



Looking back at 2020 and forward to 2021

2020 has been a year we will all remember as the year of Covid 19. People have suffered tremendously worldwide. As we approach the new year, 81.5 million people have contracted the virus and 1.78 million have died. In every country the economy took a downward spiral. But we are looking to a brighter future with vaccines being administered and hopes for recovery to a 'new normal' are everywhere, including Bonaire. In this last issue of 2020, people from various sectors of life on Bonaire have graciously shared their thoughts of 2020 and what their hopes and ideas are for 2021. Enjoy!



**Nina den Heyer – Executive Council
 Deputy of Bonaire Social Affairs**

I think 2020 was a very challenging year, it was a year that stretched our ability to cope and adapt to a rapid sudden change that impacted the whole

world and every aspect of most of our lives. But it is in the challenges that you see the true character of us all. We also saw some beautiful initiatives from our people to help others who had it even! harder and we saw people tapping into their own creativity starting new businesses or new hobbies. 2021 will be a year of further growth and adapting, a year in which we will again see how Blessed Bonaire truly is. Bonaire holds a special place in God's heart, of that I'm certain!

Kind regards! And hope you have a super 2021! *Nina*



**Caren Eckrich
 Bonaire Marine Park**

As a biologist and nature lover, I will remember 2020 with mixed feelings when it comes to Bonaire's nature. After several

years of increasing tourism and concerns about over-using nature, the travel restrictions and lack of tourists gave our nature a break and residents were able to enjoy their favorite nature spots without throngs of tourists.

I hope we will begin welcoming tourists again soon, but in a sustainable way - where tourists enjoy and appreciate Bonaire without spoiling it. I would love to see Bonaire's tourism develop in a way where favorite get-aways enjoyed by locals are not overrun by tourists, roads are designed so that there are less traffic jams, and our coral reefs are not jeopardized through unsustainable coastal development and poor infrastructure (untreated wastewater, unpaved roads, the clearing and development of land near the coast, the use of fertilizers and pesticides in gardens, etc.).

In 2021, I hope that Bonaire is able to open once again to tourists and that together we grow our economy while safeguarding our number one attraction - our amazing coral reefs.



**Jason Helmholdt – business director
 TWR (Trans World Radio)**

Although 2020 was a very tough year for so many people, it was also a good year for us to take a step back and see where we are putting our trust. If there is one thing I learned from this year, it is that God is in control. It really made me realize how much trust I had in Earthly things and in our own ability as humans to solve issues, all of which came crashing down in 2020. This left me with just one thing to point at... Jesus Christ. Hebrews 13:8 tells us "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." This pandemic didn't come as a surprise to Him and it also didn't change anything about

Him. He died so that I can have eternal life and nothing on this Earth can take that away. That is the Rock I can put my trust in and know that no matter what is going on in this world, I can always count on the hope of Jesus Christ.



**John Soliano
 ORCO Bank branch manager**

The mental and financial resiliency of our inhabitants and business has been tested to the max in 2020. We overcame the most difficult times and the lesson learned created an accelerated growth and creativity in our community. We are still in turbulent water but with a greater ability to handle and manage the challenges ahead. On the other hand, we saw the best in people and businesses came forward to help others in need and show more humanity. Let's keep growing in this area also to create a community that looks out for one another. We became stronger in the most broad sense of the word!



**Bas Noij
 VIP Diving**

For the tourism sector that I am active in, 2020 started amazing but ended up dramatic. The global COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on the travel industry and we have suffered from it like never before. Being on the board of STINAPA and BONHATA I was not only involved in crisis management for my own business but also in a broader sense for the two organizations and the sector in

**Looking at 2020 and 2021,
 continued on page 13**

The BONAIRE REPORTER online

news that has broken since the printed issue



Numbers January 11, 2021

Bonaire has 121 active cases of Covid-19 on January 11, 2021. 25 of the 105 people tested, had a positive result for Covid-19. The numbers are high because it includes result of the past days. Contact tracing has started. The infected persons are in isolation. Their family members and contacts are in quarantine. One person is in hospital due to Covid-19.

To bring these numbers down it's important to maintain the hygiene instructions, as keep 1.5 meter distance and wash your hands with water and soap regularly to prevent infection with the Coronavirus. Take a test if you feel sick. It can take a while before you get the result. It's important to wait the result in quarantine. Do not go outside before you get your result because you can infect other people.

Do you have a fever, sore throat or other complaints related to Covid-19? Stay at home and call 0800-0800.

Maintain the hygiene instructions. Eat healthy, exercise and get enough sleep. Take care of yourself and the people around you.



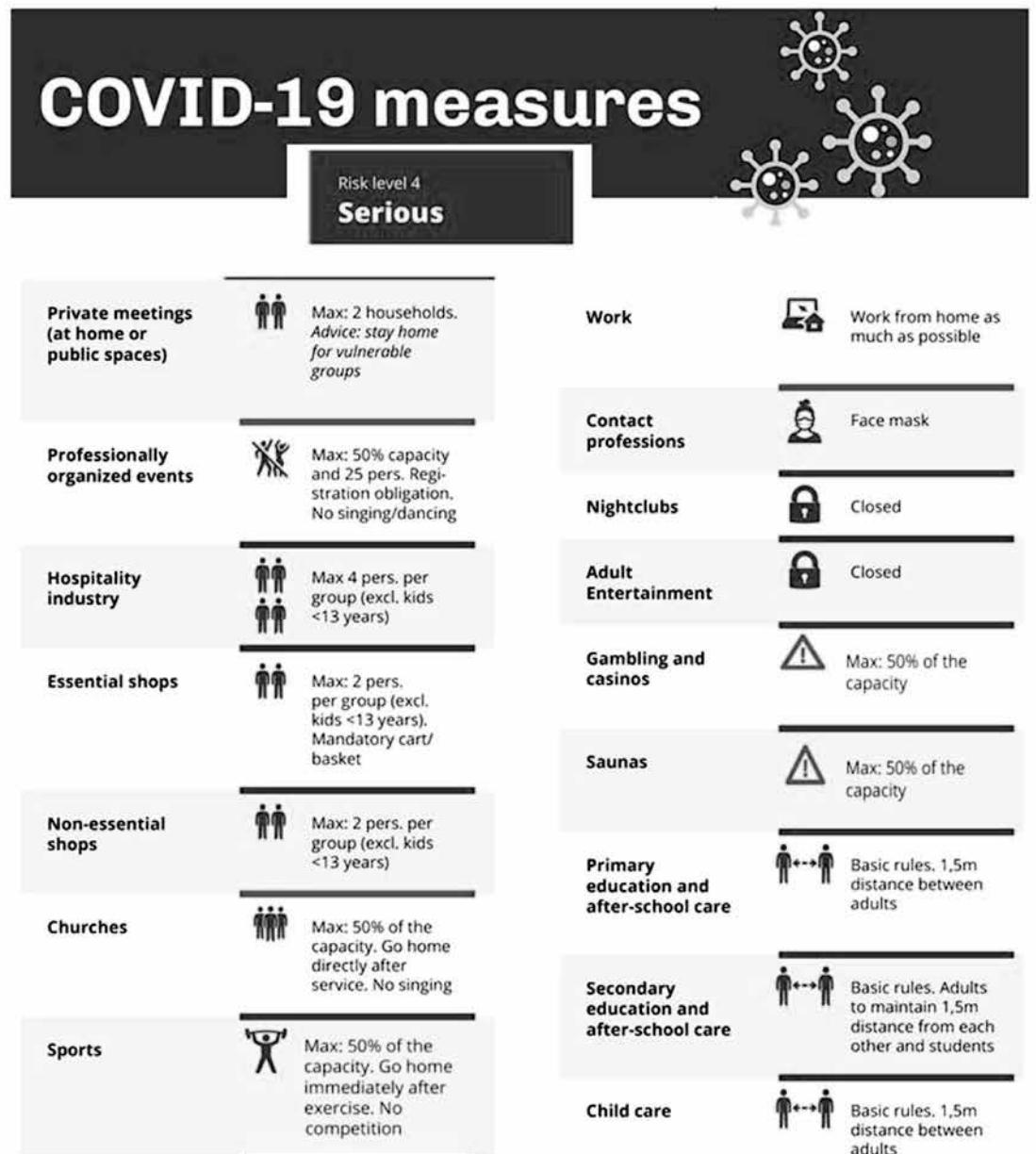
Phase 4 of COVID-19 regulations began January 9

Bonaire's Lt. Governor, Edison Rijna, addressed the people of Bonaire January 8th about the increase of the number of active COVID-19 infections which were now at the 100 mark.

