesigned \$100 bills that incorporate advanced anti-counterfeiting features, the US central bank said.

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Winners of the healthy cooking contest with RCN director Sybren van Dam and Commissioner Silvana Janga-Serfilia (both at left). Team Sorpresa in orange shirts, in white and blue the Sharlon & Sons team

Flotsam and Jetsam (Continued from page 2)

► Here's your last chance to register for Fundashon Ban Boneiru Bèk's 10<sup>th</sup> Study & Career Fair (SBM) which will be held on Friday, November 15, at Jong Bonaire on Kaya Simon Bolivar. Booth setup will start at 8am and the fair will officially open at 11am and end at 6 pm. The motto of this year's SBM is: "Studiante Awe, Profesional Manan!" ("Student Today, Professional Tomorrow"). Last year 38 schools and companies from Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao and The Netherlands participated. There will be more information in upcoming editions of *The Reporter*. For more information or to register contact the Study and Career Fair 2013: **Lilian Paula-Crestian**, email: [sbmbonaire@gmail.com](mailto:sbmbonaire@gmail.com) Fundashon Ban Boneiru Bek: [www.banboneirubek.com](http://www.banboneirubek.com)

► On Sunday, September 29, the cooking competition finals took place during the Health Market during health month. Ten finalists were in the battle. The quality of

the teams was so good, that two first prize winners were awarded by the jury.

The winners:  
1st prize: Team **Sorpresa 2** and **Sharlon & Sons**; 2nd prize: **Entre Amigos**; 3rd prize: **Rekresaroyo B**; Creative prize: **Kome Dushi Salu**

All the winners won awards and beautiful trophies that were designed especially for this occasion. See above photo.

► The island health fair last month was very successful, many visitors were attracted by the stands which all had to do with health and healthy living. The theme of the market was: "Bo salú den balansa: "Uni forsa i konosementu, ban traha huntu pa un Boneiru salú" (Your health In balance, Strength and Awareness. Let's work together for a healthy Bonaire).

► Green Label Garden Center moved their entrance a few meters from the original one, but they are still at the same location. Follow the signs.



► Curaçao's fuel distributor Curoil is not allowed to unload ships in Bonaire for one month, according to emergency orders issued by Island Governor Lydia Emerencia last week, because the Curoil depot across from WEB does not meet the minimum safety requirements.

This measure has had no immediate effect on the gasoline supply for the island according to a government press release. An inspection last month revealed that the situation on the premises is so unsafe that the area should be closed immediately. A fire near the storage tanks would probably go unnoticed until well underway and could set the tanks on fire due to the lack of extinguishing facilities.

Nearby residential areas could also be in danger. The inspection was conducted after 7,500 gallons (28,400 liters) of gasoline leaked due to a pipe rupture on the WEB side of the street where the gasoline line runs

under the road.

Last Friday the governor followed up on the emergency order to minimize the risk for unloading of combustible fuels from the pier from the WEB pier to the Curoil Depot on Kaya Gob. Debrot.

Partly in response to the motion of the Island of October 15, the Governor of Bonaire and the management of Curoil ( Bonaire ) NV held additional constructive talks Friday morning meant to guarantee the availability of diesel, kerosene and gasoline to the island. This follows the statement by Curoil that there was sufficient supply to last until the November 5-8. The next fuel ship is due to arrive between the November 2 and 4. Curoil says they are working hard to meet the necessary conditions required by the government to allow that supply ship to discharge its fuel into the tanks.

The goal is to both ensure the fuel supply on Bonaire and ensure the safety of the population. While they



Governor Lydia Emerencia and Y. Lasten, Director of Curoil (Bonaire) N.V agreed to work together.

agreed to release further details of the agreement in the coming weeks, they decided not to entertain queries from the press so they can concentrate on the tasks needed.

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# On the Island Since... January 1952 - Calixto Coffie

“I was born on Curacao, October 14th, 1951, but both my parents are Bonairean. When I was three months old, my mom took me home to Bonaire. My parents were not married and when mom and I got back, we moved in with an aunt of my mother and her husband, Magdalena and Eduardo Thielman. They didn't have children of their own and together with my mom they raised me, and Eduardo became a real father to me. They loved me so much!

The first musical instrument I saw in my life was a mandolin because Mr. Eduardo was a mandolin player. When I was about 13, I became interested in music and one year later – it was the time of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones – I founded a band together with some other boys. We called ourselves ‘The Golden Stars.’

I went to Lower Technical School; I wanted to become a fitter, but Mr. Eduardo wanted me to become a carpenter. He was a strict man. Every day when I went to school he would say, ‘Remember, learn huh!’ When I got my carpentry diploma and came home radiant, he was so happy and proud and so were his wife and my mother!

In 1969 I got the letter from the military. I was tested and approved to go to the army barracks in Savaneta, Aruba. It was a beautiful experience, until I got my call. Everyone would serve for one year, but when I went, they started to recruit Antilleans as well for the cadre (a higher military group of experienced professionals). Before it used to be only the Dutch. I was lucky to be chosen – together with two other Bonaireans – for the first Antillean cadres on Aruba. We went to the Sufisant barracks on Curacao for a number of months for our training. After we had passed and I'd become a Marine 3rd Class we went back to Aruba where I became a Marine 1st Class and then Corporal.

But, I have to say there wasn't one day that I didn't think of my parents on Bonaire – them and my music! I served two years as a Corporal. It was the best of times but then I told myself, ‘Calixto, you have to go back to Bonaire, to your parents, the bands and the tranquil atmosphere of the island.’ And so I said goodbye to the barracks and my friends and returned to my island in 1972. When I came back I didn't have a job – just my diploma – and I started working for a construction company as a carpenter. It didn't pay much, but one cannot depend on his parents forever.

Then, during one of our performances, I met the woman who was going to be my wife: Geertruida. She had a little daughter, Charlina, who was three years old. After we'd dated for some time she became pregnant with our daughter. And you know, Geertruida gave me the most beautiful moments of my life because she gave me four children, two boys and two girls. Her daughter Charlina was my first child and after we got Belinda we married and then we had two boys – two of the best soccer players of Bonaire: Cassius and Leonard. It runs in the family because Geertruida's uncles and



Calixto Coffie



Calixto and Geertruida

brothers are all top soccer players! All our four children were very cute children. Now they're all grown up and have families of their own. We even have great grandchildren.

“Because I had my Lower Technical School diploma they knew I was an intelligent guy, but nevertheless they made me a bell boy at first. But by the end of my career at the hotel I was food and beverage manager. However, I didn't get paid accordingly... ..”

When Charlina gave birth to her son, Charlon, here at our house, she planned on moving out some time later, but it was then that we begged her to leave the baby with us! He was such a darling boy! The baby stayed with us. He's 20 years old now and he loves us and we adore him. He graduated MBO (Middle Professional Education) and he is one of the best athletic runners of the Antilles. Now he's going to do Higher Professional Education and most likely he has to go to Holland to continue his studies and then we will really miss that boy!

We never raised our children very strictly, but they weren't allowed to hang around after school. They would rest a bit and then they would go play sports because sports give you a healthy body and a healthy mind. And... you have to love each other and be good to your family, your neighbors - to others! That's what's important to us.

When I married Geertruida, my career as a musician started. I play guitar and bass guitar and I sing and also I compose music. In the early days I gave singing lessons to children as well. I was very busy. To earn



Left to right: Audy Flores, bass guitar, Miss Peggy Bakker, Cheno Thomas, 1st guitar and Calixto Coffie 2nd guitar

money for the family I worked first in construction and then I worked for five years at Hotel Bonaire. It was kind of funny. Because I had my Lower Technical School diploma they knew I was an intelligent guy, but nevertheless they made me a bell boy at first. But by the end of my career at the hotel I was food and beverage controller. However, I didn't get paid accordingly.

We'd gotten married in 1976 and we lived in a very old Bonairean house that I'd inherited from my stepfather, here, on this terrain. Throughout the years when I worked at the hotel, I'd told Geertruida over and over again, ‘One day when I make enough money, I will build a beautiful house for you!’ Then I met a friend who was working for Landsradio – the telecommunication service of the Netherlands Antilles. He told me they needed people and that's how I got

parties and business events. Music is the most wonderful thing in the world because it keeps you alive – that's what it does... Nowadays I'm busy with music all day long. It's my life, and my family knows it and they support me in every way. When I play, I feel my soul growing bigger and I can express myself better, because I'm not so much a man of words. I prefer to sing. My guitar is my second wife - that's how it feels. I also love to read. It opens the door to knowledge. I love to read about astronomy. I always look at the stars and I know every planet. The universe is mighty.

I feel I've been very lucky in my life to have found a wonderful lady like Geertruida. A marriage always has a lot of ups and downs, but when you're in the downs you should think, ‘we'll make it, we'll try again.’ I never thought of divorce, never! Imagine divorcing a woman who gave you such cute children!”

“Patience and good communication are very important,” Geertruida says “When something is wrong you have to talk, and if you don't have patience, it's not going to work and I love Calixto a whole lot!” “There's only one love,” Calixto says, “and that's true love... As a musician you go everywhere and you also get tempted. I've been flattered, I can't deny it, but Geertruida was always on my mind – I stay with her.