Two main clusters remain active, from a recent church service and a holiday party. A third cluster, from a local snack, has also become active. Investigations are ongoing to trace contacts, but with the burgeoning number of cases, it is becoming more difficult. The number of active cases are expected to rise still more in the coming days.

In his declaration, Lt. Governor Rijna informed the public that additional restrictions (Phase 4 of COVID-19 regulations) would be in place starting Saturday, January 9, 2021. These measures are necessary to avoid people gathering in large numbers, so as to avoid the spread of the coronavirus.

Additionally, starting tomorrow, police will act against those who are not complying. There will not be any more warnings, instead, penalties will be assessed immediately for those not complying with the phase 4 COVID regulations as shown in the graph.



Press Conference, January 2, 2021

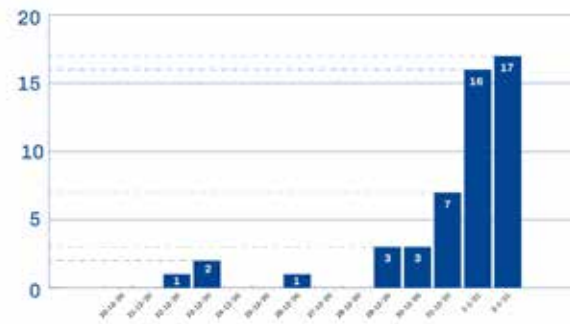
Speech by Dr. Marian Luinstra-Passchier

Kralendijk - In recent days more people have been tested than in the previous weeks and now we have a lot of positive test results. The Public Health Department is working very hard to get a clear picture of all infections and their circumstances. Many people have been walking around with symptoms for some time and initially did not have themselves tested. These cases are now surfacing all at once. Many people thought that the coronavirus was not on the island and therefore they did not get tested.

This week 46 people have already tested positive. You can see the trend of the past weeks in this illustration.

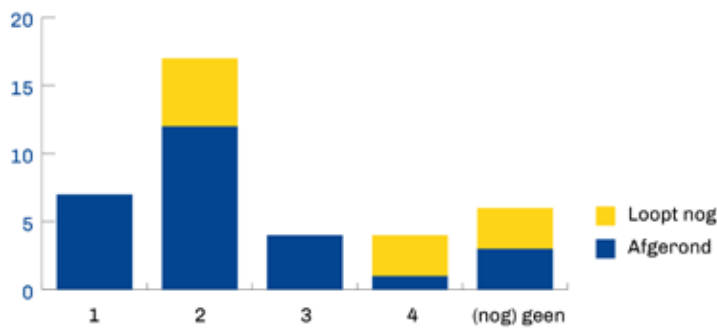
Source and contact tracing for this number of people requires a lot of time and manpower. We want to prevent the virus from spreading further. We do this by calling those who have been in contact with infected people and placing them in quarantine if necessary. If we call you and tell you to go into quarantine, please do so. This is essential in order to protect the people around you. This is why it is so important that you call immediately if you are experiencing any symptoms. The sooner we know the better. In this way you can prevent others from becoming infected.

Number of new positives



Meer informatie: [openbaar lichaam Bonaire](#) www.bonairecrisis.com Coronavirus Informatielijn: **0800 0800**

Clusters



yellow - still researching
(nog) geen = none yet

blue - finished

Who are the people who got infected in the last week? We now know that these individuals are residents of Bonaire. Within the group of infected people we can distinguish a few large and a few small clusters, i.e. groups of contamination.

Graph 2. The yellow color indicates that we suspect that this person belongs to this cluster, but it is still under investigation. For the last six cases, we do not (yet) see any connection with an existing cluster.

These clusters are family members, friends and colleagues. We have also seen that people may be infected in church. A new issue is a cluster that originated at a party and may possibly still continue to grow. This is not yet visible in this illustration. Our people are still far from identifying the source of contamination for everyone infected. We are conducting further tracing research into this matter.

It is now clear that the coronavirus is active on Bonaire. Obviously the virus arrived on the island from outside of Bonaire. But it is among us now and we see an increasing number of people becoming infected. The virus is able to spread easily because people no longer take the corona rules seriously or they have even stopped adhering to them at all. People have become carefree. The current figures show where this can lead to. We can no longer pretend that the virus is not on the island. The time for carelessness is over. If you have symptoms that may be COVID-19 related, don't go about business as usual. Stay at home and call 0800 0800 and make an appointment to have yourself tested.

WWF to help with plastic ban

At a time when the Public Body Bonaire (POB) is formulating both legislation to ban disposable plastics and a public awareness campaign to build support for the action, the Executive Council has accepted an offer of continuing assistance from the World Wildlife Fund – Netherlands (WWF-NL).

A conservation organization that is active worldwide, WWF-NL has been supporting nature initiatives on Bonaire for over 50 years. It assisted with the purchase of Klein Bonaire and the establishment of the Bonaire Marine Park. It continues to help fund organizations such as STINAPA, Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire, Reef Renewal, and Boneiru Duradero.

Earlier this month the OLB and the WWF-NL signed a letter of intent that commits both parties to broad cooperative action in the field of nature and the environment. The Memo of Agreement (MOU) covers a wide range of policy areas such as waste management, wastewater treatment, sustainable fisheries, coral reefs, sargassum and endangered species. The immediate joint focus of effort will be the island's campaign to ban the provision (sale or giving away) of certain types of disposable plastics. The intended ban will take effect six months after the Island Council legislates it. *DMR (Bonaire.nu)*

WEB rates to increase

Beginning January 1st, 2021, the average household on Bonaire will pay about US \$6 more per month for electricity and 0.50 more per month for drinking water, depending on consumption (kWh and m3 rate). The basic monthly rate charged households and businesses for having an electricity or drinking water connection, already suspended temporarily, will remain zero until the end of 2021. The rates are going up mainly because of the increased cost of fuel.

The Netherlands Authority for Consumers & Markets (ACM) determines the maximum rates for electricity and drinking water that producers and distributors are allowed to charge in the Caribbean Netherlands, based on their costs of operation. Then companies ultimately set the actual rates they charge their customers. *DMR*

Knops approves OLB's late budget

After an initial rejection, the 2021 budget written by the public entity Bonaire has been approved by State Secretary Knops (Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations). The Executive Council, legally obligated to present a budget that had been adopted by the Island Council by November 15, submitted one to the Council for approval on October 27. Council did not adopt the budget until December 3. Consequently the Financial Supervision Council, refusing to accept the submission because the statutory term had passed, announced it would write Bonaire's 2021 budget instead. Before Christmas however, Knops informed the Executive Council that the government prefers the public body determine its own budget, so he had approved the version adopted by the Island Council. *DMR (Bonaire.nu)*

Flights from Toronto returning

On February 6 Westjet will begin weekly non-stop service between Toronto and Bonaire. The Westjet flights will be scheduled, not charters, so passengers will be able to book travel in either direction.

An agreement has been negotiated with Westjet by Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB), the Bonaire island government (OLB), and the Bonaire International Airport (BIA). It provides for one flight per week for ten weeks, with Westjet's passenger load warranted by Bonaire. Flying Boeing 737 aircraft, Westjet's capacity will be 174 passengers each way every week. The service is projected to boost the island's tourism and hospitality economy by USD 2.5 to 5 million. *DMR*



Two new members join Island Council

Elvis Tjin Asjoe and Din Domacassé have replaced Renata Domacassé and Joselito Statia as **Movementu di Pueblo Boneriano (MPB) members of the Island Council of the Public Body of Bonaire (OLB). The remainder of the Island Council now consists of Rolanda Helburg-Makaai, Michael Pieters, and Clark Abraham on behalf of the Democratic Party (PDB); Esther Bernabela and Gerald Silberie on behalf of the UPB; and independent councilor Daisy Coffie. Elvis Tjin Asjoe recently resigned from the Executive Council. DMR (Koninkrijk.nu)**

COVID-19 news roundup

The Dutch vaccination campaign against corona will start simultaneously (as nearly as possible) throughout the Kingdom, including the islands. The first vaccinations in the Netherlands are scheduled for January 8. The islands have all drawn up their own plans to carry out the coronavirus vaccination campaign. The elderly, people with chronic illnesses, and healthcare personnel will be vaccinated first.

A modified covid virus has turned up in England and South Africa, and increasingly in other parts of the world. Not much is known about the new strain except that it seems to transmit more readily than the original virus but seems to have slightly milder effects. Doctors do not know yet whether the new vaccines will be effective against the new form of the virus, though most believe they will be. Dr. Marian Luinstra-Passchier announced that the Public Health Department is closely following the news about the altered virus in order to be prepared if it turns up on Bonaire. The Netherlands has closed its airspace to flights from England and is requiring Dutch nationals returning from abroad to quarantine for 10 days.

KLM and TUI continue to fly to Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao but have suspended package bookings until March 15. Travelers must arrange tickets and accommodation on their own.

Travel from the Netherlands is discouraged but not banned according to Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutt. He says the government is advising people to avoid travel because of the serious situation in the Netherlands, which is much worse than here.

A negative PCR test result is required for all travellers boarding a flight to the Netherlands, including Dutch nationals returning home.

A curfew and alcohol ban were declared on Curaçao during Christmas and New Years and will continue until January 11. The curfew is in effect from 9 pm to 4:30 am and alcohol is banned in restaurants, bars and public areas. Curaçao's new cases have stabilized. However, according to Bonaire's contract tracing results Curaçao continues to be the primary source of the infections turning up here.

Bonaire's contact tracing surveys Bonaire's contact tracing surveys have revealed, according to Dr. Marian Luinstra-Passchier, that people who became infected had contact with many people in the preceding days. People who gather in groups and do not take precautions run the risk that one single infection can lead to many more infections. Work locations are where most infections are contracted, with at home contacts with family and friends being second.

Covid on Bonaire as of January 11, 2021

121 active • 186 recovered • 1 hospitalized • 3 deceased
310 positive • 3298 negative • 3608 tested • 495 quarantine

For breaking Covid news see online Reporter <https://bonairereporter.com>

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A time of giving



Volunteers of the Bonaire Youth Outreach Foundation packed up the vans with gifts and snacks for kids all over Bonaire. This is the 21st year for the gift giving Christmas drive to ensure every child on Bonaire receives a gift. The gifts are collected, wrapped and then delivered. Thank you to everyone who donated. Photo Julie Morgan

Orco Bank hosts Christmas breakfasts

For the last 11 years Orco Bank N.V. has given a Christmas hamper to all the bank colleagues. The hamper was given with greatest pleasure to say thank you to all those who have collaborated with the bank in its service to Bonaire. This year the bank altered that tradition, and gave instead to those who are in greater need of our attention and love.

Orco, together with the FKPD, organized a Christmas breakfast for all of FKPD inhabitants and leaders. Adhering to COVID-19 safeguards, the group was divided between two different locations. Besides the great breakfast, Orco gave each of the FKPD inhabitants a daily use gift.

Orco is taking care to render the best bank services a client could expect from a bank while contributing to the Bonaire community.

Orco Bank N.V wishes all of the community Happy Holiday Season!



A time of giving, continued on page 7

This year BYOF (Bonaire Youth Outreach Foundation) and the Pasku Briante (bright Christmas) team distributed over 1,750 gifts to Bonaire's children. We wanted every child on Bonaire to receive something special for Christmas, and they did. A team of 25 Santa hat-wearing volunteers wrapped the presents. They then visited every neighborhood to hand out the gifts. In addition to the gifts, the kids received a book, a Capri Sun juice and a snack box with five different snacks.

We want to thank the many individuals who dropped off presents and donated funds. We thank also the businesses that contributed: SunSmiles Bonaire, Delfins Beach Resort, The Cadushy Distillery, Rum Runners, De Freewieler, Harbourtown Real Estate Bonaire, BeachVibes Surf Shop, Top1Toys Bonaire, Esther van Zuijlen & Johan Visser, Cactus Blue Bonaire and FIT Sound Rental/ TAFKAH, Sabadeco, Playa Trading and Budget Carrental.

The Covid 19 pandemic has made this a rough year for Bonaire and the world in general. We want to thank our community for pulling together and making this year's Pasku Briante (Bright Christmas) shine.

The BYOF and Pasku Briante team is made up of Sun Rentals, Harrie Schoffelen and Thamara van der Vlugt. We wish the kids, parents, families and the whole community of Bonaire a Happy Holiday. *Dennis Martinus*

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POLICE REPORT

Found

A bunch of keys was found on a bench near Seru Largu in the morning hours of Sunday, December 20. The owner of the key ring can report to the police station with a valid ID to collect it.

Property crime

Saturday, December 26 between 4:30 and 5:30am a locked scooter was stolen from the road at a fisherman's hut on Sorobon. It is a white scooter, model 2017 SYM PRO with number plate MF-2234.

Arrests

At around 10:30 pm on Monday, December 14, the police station was notified that a customer heavily under the influence of alcohol was not willing to pay at a restaurant. The man, 45, did not respond to police orders and proceeded to start his car and tried to drive away. The officers arrested him for failing to comply with a police order and for driving under the influence. During the arrest, the suspect strongly resisted so the officers had to use physical force.

In the afternoon on Tuesday, December 15, a man, 21, was arrested at Kaya Grandi for failing to identify himself after being asking three times. He also received a police report for not having a valid driver's license and not wearing the seat belt. Everyone from the age of 14 must be able to show a valid proof of identity if the police ask for it.

In the evening of Sunday, December 27, two people were arrested in Rincon. The driver had failed to stop when signaled to do so and hit a police officer. A chase followed. After warning shots were fired the driver and the co-occupant were arrested.

Traffic accidents and violations

In the morning hours of Monday, December 14, a scheduled traffic stop was held at Kaya Internashonal. During the inspection, 21 motor vehicles were checked. Two police reports were issued. One was for driving without a seat belt and the other for driving without a driver's license and valid insurance. The cost of driving without your seat belt is \$110.

During the latter half of December, several drivers were fined for driving without valid insurance papers, a driver's license or number plate. Fines were also issued for driving without a seat belt, using the phone while driving and driving without a helmet on a scooter. The amount of a fine for the above violations varies between \$30 and \$225.

In the morning hours of Friday, December 18, several people were fined for parking incorrectly in Kralendijk. A car was also towed away. The owner was able to collect the car from the police station after paying the towing costs.