Except for the time I spend on Curacao, I've never lived anywhere else but on Bonaire. For me it's one of the most beautiful places in the world. Everything changes. That's unavoidable, and Bonaire changed as well. We're no longer in the Stone Age. We've mixed a bit with the Latinos and the Dutch and I hope that everyone who comes to Bonaire will come with the right intentions and a kind heart. It's fun and good to live with people from a different culture, because you learn from them and they learn from you.

I thank Bonaire for all it has given me so far: a lovely wife, great children, and my music... and I thank God too.” ■

Story & photos by Greta Kooistra

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# Tourism History

## TOURISM HISTORY PART 17- Hugo Gerharts

### Part 2: Gerharts and The Hotel Bonaire

The involvement of the Gerharts family in Hotel Bonaire came about when the hotel was in financial problems. The hotel had already gone bankrupt twice. The island government was again seeking new owners. A couple of investors from New York were interested and Hugo Gerharts flew to the Big Apple to talk to those people. Warren Kraemer represented a group that was willing to take over the hotel and acquire funds to do so. However, the bank involved demanded a guarantee from Bonaire. Hugo convinced his father to give the guarantee, an amount of US\$200,000. He himself became involved with the New York group to keep an eye on how the hotel was being managed and to report to the investors. The problem of air-lift persisted but Gerharts succeeded in getting several charters directly from the US and Canada to Bonaire to fill up the hotels. The hotel changed its name: Hotel Bonaire became Bonaire Beach Hotel. Things went pretty smooth for some time. But after all, it turned out that the New York group was unable to pay back the financing they got (about US\$500,000) and the banks stepped in. The hotel went bankrupt and the bank claimed the amount guaranteed by the Gerharts. They lost a fortune that way.

Besides the problem with investors who couldn't meet their financial obligations, there was the problem that shareholders would never receive any dividend on their investment: the hotel could just barely stay in business, the management was hardly able to pay their employees every month and bankruptcy was constantly looming.

Hugo Gerharts had founded an off-shore crude oil trading company with which he made considerable profits. He used these to invest in Bonaire's tourism. Among other things he bought shares of the hotel back from foreign shareholders to keep the shares on the island. When the tax inspectors found the large sum of 5.5 million florins in the books of Gerharts' company, Bonaire Trading, meant to be invested on the island, Gerharts was taxed 2.5 million florins.

In 1998, when Gerharts had plans to open a new 300-room hotel on the island and had just renovated part of the Sunset Beach Hotel rooms, he ran into financial trouble. Being behind with the payments of water and electricity of the hotel, he had just come to an arrangement with WEB about payment in installments of the outstanding debts, when



Hugo Gerharts

suddenly, in the middle of the day, the hotel was cut off of water and electricity. The hotel was 85% full of mainly American tourists. Gerharts had to scramble to find a place for the 175 guests and once again Sunset Beach Hotel had to close. It would never open again. Gerharts had a large outstanding loan with a bank for which he had given his private and business properties as guarantee. When the Sunset Beach Hotel had to close, both WEB and the bank claimed the outstanding amounts, which inevitably led to Gerharts' bankruptcy.

In the aftermath of these developments, Hugo Gerharts lost his hotel, his businesses and all his properties, including his residence, on the island. He retired to his Miami apartment in 1999. It was not until 2008 that he returned to his island, where his son Larry and his daughter Natasja live.

Hugo Gerharts, father of six, now 82 years old, has spent a life of doing business and working tirelessly for the promotion of his island, just like his father L D Gerharts did. He still is much in demand as a speaker on tourism topics, especially regarding the cruise ship industry. He has an outspoken opinion on the current new development plans for the Kralendijk waterfront and on those for the former Sunset Beach terrain.

He has received a royal decoration: Knight in the order of Orange Nassau.

Summing up his life's story, he says: "Many businessmen have made money in Bonaire and taken it out of the country. With the off-



A younger Hugo with his father, L.D., with the Gouden Verrader figurehead at the bar of the Zeebad Hotel.



Hugo is presented with flowers by Anja Romeijnders on behalf of the tourism industry at his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party

shore company, I've made money outside of Bonaire and invested it in the country, in the island's tourism industry."

PS: He is currently trying hard to get back the figurehead "De Gouden Verrader," which for years has been a landmark on the bar in the Zeebad/Flamingo Beach Restaurant. It has several times been kidnapped, taken to Holland and returned by Dutch Navy personnel and finally taken away for

good when the hotel was sold. It is somewhere on the island and Hugo Gerharts would very much like to have it back to be kept in the family. ■

Evert Bongers

Still to come:

Epilogue



## Karel's Pier Extension OK Appealed

On Tuesday, October 1st, Rijkswaterstaat (Governmental Department of Water Control/jb), Rotterdam, The Netherlands, organized a public hearing in protest of the planned extension of the pier in front of Karel's restaurant in Playa. Rijkswaterstaat has the opinion that an extension of the present pier does not have huge environmental consequences but STINAPA, Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire and 162 individuals wrote and signed an appeal or petition because they are concerned that the extension of Karel's Pier might have huge consequences for nature and environment. In their opinion at the present moment insufficient research has been done and not all consequences are known.

The hearing in The Netherlands was webcast to Bonaire. People in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, and persons on Bonaire could see each other and talk with each other. A huge tent, a television and speakers were positioned on the parking lot of the RCN building. Some hundred persons attended the hearing (see photo). Unfortunately the installation of the television and the speakers took some time so the hearing had already started. View of the screen which was divided in three parts was poor.

In attendance at the hearing were the Ministry's appointed 3-member commission, charged with hearing arguments and questioning the parties. The appeal was presented by the legal firm Boekel de Neree. WWF, having delivered an objection to the permit, was also at the table. The developer, Jokaya N.V., was represented. RWS officials presented the ministry's case for granting the permit. Six members of the public attended the two-



hour hearing. The hearing was conducted by an internal commission of the Ministry rather than an independent commission, which was a disappointment to the petitioners. However, the 3-member commission focused on listening to testimony and asked probing questions, allowing plenty of time for all sides to express their positions.

No decision was reached during the hearing itself. ■ Story & photo by Jan Brouwer



## 40% and 33.3% Discount On Skateboard Helmets and Mountain Bike Helmets

This is the 23<sup>rd</sup> of a series of Bonaire Reporter short articles by J@n Brouwer, about helmets and helmet awareness.



Bonaire/Hato-Kralendijk – Since the last edition of *The Bonaire Reporter* no less than four citizens stopped in Hato at the house with the helmets in the tree to pick up a helmet for free. First islander was an employee of the SELIBON. He saw some helmets on top of the fence and he wondered what the plan was. He was in the need of a helmet so I said: “Feel free and choose one!” The same day I had a talk with a physiotherapist from BonFysio in Hato. He helped two persons who suffered from the results of an accident on a two-wheeler. During the accident they did not wear a helmet. After a few hours he passed by and left with a used but still usable motorcycle helmet. Then, early one morning, a medical student from Saint James Medical School in Hato stopped in front of the house. He grabbed a helmet and left, apparently in a hurry to his classes, on his noisy scooter with a leaking expansion exhaust. Last visitor was Andy, a Bonairean electrician, who needed a bicycle helmet for his cute little daughter.

So, now I am running out of helmets as

there are only some five left. So I contacted Harry van den Tillaart, who is in scooters and in helmets, but there was only one helmet left. Then I went to Zeeko, located opposite to the SELIBON, along the Kaya Industria. I knew they had a huge pile of skateboard and mountain bike helmets in stock, colored black, metallic blue and metallic red. And I made a deal with the owners of the shop that is said to sell more than 100,000 different items.

I managed to arrange a discount of 40% and 33.3% on new helmets. The helmets are for sale for only \$15 instead of \$25 and the other helmets are for sale for \$10 instead of \$15. I am not that good in calculating but in my opinion indeed that is a discount of 40% and 33.3%. The only condition or restriction is that you have to show them a copy of *The Bonaire Reporter* with an article in it about helmets. Big deal! ■

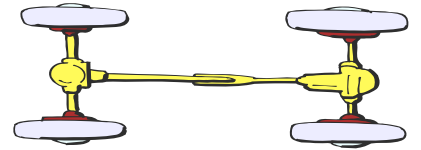
Story & photo by Jan Brouwer



## BONAIRE ON WHEELS

This is the 130<sup>th</sup> of a series of Bonaire Reporter articles by J@n –wear a helmet- Brouwer, featuring some of Bonaire’s interesting vehicles and persons that are “on wheels.”

Up to at least 200 articles!



### BO VAN KOUWEN AND THE BLACK LONDON TAXICAB

Bonaire/Kralendijk – In front of Zeeko’s, in the parking lot along the Kaya Industria, a London style black taxi is parked. The vehicle is for sale and Bo van Kouwen, the daughter of the owner of the enterprise is willing to pose next to the vehicle and to give me some information.



You can even get an English taxi to go with your helmet at Zeeko

Bo, 13 years young, student of SGB, is one of the 13 candidates in the Miss and Mister Teen Contest Bonaire 2013. On October 2<sup>nd</sup> she went on stage at Jong Bonaire in Kralendijk. Final test is on November 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Sports Hall on Kaya Amsterdam. All tests are about skills and abilities and finally the ultimate personality will win. Bo tells me the vehicle is a London cab and that it is for sale for €500. The car seems to run. There is a little problem with the fuel pump.