During a scheduled alcohol check held on Kaya Korona on Friday, December 18, between 4 and 6 pm, three people received a report for driving under the influence. Two of the three people were banned from driving for four hours because they exceeded the permitted maximum

alcoholic strength of 220 Ugl (= micrograms per liter). If you drive under the influence of alcohol, you could receive a fine, a (temporary) disqualification from driving, a prison sentence or a combination of these penalties, depending on the seriousness of the situation.

At around 1 am on Saturday, December 19, the police station was notified that a car had run into the mondi on Kaminda Tra'i Montaña. Upon arrival of the patrol, the driver was found to be unharmed, but complained of chest pain. During a maneuver to overtake a car he lost control and ended up in the bushes. The ambulance personnel performed a medical check on the spot. The driver did not have to go to the hospital.

In the morning hours of Saturday, December 19, a driver fell off her scooter when she suddenly had to brake so as not to collide with the back of the car in front of her. The driver had abrasions on both knees, her elbow and left shoulder. She also felt dizzy. She was examined on the spot by ambulance personnel.

On Monday, December 21, two cars collided on Kaya Essequibo when the first car suddenly braked to avoid a hole in the road. The driver of the rear car is pregnant and complained of pain in her stomach and back. The woman was taken to hospital by ambulance for further medical check-up.

At around 2:40 am on Sunday, December 27, two cars collided on Kaminda di Rincon. One driver was injured and was taken to hospital by ambulance. His car was "total loss" and was taken away by tow truck. The other driver was unharmed, but did not have a valid driver's license and was driving under the influence of alcohol, both reportable offenses. His car was damaged and was also towed.

Emergency ordinance

Parties and / or events where people dance are prohibited in accordance with the emergency ordinance.

On Sunday, December 20, several locations were checked for compliance by KPCN, Supervision and Enforcement of the Public Entity and the Kmar. A site in Antriol was closed after receiving numerous warnings.

In this check there were again too many people who did not keep to the prescribed distance. The owners of two other locations were approached and given a warning. An owner self-closed the site to avoid further problems. On a beach at the E.E.G Bulevar, strict action had to be taken in connection with a party with about 80 people who did not adhere to the social distance.

Over the holidays, inspections by KPCN and the Supervision and Enforcement department have shown that many locations comply with the rules of the emergency ordinance. At a few locations, warnings were issued about the number of people inside. The owners immediately responded and some people were asked to go so that the maximum number of people could be met.

Ask Kate

Bonaire real estate advice



Dear Friends,

Thank you all for the questions you sent this year to our column. We read them all. We answer your question directly by email when we receive it so you have the answer quickly, then place it in our column so others can benefit.

Your questions have helped many people, even people who already live on the island, who tell us "I didn't know that till I saw the question in the column." So please keep asking!

We hope for a brighter 2021 for everyone, and until we can see you again, we hope you and your loved ones stay well.

All the best,
Kate Butler and Jean Searce
Re/Max Bonaire

If you have a real estate question or want to buy or sell property, email us at kate@bonairehomes.com.

Fire

In the morning hours of Saturday December 26, the police station received a report of a fire in a car parked in front of a house. The owner stated that just before she was about to get in to work, she saw that the car was full of smoke. She did not open the vehicle for fear that oxygen would start a fire. The fire brigade removed the battery and then opened the car. The dashboard had completely melted, probably due to a short circuit. No one was hurt.

In the afternoon of Tuesday, December 29, a backhoe caught fire on Kaya Inter-

national, in front of Bonaire International Airport.

The incident happened very close to the fire station, and the fire was put out quickly. KPCN is still looking into the accident which caused quite some material damage, but no personal injuries. At this stage a leaking hose is thought to have caused the fire.

Contact the police

911 (rush or red-handed)
717 8000 or 715 8000 (no emergency)
717 7251 (anonymous tip line)



Countless 'Santas' wait in a line that wrapped around the block from eZone on Christmas Eve. Bart Fielmich, director/manager for the store and his elves managed to deliver the gifts just in time. The personal shipping store stayed open an extra hour and everyone in line left with their goodies to celebrate Christmas.

Letters & Opinions

The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various authors and forum participants do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of *The Bonaire Reporter*.

Every day

a coronavirus poem

Our world has changed
And it's very scary
Today and
Every day
It's different than
Before and there's
No more hugs kissing
Our happiness gone away
Like never before the killer
The virus has taken our
Loved ones away and
Families suffering
Like never before
The fear of the unknown
Has arrived and the
The worry of what will happen
Tomorrow to you and me
Coronavirus on our mind's
Coronavirus everywhere
Coronavirus even in the air
And our lives are in danger
Like never before and
We practice social distancing
Every day to keep this virus
At bay as we shop in different ways
Were asked to stay at home
Like never before but
When will this killer
Virus ever go away
But I promise you all
I'll love and pray for everyone
Who's suffering from coronavirus
Every day.

David P Carroll.

Christmas lights Earline Wasser

I'd like to thank everyone who displayed Christmas lights in Kralendijk: Boat owners, City of Kralendijk, businesses and home owners. We leisurely drove through districts of Kralendijk this past Sunday evening after dark as did many others and I'm sure they enjoyed the sights as much as we did. The displays were not repetitious as additional designs had been crafted, and additional colored lights in displays enhanced the overall visions. Round-a-bouts were similar to last years version but they too, were also enhanced.

Has anyone thought of a city wide contest offering trophies for different category entries? It could be fun. Possibly have the general public vote for their favorites in boat, City, business and home owners entries. People could vote online by email or Facebook and possibly at a drop off box in a centrally located grocery.

Thank you again for helping to lift the season's spirits for all to enjoy. Your efforts are appreciated.

Earline Wasser

Wearing masks--another view Charles M. Baltayan

To the Editor:

Recently some have written about the wearing of masks and how it shows caring and offer protection.

Too say that one does not care by not wearing a mask is wrong on many levels and to say that masks offer protection is not clear either.

We have been advised through the

media of many different things and one can not know what to believe. It has been reported to be documented that the wearing of masks by children leads to a higher incidence of strep throat, that there is only one mask on the market that can actually help in the control of the spread of Covid, that bacteria can thrive inside a mask that you wear, and that masks can lead to more crimes that are more difficult to solve. Whether we are being told the truth about the real ways Covid can be transmitted, who knows. Does one have to be sprayed by another into one of their sinuses to be infected? If so, the mask can only do so much as ones eyes are targets that lead to sinuses (a full face snorkel would certainly be better). Are we really protecting others or ourselves if the virus is airborne by wearing a mask? Clearly not. Should people make themselves more subject to extra bacteria/fungus/virus by wearing masks in non-contact situations (driving alone in your car with a mask on or on a bike/scooter/motorcycle)? Not a good idea.

Then there is the problem of disposal. I am sure everyone has seen 'mask litter' (picture below) all around and who really wants to pick up something similar to a used Kleenex? The most painful image is of a parrotfish with a mask on recently posted on FB.

We are blessed on Bonaire to have a high UV index, salty corrosive air and relatively few people that are generally spread out.

My view is:

>If you are at risk, protect yourself however you deem fit. Please use a clean mask and properly dispose;

> We know that UV kills the virus so get some daily sunshine as it also aids in the production of Vitamin D (now being claimed to be a possible effect of Covid but likely because we are told to stay home/inside);

>We know that stress can lead people to be more susceptible to disease yet we get restricted from stress releasing activities that can also keep us physically fit, like sport, training, yoga or exercise. Stay fit and get outdoors. Go swimming in the salty water as salt products kill the virus (bleach is sodium hypochlorite). It is exercise and can't hurt;

>Even drinking a little alcohol can have benefit: It relaxes and a little alcohol can help clean your system (little is the important key, sorry!).

No one ever wishes anyone any unnecessary suffering but despite the horrendous economic and social negatives, the environmental positives of cleaner air, surfaces and water are worth noting. Covid has probably done more to heal the environment than all the government interventions proposed and to date. Hopefully, as a world, we can build on this while we painfully try and get the economic and social declines raised.

Masks should not be mandated and only by those who think they will benefit and take care not to spoil the environment. People should be considerate of others by staying away when sick, keeping clean, and give space to those who wish it. Hopefully we can all get out and exercise, eat well and do things to stay fit and healthy so we can all experience a better 2021.

Respectfully, Charles M. Baltayan

Health insurance coverage expanded

On January 1 ZVK insurance will begin providing expanded coverage for Bonaireans needing restorative care. Covid-19 patients, for instance, including those who were treated previously, will be entitled to a maximum of 50 hours of physiotherapy or remedial therapy treatments; 10 hours of ergotherapy; and seven hours of informative sessions about nutrition and eating habits with a medical purpose.

People needing partial dentures will now be compensated, as those needing full dentures have been. And exercise therapy will be covered for more people with COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). *DMR*

Our apologies to RCN and BES Reporter

When reporting on RCN's media research report in our last issue, our wording seemed to declare that *The Bonaire Reporter* ranked fourth among the news websites in the BES island. That hon-

or belongs to the BES Reporter's news website. We're proud to report though that almost a third of respondents on Bonaire (29%) say they read *The Bonaire Reporter's* print edition.

Venezuelans will soon need visas

Beginning January 15, 2021, the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, including Bonaire, will require holders of Venezuelan passports to have a visa. Venezuelans already in the islands can apply for a visa at the external service provider VFS Global in Caracas. Venezuelans wanting to travel to the islands can apply for a visa at a Kingdom Embassy or a VSF Global branch. *DMR (Bonaire.nu)*.

Kaya Amsterdam roundabout open in January

The new roundabout on Kaya Amsterdam is scheduled to open to traffic the last week in January. A third layer of asphalt must be laid down before the surface will bear the weight of heavy trucks.

Under the "Multi-year Maintenance Program for Roads Bonaire funded by the national government," the roundabout is part of an extensive renovation plan that includes Kaya Amsterdam and Kaya Governor Debrot. Those upgrades will be put out to tender at the beginning of 2021, and work will start in the second quarter.

Christmas speech

In his Christmas message Lt. Governor Edison Rijna acknowledged that the people of Bonaire have had a bad 2020. However, he said, because of the island's status as a municipality within Netherlands, Bonaireans were well supported during the covid crisis. The island began the year with a record number of tourists here, then in March that business sector had to be shut down. The damage to the economy was widespread, but thanks to the aid package from The Hague, the dedication and diligence of the people in the health care system, and the people's general (though imperfect) compliance with the restrictions, the island is managing well and prospects for the future are promising. *DMR*

Flotsam & Jetsam, continued from page 2

Island's general practitioners organize

The six house doctor practices on Bonaire will merge to become an organization of independent GPs, Primary Care Caribbean (PCC), on January 1. Following the death of Dr. Hermelijn from the corona virus and the pending termination of Dr. Miranda's practice, the general practitioners have joined forces to strengthen the quality, continuity and efficiency of general practice on the island.

Now that Locum GP Eijsenga has taken over Hermelijn's practice, both practices will be integrated into the Tera Korá district and housed initially in the building where Dr. Miranda practices. The general practitioner post opposite Fundashon Mariadal will not continue in its current form, and medical services such as those provided by the GP post and chronic care will be handled by the PCC. *DMR (source: BES Reporter)*

This may be another first for Captain Don

Sign the petition for Captain Don Day

In the mid 1980's a permanent underwater flagpole was erected on the shallow reef at Captain Don's Habitat. There was also a memorial plaque on the cement block that held the flag post.

George Buckley said, "I provided the Memorial plaque that went on the cement block. I was also there for its placement ... which almost cost the Habitat manager Nick Davies his fingers, as it shifted on the bottom, said George Buckley, "One of my SCUBA divers, Paul Gagnon, helped carry the heavy plaque to Bonaire as a third or fourth carry on ALM... which we could do in those days."

According to Buckley, Captain Don designed the pedestal and Habitat staff helped to make the mold and pour the cement with the hole for the dive flag post.

"The plaque's verbiage had been determined over the course of several late nights and many rum and cokes at the Habitat bar with Captain Don, myself and Frank Fennel who was then with NIKON.

"We kept the wording simple ... 'Honoring the Underwater Pioneers and Explorers who have gone before us'."

The plaque was cast in marine bronze by the McGann Bronze Company which was then in Massachusetts.

Visiting divers quickly adopted the cleaning of the plaque and periodic replacement of the flag. My Bonaire Expedition group, AQUARIUS Divers and SCUBA West Virginia were amongst those who early on committed to the upkeep as well as numerous return visitors to Habitat.

Diver Linda Cober said, "Every time I dive Cliff, I go by the flag and give it a salute, honoring 'those who have gone before us,' particularly Capt'n Don after he



Divers Leanne Pinkerton and Dee Scarr fasten a new flag on Christmas Day 2020. Photo Julie Morgan

joined those ranks. A Captain Don Day would be a fitting honor for a man who did so much for Bonaire."

As far as we know Bonaire has the only underwater dive flag or at least it may be the first. *Thanks to George Buckley and Linda Cober for sharing their memories.*

Please sign the petition to establish a yearly Captain Don Day, May 21, on Bonaire to honor the Father of Bonaire Diving and ocean conservationist. https://www.petitions.net/captain_don_day_may_21_in_bonaire_na

coming soon...our

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PRINS BERNHARD CULTUURFONDS

Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds Caribbean awarded € 80,000

On the occasion of its 80th anniversary, the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds (Netherlands) has contributed € 80,000 to the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds Caribbean ("PBCCG"). This award acknowledges that the (Dutch) Cultuur-

fonds originated in the Caribbean. The PBCCG serves the six Windward Islands that are part of the Kingdom. Special thanks from the PBCCG goes out to Adriana Esmeijer, who after 20 years of faithful commitment to the cultural interests of the Dutch Caribbean Islands, is leaving the Dutch Culture Fund and making way for the new director Cathelijne Brothers.

MCB donates to Mediabus

The MCB bank has expressed its appreciation for the good work of the Reading and Writing Foundation Bonaire by its donation to the Mediabus.

In 2020, the Mediabus drove every day to schools and childcare in Kralendijk and Rincon. Children could select books and magazines and take them

home to read. Saturdays in December, the Mediabus distributed books in the parking lot of Van den Tweel. Together with the Kinderhulp foundation, the Mediabus has distributed hundreds of children's books to the children of Bonaire. **In the photo, Lily-Ann Domacasse of the MCB hands over the check to Darly Janga and Paul Ruijs of the Reading and Writing Foundation Bonaire.**



Sapphire Foundation gifts public library. The Sapphire Foundation gifted Bonaire's public library with storage cabinets; a book mill; children, teen and adult books; bookends; a magazine rack; and markers and colored pencils so that the little ones can draw and color.

OLB thanks childcare workers.

On Monday, the December 21, Rayan Rammo, on behalf of deputy Nina den Heyer, handed over the first gift cards to the employees of childcare center Hardin di Chikitin 'Nos Kas.' All employees who work in childcare will receive a gift card before Christmas this year. "You have shown leadership and passion for the job in guiding the little ones on our lovely Bonaire", said Den Heyer in a message to the staff.