Apparently this is a London style black taxi, also known as a “hackney” or “hackney carriage.” This taxicab is produced by Austin car bodies and was also known as model FX4. The first FX4 rolled from the English assembly line in July 1958. The last one was produced in 1997. I think this Bonairean cab was pro-

duced in or around 1982 because of the style of the indicators below the headlights and the extended and reinforced bumpers. Earlier models had the indicators more visible mounted on the roof of the hackney carriage; they were nicknamed bunny ears. This FX4 is a four-door model or saloon. (Two-door cabs were called funeral version! /jb) The vehicle is powered by an old fashioned and reliable four-cylinder 2520 cc diesel engine. The solid chassis is separate from the body and independent front suspension makes it a dream to ride. British pounds are accepted! ■

Story & photo by Jan Brouwer

## We Want Bonaire Back



Margret Romaijn, Governor Lydia Emerencia and James Finies

Foundation “Nos Ke Boneiru Bèk” (We Want Bonaire Back) presented 3,500 signatures to Island Governor Lydia Emerencia in support of the request to organize a new constitutional referendum on the future of the island. Chairman of “Nos Ke Boneiru Bèk,” James Finies, said, “The people didn’t vote for the current constitutional structure of Bonaire. They did not make a conscious choice on their future status. The choice for direct ties is something different than integration.”

On behalf of all signatories, the foundation asks that everything be done to exercise the people’s right of self determination. The options to be included in the referendum, as laid down and recognized internationally by the United Nations (UN) are: integration with full political rights, independence and free association. According to Finies, it is government’s duty to provide all the necessary information before the constitutional referendum is held. ■ Press release

## Fundraiser Walk



On Saturday, October 5, two women and five men walked through Bonaire’s barrios to collect \$429.60 to benefit the Stichting Prinses Wilhelmina Fonds Bonaire (cancer). They included Ludgarda Cicilia, Shahaira Martis, Nazario Alberto, Herman-alias Manguès-Winklaar, Rafael Damascus, Urnix Martijn and Eric Valentijn. Thanks to these athletes, to Radio Digital and Radio Energia Bonaire and all who made the event happen. ■ Morela Wanner

## Help To Make Bonairean Kids Happy

A group of friends came with an idea to make more kids happy in the month of December. Together with FESBO this organization that works daily with mostly economically disadvantaged kids they plan to organize a St. Nicholas Feast on December 1<sup>st</sup> for 200 kids between 4-8 years old and a Fun Fair on December 14th for 100 kids between 9-12 years. The costs for each child for each activity are estimated to be: \$19 for the St. Nicholas Feast and \$32 for the Fun Fair. Are you ready to adopt at least one child? Please call anytime for more information or email to [dri-ina@ennia.com](mailto:dri-ina@ennia.com). They are not an organization, just simply a group of friends who want to see smiles on the kids faces: Dalitza Victorina 786-0299, Alda Dirksz 785-6378 or Ilva Sint Jago 786-5451. ■ Press release



# Word on the Street

Economics commissioner Burney El Hage announced last week that he will be **leaving Bonaire politics on November 5<sup>th</sup>**. As reported here last issue, he had previously issued a statement saying that he would step down in 2015. After consultation with his family he has chosen to make his exit sooner. El Hage served his party for 20 years in several positions both at the island Government and Central Government positions.

He made no comment about his upcoming trial scheduled for November 25.

•In more political news, **Commissioner James Kroon has also announced he will be stepping down from his position with the Island government before the end of this year.** It's questionable whether Kroon will be allowed to return to his job at *Douane* (Customs), which operates under the RCN tax office, once he steps down from government. The conditional punishment imposed on Kroon by the prosecutor over the falsification of signatures on a taxi permit, may preclude him from continued employment for RCN

•It's ironic that the leaders who called for the removal from office of Governor Emerencia **are themselves leaving government**

•**City Cafe will close its doors on November 30.** Look for some special activities between now and then. The management says they intend to reopen at another location. Owners of the property have advertised in local newspapers that



the premises of the "former City Cafe" will be available for lease as of 1 January 2014. Anyone hear whisperings as to who may be the new lessees?

•A recent two-year international investigation of a drug ring resulted in searches and arrests in The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and BONAIRE. **The island arrests included a 68 year old "European Dutch" resident, allegedly the "kingpin" of the operation,** and another "European Dutch" resident. Both men are familiar faces on the island.

•**The Dutch authorities will allow Bonaire's Saint James Medical School to operate as a "sub-campus"** of the Saint James Medical School in Anguilla for the purpose of allowing the current students to complete their studies and receive their diplomas here on Bonaire. As previously reported, now that Bonaire is "part of Holland,, SJMS does not meet the requirements for medical schools under Dutch law and was denied permission to remain on the island. The "sub-campus" status is temporary and it appears that SJMS will be gone from the island once the current students have graduated.

•**New business now open at the renovated Gas Express complex (ex-Pauw station).** Hair Creation offers three different services, women's hairstyling, men's haircuts and...tattoos! Hmm.....tat and a haircut, two bits... ? (Bula asks forgiveness from those of you who are not old enough to get that last little joke!) Samantha invites you to pass by the new shop or call for an appointment 785-2695

•She's back in action! **BONHATA, recognized by the government as the "official" association of hotels and tourism on Bonaire, has elected a new board of directors for 2014-2015.** The representatives on the new board include the reappearance of a familiar face in the industry. Harbor Village Beach Club will be represented by Sara Matera. Other members of the board include:

- ♦ Boogaard Assurantien, represented by Mrs. Fra Aziz
  - ♦ Captain Don's Habitat, represented by Ms. Claire Sealy.
  - ♦ Carbo TTC, represented by Mr. Boudewijn Scholts
  - ♦ Divi Flamingo Beach Resort & Casino, represented by Mrs. Hetty van den Ouweelen.
  - ♦ HBN Law, represented by Mrs. Francien Alberda.
  - ♦ Sand Dollar Condominiums, represented by Mr. Charles Vos
  - ♦ The Cadushy Distillery, represented by Mr. Eric Gietman
  - ♦ VanEps Kunneman VanDoorne, represented by Mr. Tom Peeters
- BONHATA represents more than 80 members from different sectors in Bonaire's tourism and tourism-related industries. Founded in 1980, BONHATA has

maintained its position in the forefront of the tourism and has grown to be a respected partner in the industry.

•While the crisis at Curoil is ongoing, no one is reporting that there may have been a victim of the gasoline leak last month. **The lovely tree that serves as a memorial marker for Marlies van der Kouwe appears to be dead, dead, dead.** The tree is located directly above the location of the underground gas spill.

•Preliminary results from the lionfish census just completed by STINAPA researchers indicate that **there are fewer lionfish in our waters than there were last year.** A detailed report will be issued around the end of 2013. Kudos to our dedicated hunters. In the Bahamas the population of lionfish is 15-20 times greater

•**Construction of the new traffic circle at the crossroads of Kaya Nikiboko South/Kaya Betico Croes/Kaya Kanari recently came to an abrupt halt.** Residents in the area report that apparently the initial survey and measurements were all wrong! As a result, when the excavation and construction process of the original design began, the traffic circle was encroaching on large portions of residential property. Construction was stopped and it was back to the drawing board! Hopefully they'll measure correctly this time. But some area residents say there is not enough room to build a traffic circle there at all. We shall see! ■

*Sra. Bula Bonchi*  
(That's Mrs. Jumping Bean for those who don't read Papiamentu)

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Last month, on the International day of the Press the MCB Bank challenged members of the media to offer their thoughts and ideas for a vision and a strategy for the future of Bonaire. *The Reporter* asked its readers to offer their views to assist in our response. Two are presented below:

**MORE IS NOT NECESSARILY BETTER**

Dear Editor:

It is commonly known that Bonaire's most important economic pillar is its tourism. Besides some oil and salt business there is little else that generates income for the island. Reason the more to question and re-think our present approach to the tourism industry. Pressed by short term thinking politicians and business owners in the dive, restaurant and hotel world, Bonaire is now following a strategy of "more is better." More tourists, more people, more hotels, more restaurants, more cruise ships, more dive shops which may in the short term

bring more income to the business owner. But 'more' will also bring more cars, more crowded reefs and schools and ever higher influx of foreign workers with all the negative consequences thereof. Besides, as most of these businesses are foreign owned, profits will not remain on Bonaire. Unavoidably this approach leads to low value, mass tourism by which Bonaire shoots itself in the foot, as this transcends everything positive the island stands for: tranquility, splendid reefs, friendly population, eco friendly and a rich culture. The mass tourism approach is detrimental in the long run because it goes against the soul of the island. Besides, Bonaire does not offer enough variety, like Aruba or St. Maarten do, to be able to sustain mass tourism in the long run.