This month, the BES (t) 4 kids program began to investigate the current employment conditions at childcare organizations and host parents on Bonaire. The goal is to improve working conditions before 2022. To guarantee quality childcare, well-trained personnel is needed. Last year a training program was begun. Now authorities will take a closer look at the terms of employment. Attractive terms of employment are required in order to retrain and attract well-trained personnel.



Every Child a Christmas Present by Dive Friends Bonaire

Every year, SunRentals Bonaire collects the presents for 'Every Child A Christmas Present'. The project 'Pasku Briante', organized by the Bonaire Youth Foundation, is founded to give presents to the less fortunate children on Bonaire.

Especially on this moment, this year, it is very important for the kids to have a nice Christmas. It is a hard time for everyone so we, as Dive friends Bonaire, will try to give them a big smile on those little faces!

We asked all the crew members give some \$\$ and went out for the presents! We hope that it brings them a beautiful Christmas day. Dive Friends Bonaire
Robert van Bennekom



Thanks to Telbo/Kla for remembering *The Bonaire Reporter* this year. We appreciate their gift and the words which accompanied it. Words which we believe in strongly:

Don't let anyone silence the voice of the society and the people. Stand together and let the press be free.



Long term supporters and friends of Echo, Don and Penny, have visited Bonaire. They were moved by the beautiful parrots and how Echo has made a difference for the Yellow-shouldered Amazon parrot population. To encourage gifts, their charity fund matched all donations made to the end of the year 2020 up to \$3,000.



LA CANTINA CERVECERIA

BREWERY | GARDEN | CHEF'S TABLE

La Cantina will open its doors again in January 2021 with its famous Garden and our renewed concept:

The Chef's table!

Located behind the BREWERY at the Kaya Grandi, La Cantina Garden with an A-La-Carte menu features outstanding outdoor dining for the whole family to enjoy. It is a must visit culinary treat with a lush green ambience.

The Chef's table is an exclusive and interactive culinary experience, where you will enjoy a specially designed 6-course tasting menu, prepared and served by our chef. To complete this delight for your senses, we lovingly paired beverages to complement each dish in its own unique way; from signature cocktails and local beers to remarkable wines!

La Cantina Garden is open 5 days a week Wednesday – Sunday from 18:00 - 22:00 with A la Carte menu.

La Cantina Chef's Table open 2 days a week (by reservation only) Friday & Saturday from **18:30 onwards** with a 6 course surprise menu.

For more information or availability, check our website

lacantinabonaire.com





Reef Glimpses Current Events



There wasn't much of a current under the North Pier on this afternoon in 2007: three of the snappers are aligned, but the one above hasn't felt enough current to turn. Note: above the shallowest snapper is a silhouette which looks a lot like a manatee, but I don't think I'd have been taking pics of snappers if there was a manatee around. Who'd have thought a spotted drum could look like a manatee?

the sand bottom, from a mooring near the reef directly to shore! Expensive, not legal, but functional.

Luckily, there are easier ways to break the crossing-current-curse.

You can swim to the reef on the surface, the simplest

solution. (It's so simple it almost feels like cheating, doesn't it?) It's tougher at the end of the dive, though, because you're surface swimming to shore against the wind (unless you're diving on our windward side, in which case you're diving with a Bonaire guide, or you're experienced beyond the level that I'm writing about here, or you're just not thinking it through).

Off Playa, the area between shore and the reef is mostly sand. If you become disoriented on the sand, look around and find the deepest, purest blue color; that's the reef slope, and the key to other directions.

On Bonaire, ripples in the sand and ripples on the surface of the water generally run parallel to shore, giving you more visual orientation. Oh, and at night there are lights on shore at Playa, so turning off one's underwater light and heading for the onshore lights also helps counteract the cross-current-curse.

None of these techniques worked for us that night in Lac Bay, which was in itself a valuable learning experience. We couldn't use the moon to navigate because it was straight up, we couldn't use the ripples on the water's surface to navigate because there was no wind, so no ripples. The bottom was covered with grass, but it was bent by the same currents that were confusing us. The light level was the same in every direction. Not one single technique I knew about natural underwater orientation was available.

Every so often it's good to be reminded that Bonaire's easy diving reputation is well-earned, but not accurate for every circumstance! *Dee Scarr*

Dee has been guiding divers on Bonaire since 1982. She's written about her undersea experiences in her books, Touch the Sea, The Gentle Sea, and Coral's Reef (for children); in Dive Training Magazine from 1990 to 2000, with "Coral Glimpses" in the Bonaire Reporter; and now with "Reef Glimpses". The Bonaire Reporter is delighted to bring "Reef Glimpses" to you free of charge. Dee's books are available for purchase at the Carib Inn on Bonaire or through touchthesea.com.

Years ago, a friend and I decided to do a night dive in Lac Bay.

The night was calm. We entered on the Sorobon side, on the little beach next to the fishermen's pier. We kept our direction in relation to the current – except that suddenly the current changed direction. (We must have turned that curve with the shoreline and windsurfing area to our right.) We surfaced, oriented ourselves, tried again. Eventually we got so frustrated by our inability to swim in any direction but circles that we gave up.

Oh, sure, we should have planned that dive better -- but we didn't think about it because, gee, all we were doing was a shallow-water bay dive on Bonaire.

A compass would have helped, but we didn't have one. After all, who needs a compass on Bonaire? All we need to do here is Swim to the reef slope, then against the current along the reef slope. Return, shallower, in the other direction along the reef slope and then turn toward shore or the mooring.

Swimming against a current can be difficult, but it's a difficulty we expect. What's unexpectedly tricky is trying to swim across a current: it turns out that our instinct is either to swim against a current, or drift with a current. On my first experience night-guiding off Playa, I headed confidently toward the reef. After a while we should have been there, but we weren't. A trip to the surface revealed that we were 'way along shore from where we'd entered! There had been a current; I had started out crossing it but turned upcurrent without even realizing it.

At least one person had enough of a problem with the crossing-current-curse that they installed a rope along

Echo continues for parrots and people! by Julianka Clarendia

It has been a difficult year for everyone, especially non-profits like ourselves who rely on the generosity of supporters to continue conservation programs. If 2020 has shown us anything, it is that we need nature more than ever. It is where we make memories, find peace, embrace ourselves and most importantly stay healthy.

While humans are getting to the new normal and are social distancing as much as they can most of the parrots who came to our conservation center in the recent months are unfortunately showing obvious signs of too much human contact. At Echo, they will be taught to forage for wild fruits and to avoid human interaction, so they can be released back into the wild.

Echo is at the forefront of Yellow-shouldered amazon rehabilitation, we take in ex pets, injured and confiscated parrots, in the hopes that we can rehabilitate and return them to the wild, without the need of human intervention.

Poachers

The two parrots saved from poachers are still in rehabilitation! Over the past three months, the chicks rescued in August have made an incredible recovery from their traumatic ordeal. They are now flying and foraging for food, vital skills needed in the wild.

As for the poachers who took these precious chicks from the wild, the local authorities are still investigating the case. Until the final jurisdiction by the judge is obtained the chicks will remain in the safe haven of the Dos Pos conservation centre. The team are confident that even the toeless chick will still be able to have a happy and healthy life in the wild.



Echo tours

Many of you may know, but we are a non-profit charity therefore we rely heavily on donations and tourism to operate. These uncertain times have meant, at times, we have been worried at how we could continue to operate without tours. But we are happy to welcome visitors back to our Center at Dos Pos. If you are planning to visit us and support our organization be aware that we are moving...

Don't worry we are still in the idyllic parrot haven of Dos Pos, just across the street from our old conservation center. You can arrange your private tour through tours@echobonaire.org

Please donate today

Finally, if you want to support our work in the upcoming year please donate today, through our website www.echobonaire.org !