The most important worldwide trends in the tourism industry today are authentic experiences, adventure, individualizing, value for money (but not necessarily low priced), good infrastructure, client friendly, health, exercise and sports, and the ever important sustainability. To take advantage of these trends Bonaire must make its choice and position itself within such a trend. For example, Costa Rica's successful choice of eco tourism. And Bonaire's choice should be obvious, not "more is better", but "better is better." Better reefs, better hotels, better restaurants and infrastructure and above all its tranquil nature make Bonaire unique for the discerning tourist that has money and is willing to spend it as long as he gets value for that money. For this to actually happen we need a vision and a strategy. Within the tourism industry, but even more so within the population of Bonaire, we must have the wisdom, the will, and the harmony of spirit to arrive at such a long term vision. After the vision has been decided the individual en-

trepreneur/business owner must decide how best to execute his interests within this vision. Cruise tourism does not fit in this trend-positioning of our island within the vision and therefore should be slowly be reduced in number, to eventually remain with a few ships, with wealthy tourists that are willing to pay for the privilege of visiting our island. Time share condos should not be allowed.

The choice is ours: are we going to continue to have a limited number of people make as much money as possible for personal gain in the short term, ignoring the negative consequences, or are we willing to make the hard choice to attain limited but high quality tourism and save the soul of Bonaire for the long term?

*Rene Hakkenberg*

**VARIETY, INNOVATION BUT KEEP THE OLD**

Dear Editor:

Bonaire is an island with a lot of potential and in the coming decades it's expected that the population will continue to rise dramatically.

A population of around 50,000 or 60,000 is feasible and also to be welcomed because it can be sustained better than a purely small local economy.

Importantly Bonaire must preserve itself, secondly, that the future Bonaire is built in a responsible manner and proper infrastructure is addressed. Its rural character and natural beauty should be retained.

Also there should be other activities to attract tourists to the island besides diving.

Bonaire seems highly suitable to become a holiday paradise for sick and or over-wrought people.

This can be accomplished the having hotels with hospital facilities as well as rooms or apartments where the sick and his / her family can spend the holidays and yet receive care from medically trained personnel as well as daily care. Dialysis should be offered in consultation with the hospital. It can be supported by disability payments. The sick should have easy access to the water. In addition, the hotels can provide the facilities for the family like a little bar, restaurants and shop.

Furthermore, a number of small centers for tourist workshops and a stress-free lifestyle can be set up in rural areas— kunuku living can be an attractive alternative.

Also a private retirement home for wealthy elderly foreigners is a possibility.

The above-mentioned activities will attract a lot of foreign specialized personnel but the youth of Bonaire could also focus on training in that care, which could potentially be offered by Bonaireans.

The various facilities could also be made accessible for locals but first one must focus on the foreign capital that could flow through the care centers to Bonaire.

More specialized people attracted from outside also means a growth of the local economy. Because there will be more homes to build.

Important, however, is that Bonaire retains its own character and future buildings in downtown and shopping centers be constructed primarily to conform to local architecture. There is also room for a Hawaiian style Bonaire, Caribbean colors and shaded footpaths.

In addition to new residential areas and shopping centers, the rural kunuku and should be maintained as original as possible.

■ *Jella van Berkum*

							
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# Un Jardin Français



Suzel Baraton in her garden

The French love their food and if you travel through the French countryside you'll notice almost every house has a small garden plot. They love their fresh, local, organic produce. This is now a growing trend entering the mainstream – there is an expansion in the consciousness of the West. If you watch any good cooking show, all the top chefs use these kinds of ingredients. **Suzel Baraton** and her mother **Claudine Garré** explain that this is how it always was in France though. Suzel says she is inspired by permaculture (a natural, cyclical form of living and gardening), but that it wasn't hard to learn as she gardened in a similar way as a child. She admits though that gardening isn't her passion but that her mum has the true green thumb - which was honest as her mum spoke mostly French and she could have stolen the glory for herself! Her passion is about using those products in her jams, chutneys, dehydrated goodies and more. If you go to the Kriabon Farmers Markets (1st Saturday of the month, 8 am to 1 pm) you'll see her there!

"We started with a garden with no trees, nothing! Just rocks." You can see it's definitely a labor of love and even though it's very dry now there are still plenty of fruits and vegetables and everything is attended to in detail. No chemical products are used, everything is done by hand and all the prod-

ucts they use in the house are ecologically sound. That way the water isn't harmful to the garden. Pests are controlled by homemade Neem juice using the leaves of the tree. When I ask about the iguanas who are the bane of any Bonairean gardener's existence she says it isn't a problem as they have two dogs. One of them is new and staring at a fearless turtle who meanders right up to him. "But the parrots...they are the worst!" She has decided to make a pact with them. If they leave some fruit alone then she leaves some of the harvest in the garden.

The garden has some very nice features:

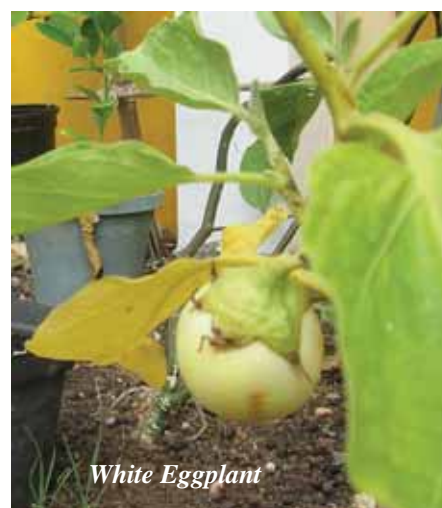
- Two compost bays. One for kitchen scraps, eggshells and leaves and the other for grass and weeds.
- A garden bed with plants in pots that have had their bottoms removed and are dug into the ground. This retains water and prevents the nutrients in the pot from leaching so quickly.
- Beds framed with drift wood (bamboo) or rocks.
- Finally Suzel and Claudine's secret (no longer!) - a system of watering using filled plastic bottles then placing them upside down into the ground for slow release.

The plants in the garden are varied with all sorts of specialty plants from places like



Plants in pots

Guadeloupe where Claudine lived for some years. They have a traditional herb patch with basil, mint, lemon balm and local oregano. Interestingly Suzel makes a juice concentrate out of these and even makes a jelly out of the lemon balm. Then there is a Malabar spinach living by a kitchen outlet that she dehydrates and makes into a powder because "my son doesn't like spinach...so of course I can hide the powder in his food!" She also dehydrates Moringa leaves which can add nutrients and protein to many meals. Also immediately noticeable are megalithic papaya trees everywhere full of fruits. She keeps one hermaphrodite to pollinate the rest of the females. She also allows everything to flower in the garden and leaves a bee's nest in a nook because "without them we have nothing." Once you look down again there are lots of unique plants. Apparently in France the evil giant Monsanto has won a court case to continue their practices, but there is an underground French style revolution with heirloom seeds being sold and swapped through social media platforms for example. Suzel has some of these seeds and has special types of tomato and white eggplant to name a few. She reminisces about her purple eggplant tree that just died which produced 30 kilos



White Eggplant

of produce with every flowering! Other unusual plants were breadfruit trees, mgambo tree (*Majidea zanguebarica*) which is used for decoration, necklaces and filtering water, dragon fruit, pigeon pea (*Cajanus cajan*), horned melon/kiwano (*Cucumis metuliferus*) and hidden humbly at the back of a border - dill!

All of the plants in the garden end up in the kitchen. Suzel has a PHD in anthropology and philosophy "as an excuse to travel the world" but discovered a passion for cooking. She found after doing an adult course in cuisine in France that working in kitchens was difficult as she didn't handle authority well or high strung "diva chefs." "You're not God, you're just making an omelet!" Now she has found pleasure in cooking at home in her own way. And if she goes on a French strike she only has to answer to herself. Her jams are cooked in copper pans handed down from her grandmother, and all the ingredients are from her garden or friends' gardens except for high quality organic cacao, rum, vanilla and cinnamon from Guadeloupe. All the glass jars she uses are recycled so if you see her at the markets please bring some to the Farmers' market!



Preserves

In the future she'd like to start a vegetarian/raw restaurant from home called Soul Kitchen which is registered now under "Le Petite Enterprise." What is your next jam I ask? "Coconut and banana is next but I like to experiment with hundreds of varieties."

■ **Clark Heijbroek** – Freelance web designer and landscape architect, Photo credits – Stephanie Rendall

If you are interested in sharing your gardening passion E-mail [c.heijbroek@gmail.com](mailto:c.heijbroek@gmail.com)





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# Another Successful Cleanup Dive - Te Amo Beach and Fuel Pier



Bonaire/Te Amo Beach –  
**O**n Saturday, October 12th, Dive Friends Bonaire's fourth quarterly clean up dive took place. This time it was a joint venture of three organizations: Dive Friends, The Fishing Line Project (a division of the Sea Turtle Conservation Project and the league of Lion Fish Hunters with their elfs and zoo keepers.  
 Check in and picking up tanks with free air was at a quarter to 10 at the Port Bonaire Location of Dive Friends. Briefing was at 10 o'clock at Te Amo Beach. A huge shelter was constructed to protect against the sun.  
 This time the target was the underwater world around the beach and the Fuel Pier.