Your support will help:

- Rescue and rehabilitate ex pets, injured and confiscated parrots
- Provide care for parrots unable to return to the wild
- Release rescued parrots back into the wild.
- Monitor wild nests and help protect parrots from poachers

Donate before the end of the year and double your impact. As for many people on Bonaire the Yellow-shouldered Amazon is a piece of nature that continues to bring them joy: from their unmistakable calls to their playful antics, For us, they are not just a parrot, they are becoming a symbol of hope and joy.

Annual roost count

The annual roost count on Bonaire takes place on the last Saturday of January every year. This count gives us an estimate of the minimum number of parrots on the island. This annual census is important for parrot conservation on Bonaire and for protecting the Yellow-shouldered Amazon Parrot (*Amazona barbadensis*) globally. In 2021 the annual count will take place on Saturday 30th of January. Will you join us? Please mark the date in your calendar!

For this end of the year let's count the good and forget the bad. **Happy Holidays from Echo !**



Did You Know? that most sea creatures don't take care of their young?

Lobsters, parrotfish, seastars, conch, crabs, anemones, corals and oh so many more sea creatures all start off their lives drifting in the currents as plankton. Most sea creatures reproduce by external fertilization. After an elaborate courtship ritual, the female releases eggs and the male releases sperm and the fertilized eggs drift up and are carried along by the currents. At some point the eggs hatch and the very tiny larvae (called zooplankton at this stage) are at the mercy of the ocean currents. Some have the ability to move up and down, but most are not able to swim against the general direction of the currents during their early larval stages.

The up and down part is called 'vertical migration' and many sea creatures do this to avoid being eaten or to eat. Many larval fish travel deep down into darker waters during the day to avoid being seen and eaten by larger animals. Then, in the early evening they travel up into the shallows where they feed on tiny planktonic algae - phytoplankton. These tiny plant-like organisms need sunlight to survive so they have all sorts of mechanisms to keep them up near the surface like oil droplets to keep them buoyant or very long spines to keep them from sinking. Through photosynthesis, oceanic phytoplankton make more than half of the Earth's oxygen!!!

Then, when the little critters get large enough, they begin to swim and look for a new home. For some marine creatures, certain coral species for instance, the planktonic or drifting stage only takes a few days. Conch larvae



Crab zoea larva <http://nathistoc.bio.uci.edu/>

drift for about a month and porcupinefish larvae may drift for one or two years! Also, in many cases, the larvae don't look anything like the adults. A baby crab looks like a mosquito and a baby coral looks like a worm! Baby fish don't have color (to camouflage within the clear water) and often have spines sticking out in weird places as protection against predators.

From kilometers away, many plankton are able to detect reef sounds and smells in order to find their new home. Some fish are poor swimmers at this stage, but others outswim our best athletes when you consider body lengths. Michael Phelps swims about one body length

per second, while larval anemonefish have been clocked at 49 body lengths per second!

Most of these reef animals find and settle in seagrass beds if they are lucky. Some end up in mangroves and coral reefs, but seagrasses offer more protection and more food. In Bonaire, Lac Bay is extremely important for this very reason. Young conch, lobster, snappers, parrotfish, barracuda, etc. all depend on seagrass nursery grounds for their best chance of survival. Once they grow a little larger, many move to mangrove channels and root systems for better survival. And eventually, many migrate out to the coral reef.

At about two square kilometers (one and ¼ miles), Lac Bay is the largest inland bay in the Dutch Caribbean and it is one of the main drivers of Bonaire's marine biodiversity. However, we need to do more to protect and conserve this fragile ecosystem. Sargassum landings have destroyed areas of seagrass, coastal development is sometimes going forward unsustainably and there are a growing number of recreational activities in this small area. Lac Bay is a Ramsar site (protected wetland), and an Important Bird Area. Essential to our reef fish populations and our fisheries, it is home to animals threatened with extinction (sea turtles and conch). Please remember the importance of this site when you visit and enjoy Lac Bay.

Written by STINAPA Biologist Caren Eckrich. Connecting People With Nature.



A Garden? Just Do It! The way to health

Needless to say that the year 2020 was heavy in many ways. With the impact of Covid worldwide and climate change we are facing huge challenges. And no one knows what the future will bring.

So I live in the moment and stay near my house and garden. It is the only place I'm sure I can get food from. The farther away our food must travel, the harder and more expensive it becomes to get it into our kitchens. Many times we don't realize how many chemicals are needed to keep food fresh to survive the long journey to Bonaire. And, that these chemicals are very bad for our health. In one way we eat to stay alive but on the other hand we die of the consequences of the unhealthy food we consume.

Really the only way you can protect yourself against unhealthy food is to plant your own food in a sustainable way. This means we have to treat the soil in a responsible way when using it. Don't bury all kinds of heavy chemicals in the soil; use compost and good manure to fertilize and don't spray your vegetables with pesticides against bugs and plant sickness. Concentrated tea of the neem tree leaves is nature friendly and does a good job against bugs, lice and viruses and it is better for your health.

Food is also way more healthy when you consume it straight from the plant into your pan and to your mouth. No nutritional value is lost. The taste is also nicer, more pure and the structure is crunchy and fresh. And you will enjoy your food with more awareness and satisfaction.

Slowly people are becoming more aware and realizing what it takes for Mother Earth to fulfill the many wishes of so many people. With today's science and technology, we know exactly what we have done wrong to our Earth and that we have to make a big change right now to avoid a big disaster. This change will be a success if we all go in the same direction. And it starts right here in your own backyard, in your garden. See the connection between your health, your food and your garden.



Melon, it grows so easily

This is the key for a healthy life and sustainable use of Mother Earth.

Every house here on Bonaire has a yard or a patio to plant something to eat. It can be herbs on a small piece of land or some peppers, a few tomato plants, or whatever around the house. Vegetables and herbs do not take much space, water or dirt. In small containers you can have some nice vegetable plants. But I see big yards here that are empty, not even one tree. What a pity for your health, because when using that land for something green, it is you yourself, who will benefit.

With this story, I hope I reached some people who will start the year with another mindset about health, food, gardening and being sustainable; where humans and nature will go hand in hand. We need to think in that direction to save the world and to give all creatures on Earth a life. Each one of the Earth's creatures is needed to keep balance in nature and to allow us to keep on

going. We need to do that for the generations after us. We owe them a life, just as we have today. We have to be responsible for nature, because if we don't the bill will be very high. Humans will not be able to change it into a better way. Each one of us is in charge, we cannot point fingers at others, Each one of us has the power to make the choice to do what is needed and a good start is with sustainable gardening right in your own backyard. This is for you, for me, for our children and for all life on the planet, our Mother Earth.

Think about making it one of your goals for 2021. Just do it, start now.

From my heart I wish you a blessed and happy healthy 2021.

Angliet, Nature lover

CHANGES GARBAGE COLLECTION
New Year's Day (January 1, 2021)

**No garbage collection on Friday
January 1, 2021.**

On Thursday December 31, 2020, the garbage truck will drive through the following neighborhoods:

• Hanchi Amboina	• Tera Kora
• Antriol	• Kaminda Lac/ Sorobon
• Bario Mexico	• Nort'i Saliña
• Lagoen Hill	• Nawati
• Kaminda Lagun	• Republiek
• Den Stashi / Den Tuna	• Kaminda La Union
• Bario Sta. Rosa and Bario Selesi	

ⓘ This applies to household waste and commercial waste such as: glass, plastic, cans, cardboard, paper and residual waste.

Please keep in mind that:

- The garbage truck will start the collection in the mentioned neighborhoods from 5 a.m.
- For dead animal collection, call 788-2999.
- Waste collection points at Kaya Industria 20, Morotin and Lagun will be closed.
- Our head office at Kaya Industria 20 will also be closed.