108 volunteers joined the event and the result was a lot of lead and fishing line, a bunch of lion fish and 3,297 different items, among them hundreds of cigarette filters, six towels, a condom, a wet diaper, a scuba weight and a shovel.  
 A pot luck barbecue was held at the Hamlet Oasis Location of Dive Friends. The food and a beverage were donated by Dive Friends. Some of the meat was donated by the Bonaire Food Group. A lot of volunteers prepared some nice side dishes and desserts. Used cutlery and plates were durable so after the barbecue there was a lot of dish washing to do. Dive Friends' manager **Asko Zuidam** explained, "It makes a difference!" ■ *Story & photo by Jan Brouwer*

## Sonia Home Italian Restaurant Grand Opening Party

**I**t's a new look in Italian restaurants. A gala opening of the Sonia Home Restaurant was held Saturday evening, October 12, by owner **Anna Sonia Vezzosi**. High end Italian design is the setting for exquisite Italian cuisine. Talented and experienced **Chef Antonio** leads the kitchen staff. Antonio was head chef for a number of years at **Elizabeth Wigny's** popular Croccantino Restaurant. Sonia Home is at the Bonaire District Plaza 20 at the Hato traffic circle. Tel. 717-1758. ■ *L.D.*



Sonia Home kitchen with Chef Antonio



Owner Sonia (right) with Marisela and Robby Cruz from Rocargo

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# The Only Mammal That Can Truly Fly



STINAPA's Fernando Simal talks about bats to a rapt audience in a cave

On Saturday September 28th STINAPA offered a presentation on bats which attracted more than 40 participants.

There was a lot of interest to learn about this mammal. Many adults with children joined us for the evening.

After the presentation, which lasted about 45 minutes, the large group walked to the cave nearby to witness the procedures undertaken when researching bats. STINAPA's Fernando Simal and

Paolo Bertuol demonstrated how they catch bats with a net in order to weigh, measure and mark the bats by putting rings on them. They check the sex of the bats, whether they were mature or juveniles and of course what type of bat it was. Two different types of bat were caught on this evening. All bats were let go after they were examined.

Both children and adults were impressed by the magnificent creatures who play an important role in some of the ecosystems of Bonaire.

One of the goals of STINAPA is to ensure that the public receives quality information about our nature and environment, and these events are one way to achieve this. This evening activity is a yearly recurring event, so anyone who missed it this time will have the opportunity to join us again next year.

Our thanks to everyone who showed interest and special thanks to all the volunteers who helped us put together this adventurous evening. ■ *Fernando Simal, General Coordinator, Temporary Administration Coordinator*

Fernando Simal is the Manager of the Natural and Historic Resources Unit of STINAPA Bonaire, an NGO that has the mandate from the Government of the Island of Bonaire to manage the national parks of the island. He has worked for this institution since the year 2000. After 9 years as Manager of the terrestrial park, since 2010 he is responsible for all the research and monitoring of flora and fauna that takes place in the national parks of Bonaire. Currently, he is engaged in studying the population dynamics of the Long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris curasoae*) in the ABC islands, the cave use dynamics of bat populations in the three islands and a cave-mapping project that aims to include all caves found in the ABCs. Fernando aims to substantiate the legal implementation of "Cave System Nature Reserves" in the ABC Islands with the knowledge acquired by the three projects.

E-mail: [pcmislasabc@gmail.com](mailto:pcmislasabc@gmail.com) to learn more.



Happy, happy Birthday from happy happy parents...and your sweet sister Neriyah. And with many many blessings to reach out more years to go. Melchior Martijn turns 3 years old !!

Big xoxoxo from all your fans and of course we have bolo!!



Dear Nimh, Finally 30! Welcome to the club! Lots of kisses from your proud Dutch friends who miss you very much! Good luck with your new shop @ Bonaire; Sunsmiles Caribbean! Luv ya!

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# DID YOU KNOW?

That the thunderous tuna is more closely related to the delicate seahorse than a sailfish or a marlin? You may have seen these two relatives swimming around the same reef and never thought they could be so similar. Even though they seem so different they both belong to the group known as "spiny-rayed fish." This group contains more than 18,000 species, many of which are present in Bonaire. The first comprehensive family tree (known as *Phylogeny*) of this group has supported the idea of a mighty tuna, commercial fished and valued, being closely related to the tiny seahorse intricately hiding amongst seaweed and corals.



After years of genetic research, it has been discovered that evolution in this group of spiny-rayed fishes occurred at a constant rate for about 50 million years, resulting in a very large and diverse group of species. So when you are out exploring Bonaire's reefs, take a second look at the marine life and know that just like a family, even close relatives can be uniquely different! ■ *Gabrielle Lout*

*Gabrielle Lout is a Marine and Conservation Biology student at Seattle University, WA volunteering at CIEE Research Station Bonaire.*



## Dive Friends Expands Trash Separation

Bonaire/Playa Lechi – At the Yellow Submarine Location of Dive Friends Bonaire at Playa Lechi, Ginger Meerkrook from The Netherlands shows the new garbage bins for plastic and cans. Eunan Doherty, Dive Friends Instructor explains, "Dive Friends already separates cardboard, paper, glass and batteries, but up until now there were no dumpsters for plastic and metal cans. From now on all locations of Dive Friends will be provided with trash cans to collect plastic and metal tins."



Ginger Meerkrook, age 11, is on the island of Bonaire with her father and her brother. She is studying the PADI book and her first dive will be on Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. On her flamingo pink T-shirt it

reads, "I've got sunshine on a cloudy day." She is a cute little intelligent youngster, willing to pose for a picture at the Yellow Submarine Location. Her opinion about the new trash cans: "Handy! And I will definitely use them!" The youth is our future! ■ *Story & photo by Jan Brouwer*

## Picture Yourself With The Reporter In Singapore.



Ellen and Peter Wolff write: "Normally we visit Bonaire twice a year but this year we decided to explore a different destination. We went to Bali, Indonesia, for some good scuba diving. The diving was excellent as well but different from our well-known Bonaire.

On our journey back home to Holland we stayed in Singapore for a couple of days. These pictures were taken in front of some significant Singapore landmarks.

As you can see the *Bonaire Reporter* travels all over the world. And, oh yeah, we are already planning to come to Bonaire again in October. We can hardly wait." ■

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Day	High	Low	High	Low	High	Sunrise	Sunset
Mon 21	04:56 0.36 ft	08:00 0.34 ft	14:48 0.95 ft	23:36 -0.11 ft		06:26	08:36
Tue 22	05:54 0.39 ft	08:56 0.37 ft	15:33 0.94 ft			06:26	09:26
Wed 23		00:17 -0.11 ft	06:33 0.42 ft	09:55 0.38 ft	16:14 0.92 ft	06:26	10:16
Thu 24		00:52 -0.11 ft	07:03 0.44 ft	10:51 0.38 ft	16:54 0.89 ft	06:26	11:03
Fri 25		01:24 -0.09 ft	07:28 0.46 ft	11:44 0.38 ft	17:32 0.86 ft	06:26	11:49
Sat 26	<b>L Quarter Moon</b>	01:52 -0.07 ft	07:52 0.50 ft	12:37 0.37 ft	18:09 0.81 ft	06:27	12:32
Sun 27		02:18 -0.04 ft	08:17 0.54 ft	13:32 0.36 ft	18:47 0.75 ft	06:27	13:14
Mon 28		02:42 -0.00 ft	08:42 0.59 ft	14:30 0.35 ft	19:25 0.68 ft	06:27	13:55
Tue 29		03:04 0.03 ft	09:09 0.65 ft	15:35 0.32 ft	20:07 0.58 ft	06:27	14:36
Wed 30		03:24 0.07 ft	09:39 0.73 ft	16:46 0.28 ft	20:56 0.48 ft	06:28	15:18
Thu 31		03:43 0.11 ft	10:12 0.81 ft	18:02 0.22 ft	21:55 0.38 ft	06:28	16:01
Nov. Fri 01		04:02 0.14 ft	10:50 0.89 ft	19:17 0.14 ft	23:13 0.29 ft	06:28	16:46
Sat 02		04:22 0.16 ft	11:32 0.97 ft	20:26 0.05 ft		06:28	17:34
Sun 03		00:52 0.23 ft	04:47 0.18 ft	12:18 1.04 ft	21:24 -0.04 ft	<b>New Moon</b>	06:29
Mon 04		02:38 0.22 ft	05:22 0.21 ft	13:09 1.10 ft	22:13 -0.12 ft	06:29	19:22

Aircos in all bedrooms. **Call: 796-9559 or 796-5885.**

**House for sale by owner.** Hato area **Call 785- 2205 .** No agents,

**Spacious house** in quiet neighborhood w. alarm system; m er room and 3 bedrooms, bathtub, warm water installation, biological garden w. water tank, 2 driveways and more. Seriously interested? **Call 786-5292**

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**Sudoku Puzzle**

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

**Sudoku Solution**

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



# SHOPPING and SERVICE 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.

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## AUTOMOBILE DEALER

Check out **Auto City Bonaire** for the widest selection of new car brands on Bonaire including Chevrolet, Honda, Isuzu, Suzuki, Subaru. Used cars too. Complete service department. Hertz rentals.

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## BARS

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## UNDERWATER VIDEO

**ScubaVision** - Pro video of your Bonaire vacation, above and/or below the water with a custom DVD by Bonaire's top videographer, Hendrik Wuyts.

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## RESTAURANTS

**Bistro de Paris**— Waterfront location at the Harbour Village Marina. Superb menu, genuine French dishes in a waterfront ambiance. Airoc if you want it. Its Zazu Bar is a very popular hangout for divers too.

**La Balandra at The Harbour Village Resort** offers Bonaire's most spectacular setting. Superb cuisine, top notch service. Eat on the deck or with your feet in the sand.

**Pasa Bon Pizza**—Bonaire's quality pizza-Best ingredients, best baking and best taste. Great salads and lasagna too. Eat in or take away.

**Unbelievable Restaurant** is offers rooftop terrace dining with a view of Kralendijk bay, a fine menu specializing in prime steaks and seafood. Just a short walk from downtown or southern "hotel row."

## RETAIL

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

**Bona Dea** is Bonaire's newest Caribbean lifestyle shop featuring good taste gifts, apparel, shoes, accessories and home décor

## SECURITY

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## STORAGE

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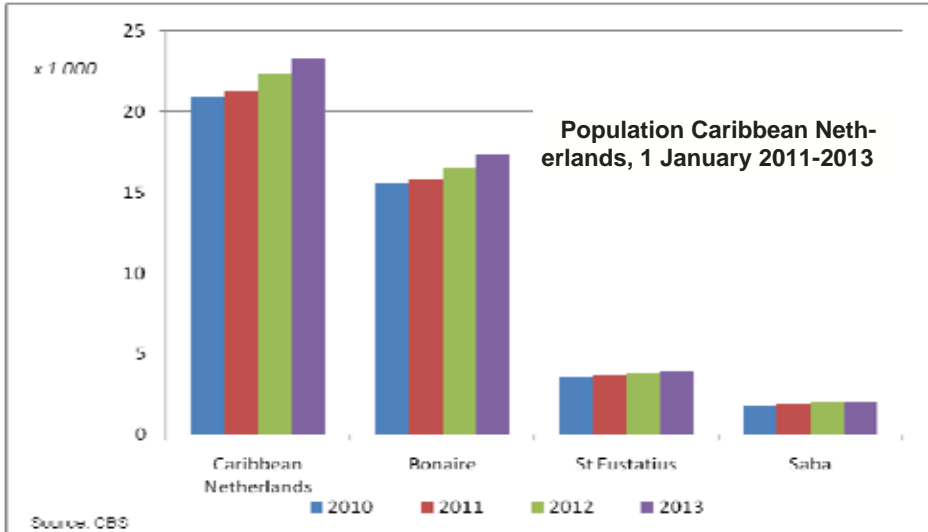
**The Tung Fong Store** is a great asset to everyone on Bonaire because it stocks so many thing we want: clothes, hardware, food, auto and bike supplies. If you don't see it... ask for it. They probably have it.

## WATER TAXI

**Get to Klein Bonaire by Ferry.** Ride the *Kantika di Amor*. Hotel or downtown pickup The only water taxi to Klein Bonaire with an easy on/off built-in ramp at Bonaire Nautico (It Rains Fishes Restaurant)



# 12% More People Since 10/10/10 On The BES Islands



On 1 January 2013, the Caribbean Netherlands was home to more than 23,000 people. Since 1 January 2010, the population has grown by about 2,400 people.

Since the BES Islands became an integral part of Holland immigration has swelled which almost entirely accounted for the growth. According to the latest report from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS).

The most substantial population growth was on Bonaire, 1,900 people. There are now 17,400 persons on Bonaire, 3,900 on St Eustatius and 2,000 on Saba. The population of the Caribbean Netherlands has grown by 2,400 since 1 January 2010. The populations on St Eustatius and Saba grew by approximately 300 and 200 respectively.

#### INCREASING IMMIGRATION

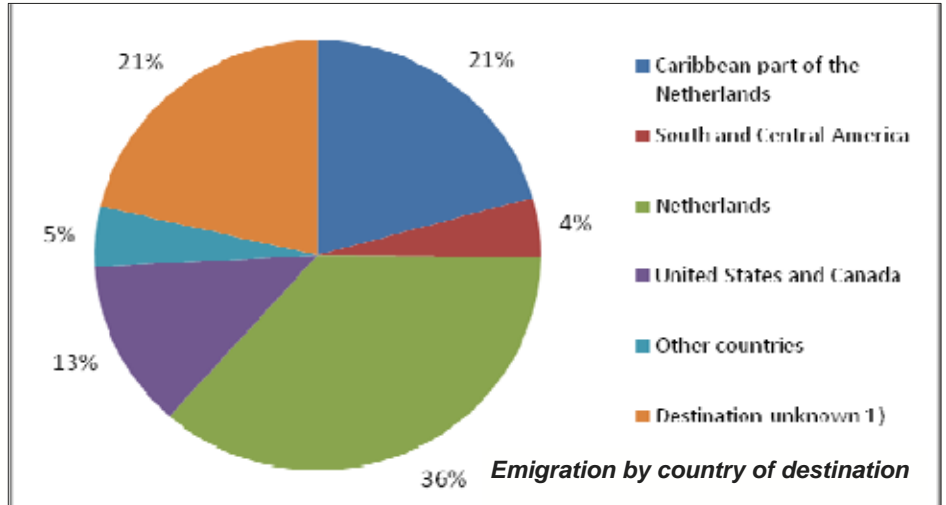
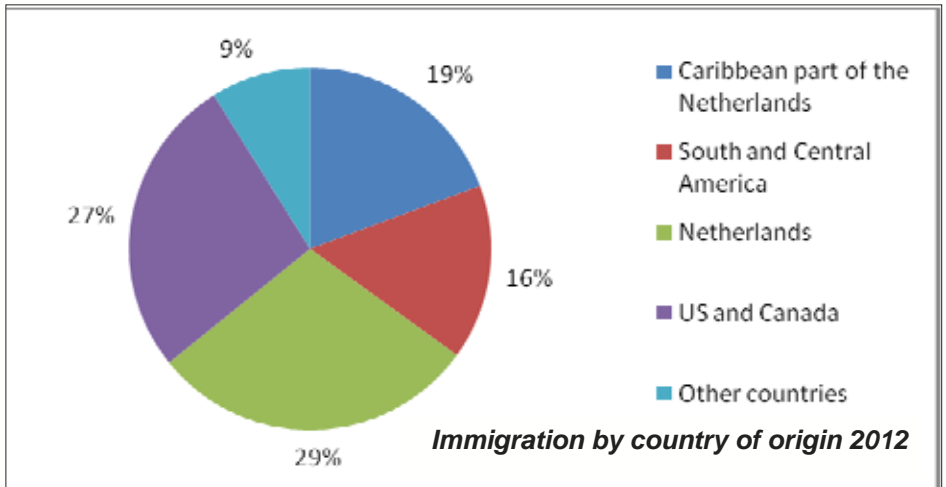
With 2,200 and 2,300 people respectively, immigration to the Caribbean Netherlands

was considerably higher in 2011 and 2012 than in 2010 (1,800). More than one quarter of immigrants come from The Netherlands and another quarter come from the US and Canada. More than 60% of immigrants from South and Central America are Peruvian, Colombian and Dominican (R.D.).

Saba is popular among people from the US and Canada because of the Saba University School of Medicine. Bonaire is relatively popular among European Dutch people.

#### EMIGRATION (LEAVING BES ISLANDS)

The Netherlands is the most popular destination for emigrants from the Caribbean Netherlands. The other islands in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom are also popular destinations. Half of emigrants on Bonaire leave the island to settle in The Netherlands. Emigrants leaving for unknown destinations



are almost invariably medical students returning to their native countries. ■

Report prepared by Suzanne Loozen & Meredith Daantje-Cecilia of CBS

For more detail go to the CBS Statline at Link: <http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?VW=T&DM=SLNL&PA=80539NED&D1=a&D2=a&D3=a&HD=131008-1146&HDR=T&STB=G1,G2>

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# BONAIRE SKY PARK\*

\*to find it... just look up

## TWO PLANETS, THE TWINS, AND A COMET YOU CAN'T SEE ...

Although we usually think of sky gazing as something to be done in the evening, the pre-dawn hours are every bit as rewarding. October offers early risers some delightful treats.

The brightest object on this month's map is the planet **Jupiter**, a bit more than halfway up from the horizon. Jupiter is currently located in the constellation **Gemini**,

the **Twins**, brothers **Castor** and **Pollux**. In mythology, Castor was mortal and Pollux immortal. When Castor was killed, Pollux asked Zeus for permission to share his immortality with his twin brother, and they now reside together, forever in the night sky. On this month's map, the twins are reclining, heads down, with their legs stretched out toward the bright star **Betelgeuse**. The stars Castor and Pollux represent the twins' heads, and they are often depicted holding hands, a symbol of true brotherly love.

Nearer the horizon, look toward bright **Regulus** in the constellation **Leo**, the **Lion**, and you'll see the planet **Mars** just to its left. Notice the color difference between the two. Regulus is very white, while slightly dimmer Mars has a warmer, yellowish hue. Mars, of course, is known as the **Red Planet**, but we see it as yellowish unless we're looking through a powerful telescope.

Very near Mars and Regulus is **Comet ISON**, but the comet is currently too faint to be seen with the unaided eye. Why mention it at all? Because Comet ISON may become a spectacular bright comet later in the year.

Comet ISON is named after the **International Scientific Optical Network**, one of whose telescopes was used to discover it. The comet has been watched by astronomers for more than a year as it falls toward the **Sun** from the deep reaches of our solar system. Like most comets, ISON will brighten as it approaches the Sun. By November, it may brighten enough to become visible to the unaided eye. The key word is "may." The brightness of comets is notori-



This stunning photo is a NASA Hubble Space Telescope image of Comet C/2012 S1 (ISON) when the comet was slightly closer than Jupiter's orbit at a distance of 386 million miles (621 million km) from the Sun.

ously difficult to predict. Sometimes, a comet will brighten to a certain point, then brighten no further.

What's exciting about Comet ISON is that we will get a viewing opportunity in November, and perhaps another chance in December. It all depends what happens on November 28 -- Thanksgiving Day in the US. On that day, Comet ISON will reach the Sun, pass very close to it, swing around it, and then ... well, no one is quite sure what will happen! The possibilities include:

1. The comet will be vaporized by the Sun, never to be seen again.
2. The Sun's gravity will break the comet into small fragments that will drift apart, and none of the fragments will be very bright.
3. The comet will break into fragments that will remain close together and therefore reasonably bright.
4. Comet ISON will withstand the Sun's energy, remain intact, and emerge from the encounter greatly brightened, with a lovely long tail of dust and gas.

At this point, we just don't know. We'll have more information about Comet ISON next month. In the meantime, if you have large binoculars or a small telescope, you may be able to see Comet ISON as a faint smudge near Mars in mid-October. Let's all hope for a brighter view in the months ahead! ■ *Jeff DeTray*



# THE STARS HAVE IT

By Astrologer Michael Thiessen

October 2013

**ARIES** (Mar. 21- April 20) Abrupt action will cause difficulties with relatives. You're in the mood to spend time with your lover. You'll have problems with authority figures if you don't play by the rules. Your ability to organize and get everyone together will enhance your popularity and bring interest from potential mates. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

**TAURUS** (Apr. 21- May 21) Minor health problems could result through exhaustion. However, be careful with luggage; it may be rerouted. You will be able to talk to your lover about future goals and perhaps make plans for the two of you to take a vacation. You are likely to reveal information unintentionally. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

**GEMINI** (May 22-June 21) Efforts made to improve yourself will turn out to your satisfaction. Your passionate nature may make you jealous if your mate has been too busy to take care of your needs. Children may be less than honest with you. You can make gains if you work in conjunction with others. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22) It might be best to work on your own; if possible, do your job out of your home this month. One-sided relationships are likely. You can get your point across and make valuable connections. You may cause a fuss if you come on too strongly in public. Your luckiest events will be on a Friday.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug 22) Invite people home to discuss your plans for group fundraising events and outings. Trips will be exciting. You might find that coworkers will support your endeavors. You must be careful not to trust just anyone. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Sunday.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23) You're in need of love. Unexpected bills may set you back. Make sure to arrange in advance to spend quality time together. You must take care not to over exert yourself if involved in sports. Your luckiest events will occur on a Friday.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23) Direct your

energy into physical exertion. Residential moves will be favorable. Changes in your residence may be financially favorable. Don't lend to people who have given you negative vibes. You will communicate with ease this month. Your luckiest events will occur on a Tuesday.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22) Escapist tendencies may lead to overindulgence. Try not to allow others to burden you with additional responsibilities. You're not your usual self this month. You can make sound financial investments if you act fast. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 23 -Dec. 21) You may have personal problems, but professional duties might be pressing. You will impress new friends and acquaintances with your intellectual wit. Try to keep your cool; you may be a tad frazzled by all the rushing around. Try to have patience and refrain from being judgmental. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec 22.- Jan. 20) You could lose money or precious belongings if you aren't careful. You can make a big difference to children if you are understanding of the difficulties they are experiencing. Try not to lend or borrow money or belongings this month. Your lover may feel rejected. Your luckiest events will occur on a Saturday.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19) Your home environment may be hectic, which could result in emotional upset if you aren't well organized. Encourage the youngsters in your family. Don't overspend on luxury items. Communicate with relatives who may need advice in order to find solutions to their existing problems. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Sunday.

**PISCES** (Feb. 20-Mar. 20) You need to concentrate on the areas where you can make a difference. Concentrate on spending quality time with children and friends. You may want to sign up for courses that will encourage you to have more confidence in yourself. Arguments may flare up in your home. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday. ■

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING

## CLOSE-IN EVENTS



**Tuesday Oct. 22-** Free Lecture on Coral Spawning and what to see underwater by Marine Biologist Caren Eckrich. Once a year corals reproduce in a spectacular and synchronized event known as the coral spawning. See photo below.

All divers and non divers welcome, Divi Flamingo Capture Meeting Room, 7-9 pm.



**Sunday Oct. 27-** Annual Bonaire Duo Xtreme mountain bike-race. Pro route 51k; Xtreme route 83 k. Register Oct. 25 & 26, 5-7 pm, Divi Flamingo Calabas Gardens. Be at Divi Flamingo at 5:30 am, start at 6:30 am.

**Tuesday, Oct. 29**—Free lecture: “Behavior and Effects of Invasive Lionfish in High Numbers” by Casey Benkwitt, Oregon State University, at CIEE research station - Kaya Gob. N. Debrot #26. 7-8 pm.

**Saturday, Nov. 2-** Marshe di Kunukero-Farmers’ Market—see ad on page 18.

**Sunday, Nov. 3**—Local artists show their work, at Chichi Tan historical home, behind Rose Inn, Rincon, 10 am—4 pm. Snacks and drinks.

**Thursday, Nov. 7**—Cave guide course by STINAPA, 6-9 pm. Sign up by Nov. 1. Email nfo@stinapa.org

**Friday, Nov. 8**—Classical Concert at San Bernardo Church—See ad on page 10

**Sunday, Nov. 17**—Dia di Gracia—for the needy—at St. Dominicus School behind the church in Playa. Donate non-food items now at family Nicolaas in front of Napa Auto Parts at the snack Cans and dry food will be received on Saturday, Nov. 16 between 7 am-12 noon. Call 717-2953 or 796-1919

## REGULAR EVENTS

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

• **We Dare to Care Park children’s playground** - closed due to lack of financing.

### Saturdays

• **Last Saturday of the month** – donate foods and household items to Food Bank (Stichting voedselbank Bonaire) from 10 am-4 pm, in front of Van den Tweel Supermarket

• **Open House at Semper Kontentu milk goat farm. Second Saturday of the month**, 8 am to 12 noon. 786-6950  
**Closed until November**

• **Marshe di Kunukeru (Farmers’ Market) 1st Saturday of the month**, at Kriabon, Kaminda Jatu Baco #55, next to Aquamarin School, 8 am to 1 pm.

• **Bonaire Animal Shelter’s “Garage Sale” Pakus di Pruga—every Saturday**, 8am-5pm. At Kaminda Liberador Simon Bolivar, across from Brandaris Café. Tel. 717-4989. Drop off cast offs on Saturdays or at the Shelter on the Lagoen Road weekdays. 717-4989

• **Wine Tasting at Antillean Wine Company’s warehouse** on Kaya Industria, **Second Saturday of the month**, 7-9 pm. (Always call to make sure it’s on: Tel. +5999-560-7539.) Snacks and tasting of six wines for \$10 per person.

• **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.

• **Petanque- Jeu de Boules**, Saturdays 2:30 pm Tera Cora Ranch. Info: 786-0150

### Sundays

• **Kunuku Arawak** - Music, drinks, local food, dancing, 10 am—6 pm. Live music starts at 4 pm. Tel.786-7210

### Mondays

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

• **Meet the Captain Night at Captain Don’s Habitat Bar**— Get up close and personal with Bonaire’s dive pioneer. The Captain will autograph your copy of his newest book Reef Windows.

### Wednesdays

**Divemaster’s Night at Bistro de Paris Restaurant** at Harbour Village Marina. Free house rum when you buy a coke.

**30-minute Meditation at Yoga Bonaire**, 12 noon, Bonaire Basics. Donation. 786-6416 or info@bonaireyoga.com

### Fridays

**Happy Hour party at Bistro Di Paris.** Ricky Thomas performs Reggae, Soul, Latin and more 6-9pm.

## FREE SLIDE/VIDEO SHOWS

**Monday - Touch the Sea -- Will resume in November-** Dee Scarr, honored as a member of the Women Divers Hall of Fame, conducts Bonaire’s Touch the Sea programs of personalized dive guiding. She presents a unique perspective on

critters and corals, plus an updated Bonaire lionfish report, **every Monday when she’s on-island** at 8:30 pm in the Aquarius Conference Center at Captain Don’s Habitat, Call 717-8290.

**Wednesday - Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB)** presents an informative slide show: *Sea Turtles of Bonaire*, at 8pm, every **2nd and 4th Wednesday** in the conference room at Captain Don’s Habitat (717-8290)

## BONAIRE’S TRADITIONS

**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

**Museo Sentro Chichi’Tan**, historical home, behind Rose Inn, Rincon, open 10am-4pm daily. Tel. 786-6420

**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

**Bridge Club** - Every Wednesday, Bridge Club on Bonaire. 19:15, contact Jeroen Seegers for information tel. 717-4200 or 788-2819 or jeroen@telbonet.an

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

**Lions Club** meets every **2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday** of the month at 8 pm at Kaya Sabana #1. All Lions welcome. For more information call 510-0710.

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

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

## CHURCH SERVICES

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

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

**International Bible Church**, Kaya

Papago 104, Hato, behind Bon Fysio/Bon Bida Spa & Gym on Kaya Gob. N. Debrot. Sunday 9am-Worship service in English; 10:45am-Sunday school for all ages. Tuesday 7:30 pm-Adult Bible study class. 717-8377 for more info or ride [bonaireibc@yahoo.com](mailto:bonaireibc@yahoo.com)

**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. Wed. 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 Sunday mornings 10am-11:30am. Bible studies in English on Monday nights from 7-8 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) 10:20am- Sunday School, 11:15 RS/YM/YW/PH Primary held from 10:20-12 noon Visitors welcome: Information: Call 701-9522 .

**Foundation Fountain of Living Waters, Centro Fuente**, Service Sunday at Kaya Aruaco 4 at 6 pm, in Papiamentu and Spanish. For Marriage Counseling, contact 717-2161.

**Iglesia di Cristo (Church of Christ)** Sunday: 10:30 am & 7:00 pm; Wednesday: 7:00 pm. Services in Papiamentu (English also if needed) Address: Kaya Msgr. Nieuwindt 25 (same street as Dr. Dorvil) Cell: 796-0721

**Call The Reporter at 786-6518 if you have something HAPPENING**

## Who’s Who on The Bonaire Reporter

**Take The Reporter Home—1-year subscription:** By mail to US \$75; By mail to Europe \$170. By Internet, Free (asking a \$35 donation.) For information about subscriptions, stories or advertising in **The Bonaire Reporter**, PO Box 407, Bonaire, Dutch Caribbean; phone (599) 786-6518, 786-6125, E-mail: [info@bonairereporter.com](mailto:info@bonairereporter.com)

**The Bonaire Reporter**, George DeSalvo (G.D.), Publisher; Laura DeSalvo (L.D.), Editor - Address: P. O. Box 407, Bonaire, Dutch Caribbean. Available online at: [www.bonairereporter.com](http://www.bonairereporter.com) **Published every two weeks**

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# Pet of the Week

LOVING AND LOVEABLE VLADIMIR

Vladimir has that classic "Sylvester, the Cat" look, but he is far sweeter and not at all interested in catching Tweetie Bird...he would much rather be cuddled, as you can see from his photo with Ava Rose! An extremely affectionate kitten, his purr "motor" starts the minute he feels a human hand. He's the first at your feet when you walk into the kitten compound and it's hard to ignore those big warm eyes when he mews at you asking to be picked up. He loves playing with his kitten roommates, but he also loves to play on his own especially when there is a human nearby to enjoy the show.

It was predictable that Vladimir would be so "human" friendly. He is a graduate of the **Hanny Hoogerkamp Orphan Kitten Raising Project**. The Shelter is often the recipient of motherless kittens who cannot yet eat on their own. Over the past few years, Hanny, a Shelter staffer, has been taking these kittens into her home and hand feeding and raising them until they can thrive on their own and return to the cat Shelter.

The care Hanny gives is involved and time consuming: preparing the proper formula, hand feeding every three hours, physical stimulation to encourage proper excretion, cleaning them, teaching them litter box and play skills, and the list goes on. Every one of her "graduates" has evolved into a loving, healthy and extremely affectionate kitten and cat. She is the ultimate "Cat Mom" and the Shelter, as well as all her "babies", are extremely grateful for her dedicated loving care and concern.



Ava Rose shows off Vladimir

Vladimir was under Hanny's care, along with his two siblings, for several weeks and "graduated" to the Shelter compound in August. He is approximately three months old, and ready to go to his forever home. Great with kids and adults, he is waiting for someone to give him the opportunity to return the love that he learned humans are capable of giving. Vladimir and all his Shelter friends are waiting for your visit, Monday through Saturday, 8 am to 1 pm and 3 to 5 pm on Kaminda Lagun. ■ Jane Madden-Disko

# Shelter News



Scene from a past Auction

You may donate other items or services (such as painting, plumbing, carpentry, maintenance) or entertainment or other "saleable things." One of the items up for bid will be a chance for you to have your pet photographed as **Guest Pet of the Week**.

This year the **Animal Shelter Art Auction** will be on **December 7 at Hotel Roomer**.

Dinner prepared by "star chefs" will be served. You may come for the dinner

and auction or just show up for the auction. More details in upcoming editions of *The Reporter*.

## BONAIRE ANIMAL SHELTER AUCTION ALERT

**Artists and craftsmen and women: The annual Shelter Art Auction needs you. Your donated art will be on display and bid upon at this very popular fundraising event.** Take this opportunity to show your wares and be part of the fundraising for the Bonaire Animal Shelter.

The proceeds of the Auction this year will go towards refurbishing the cat cage which leaks like a sieve when it rains.

If you can't bring the items yourself call the Shelter at 717-4989, and they can even make arrangements to pick up the item(s) you are donating. ■ *Laura De-Salvo*

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# Feeling Blue From Gray

## PART 7 FROM THE SERIES, DOWN IN THE LAND OF BON BINI

One of the wonderful things about Bonaire is the splendid variety of colors on the island. Color is who we are. Just look off shore to that lovely sapphire blue water. Below it are crimson squirrelfish, multihued octopi and totally tubular soft coral pipes in vibrant purple. And the rainbow display continues on shore. Flamingos strut their stuff in proper pink. Troupials sing away the day in bright orange tuxedos. And the Loras, our endangered parrots, boast a vivid feather collage in green, red, yellow and turquoise.



The colors of Maskarada

This explosion of chroma has a strong effect on the people of the island. Just look at how folks adorn themselves for events like Karnaval or Maskarada. But color displays can be witnessed every day just by looking at island houses.



A traditional mustard yellow house

Bonaire is historically famous for its mustard yellow that graces many of the older homes. Plus, households of today have broadened the palette to include happy blues, reds, and greens—just about any hue one can imagine. I like the personal statement. It reflects our culture and it is, oh so Caribbean.

However, there has been a disturbing development lately that has caught my eye. I call it the graying of Bonaire. No, I am not referring to the aging of our population. Rather, this deals with many of the new buildings that are now painted in bland gray. From the bustling boulevard of Gobernador Debrot to the shady lane of Kaya Pos Di Amor (the Well of Love street) this monochrome menace, this architectural impetigo if you will, appears to be increasing. Lighter shades of pale are on the rise and boy, is it ever boring.

Gray is a non-color, a mixologist's compromise between black and white. It is considered by scientists to be an achromatic

color, which literally means a "color without color." As color historian Eva Heller, an author of numerous scholarly books about the effects of color on humans explains, "Gray is too weak to be considered masculine, but too menacing to be considered a feminine color. It is neither warm nor cold, neither material nor spiritual.

With gray, nothing seems to be decided."

But some people on Bonaire have decided to make gray their "color" of choice and I am baffled by this. Why paint something in a somber tone on an island that celebrates color? Gray reminds me of oppressive Rembrandt skies or monochrome pillbox bunkers that still line the North Sea coastline in anticipation of D-Day, not the sun-drenched Caribbean. Geographical misplacement comes to mind.

Psychologists have long pondered the interface between color and environmental stimuli and its significance. Research suggests that color selection can influence mood and behavior, stimulate the brain and body, and even affect one's health. A recent study published in the journal, BMC Medical Research Methodology, found that people with depression or anxiety were more likely to associate their mood with the color gray while happier people preferred yellow.

And Dr. Emanuel Bubl of the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy at Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg in Germany showed that the retinas of depressed patients were less sensitive to contrast (eg. color variation). Bubl's findings are intriguing in that they suggest a scientific basis to a cultural association between depression and a lack of color.

But I really needed some local perspective beyond Freud and the state-of-the-art psycho-babble about color. So I asked Arnold de Jong, owner of Krioyo Paints, if he has seen an increase in the purchase of gray at his store. Arnold came to the island 12 years ago so he has a long-term perspective on what color paint people prefer. "Yes, it started about 3 or 4 years ago when the Dutch designer, Piet Boom, started building a lot on Bonaire. His choice was gray for the exterior of many of his houses. Now people come to me and simply ask for "Boom grijs" (Boom gray). It is very popular."

Ah, so I have discovered that gray has become a trendy color for some. This relatively new lack of color on our island really



A modern Piet Boom seaside house



A Bonairean home painted "Boom Gray"



"Modern" Bonaire colors for homes

stands out due to where we live. It reminds me of a palm tree sans coconuts, a rum drink minus the punch, Mylie Cyrus without her now infamous, oversized rubber hand. Hmmm.

Perhaps it is best that I conclude this tropical tirade with a quote about color and why it is important to our souls and well being. Georgia O'Keefe, a renowned American painter who paradoxically was married to Alfred Stieglitz, a pioneering black and white photographer, once said, "I found I

could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way - things I had no words for."

I say let the discussion begin. Let us keep our island colorful, vibrant and true to Bonaire's culture and where we live, the Caribbean. Yes, let the sun shine in. ■

Story & photos by Patrick Holian



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