Selibon N.V. wishes you happy holidays!

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The Caribbean's Leading Chandlery



Twenty-five years ago the dream of a couple of young men from Bonaire, Elvis "Piskechi" Martinus and Constantino "Patun" Saragoza, along with a young man from Aruba, Roger Jurriëns, founded 'Bonaire Windsurf Place' (BWP). BWP was created to promote and teach windsurfing in a perfect location: Sorobon, Lac Bay. Without a doubt, these three men should be acknowledged as Bonaire's windsurf pioneers.

In 1989, there were scientific studies ongoing in the Lac area. From the scientific studies, certain rules, regulations and laws were stipulated for the area and construction began.

On December 23rd, 1995, BWP opened. During this time, windsurfing was popular on Aruba, but not on Bonaire. To spread the word, BWP invited international media to Bonaire. BWP also created a windsurf package combining a stay in Aruba with a couple of days in Bonaire. The visitors were so impressed with the island that most of them preferred to stay in Bonaire for their entire vacation. The business evolution was such a success that Roger decided to sell his business in Aruba and establish himself on Bonaire. The team of Roger, Piskechi, and Patun grew the business rapidly and successfully.

Today, Bonaire has become one of the most popular destinations in the world with ideal windsurfing conditions.

"Bonaire Windsurf Place would like to thank all who contributed during countless years towards the success of BWP. It is difficult to mention all the names as we don't want to forget anyone or any organization. Thank you very much from the bottom of our heart." say the co-owners of BWP.



The owners of BWP invested in a building made of wood that had to be shipped from Norway to Bonaire. This building was vital and particular for this area and also very beautiful and unique.



Cutting the ribbon in 1995. BWP's first visitors were the family Poften from Colorado, USA.

Thursday, December 31	Oliebollen bike ride. 3pm. The fun 30km ride begins and ends at Te Amo Beach. The route heads south via Sorobon to the lighthouse and then through Belnem back to Te Amo Beach. See below.
Friday, January 1	New Years Day
January 29 - February 12	Dive Friends PADI Open Water Instructor Course. Are you interested in becoming a dive professional? Send an e-mail to Course Director Annie (coursedirector@divefriendsbonaire.com) to receive all the information.
Saturday, January 30	Annual Parrot Count Join Echo volunteers to count Bonaire's loras.

Oliebollen* bike ride New Year's Eve



De Freewieler is sponsoring their Oliebollen* bike ride 3pm on New Year's Eve, December 31. No registration is necessary. Bikers just need to show up for the 30km ride that begins and ends at Te Amo Beach. The fun ride heads south via Sorobon to the lighthouse and then through Belnem back to Te Amo Beach.

This is a competition free ride, in other words, just for fun.

Frank Bohm of De Freewieler said, "We bike together with the group and after that we eat some oliebollen and drink a cola or a beer. We'll be home in time for New Year's Eve." JM.

*Oliebollen: a traditional Dutch and Belgian delicacy eaten during winter. Oliebollen, literally translated as 'Oil Balls' are also known as Dutch Doughnuts.



L - R: Romanda Sint Jago, Antonia Trinidad, Grace Winklaar (Digicel), Aura Janga, Hilda Anthony and Rony Thode

Digicel extended thanks to the members of Rincon's RINFA (Rincon Femenina) at El Mundo restaurant on December 28. The ladies enjoyed a nice dinner and entertaining evening officiated by Mrs. Grace Winklaar, Digicel PR. RINFA is the oldest continuously active 'Ladies Club of Rincon', and for that matter, Bonaire. It began April 7th, 1974, thanks to two visionaries, the late Mrs. Susanita Trinidad and Miss Urba Pourier. The initiative was birthed by the need of a daycare facility for the working mothers of Rincon.

The children's daycare, Kresh Rincon, first staff were RINFA's own members. Kresh Rincon is still active today and RINFA members recently gifted them a much-needed washing machine.

Who would have thought that 47 years later RINFA would still be active and making an impact on the community?

Winklaar extended words of gratitude to RINFA and specifically to the seven ladies who have served as members for over 45 years: Gacha Pourier, Rony Thode, Aura Janga, Romanda St jago, Hilda Anthony and Antonia Trinidad.

A few of the notable events organized by RINFA in the last 45 years are: International Food Festival, Marshe di Rincon, Mother and Father's Day activities for the childless, activities for the Cocari, Kas di Kwido Playa. They have also travelled to represent Bonaire to Venezuela, Miami, Puerto Rico, Aruba and Curaçao.

Photo Julie Morgan, Story Grace Winklaar



Making Bonaire Accessible

Looking back and giving thanks

Many years ago Oprah Winfrey suggested that her viewers

should sit down every night before going to sleep and write down five things they were thankful for. At first I thought it was ridiculous, but the more I thought about it, the more this idea seemed to please me and I tried to it every night. The only thing was that I did not write it down, but thought the five things over in my mind.

It was hard at first, because I was distracted by a lot by side-thoughts, but I got better at it. And after a few weeks it went quite well.

Oprah also taught me to always think in a positive way, whenever I wanted something to happen. And life taught me that this also worked.

This year, 2020, is coming to an end and I wanted to see if I could come up with five positive things. After all ... it has been a rollercoaster-kind of a year:

1. There were several medical issues that made my life very difficult. There were many friends who have helped me to make life a bit easier. And they still do. I get treatments that should lessen my symptoms. I get help getting to doctor appointments, therapy and shopping. And life seems to get less difficult.

2. Losing my husband was something I knew that would happen, but when it really did, it seemed so much harder than I thought. To help me cope, there are many friends who help me to get by.

I got to learn so much about special care, wonderful volunteers and professionals. I am forever grateful.

3. We have had a lot of rain the last few weeks and every plant, tree and shrub grew very high, which I dreaded. But having a wonderful new road, a beautiful blooming garden has made all that water a blessing.

4. During the time of advent there are special masses held, called aurora-mass. Normally, when the wind is hardly blowing, it can get pretty hot. But early morning at 5am it is nice and cool and from afar I can hear the singing... and I enjoy that a lot. It gives me a sense of hope.

5. The covid-pandemic is reigning the world. Hospitals are full, elderly and younger people are dying, the economy is at a standstill. But there are vaccines being developed and that means there is a sense of hope.

If everyone could make their own, very personal list of the things they are thankful for and start to think positive thoughts, there should be hope for all of us.

My wish for 2021 is that things will get better, that no more people die from the virus and that everybody can be together with their loved ones as long as possible. And, that everybody, who needed treatments and could not receive them because of the virus, will get them in 2021. And that nobody on this planet will be lonely anymore. *Ria Evers-Dokter*

Bonaire's sky park Happy Perihelion Day

Hello there my starry-eyed friends: Happy Perihelion Day!

Perihelion is the point in our slightly oblong orbit when Earth is closest to the sun! In 2021, it will fall on January the second!

Y'all might be wondering why -- if we're closer to the sun -- it's full-on wintertime! That's because seasons are driven by the TILT of the Earth and NOT the distance from our star. In the winter, the Northern Hemisphere is tilted away

from the sun, and receives less direct light, cooling us down.

Anyway, celebrate Perihelion with some African Peri Peri sauce and enjoy being three percent closer to the sun! Or, if you're more of a night owl, pop outside and look for Bootes the Herdsman in the North East because the Quadrantids meteor shower will peak over the weekend too! 2021: pulling out all the stops! Thanks for checking in on Star Gazers, friends. I'm Trace Dominguez. Keep lookin' up.

Source: Trace Dominguez-Star Gazers website: <https://www.stargazersonline.org>

Every Saturday

Pakus di Pruga- Flea Market store sponsored by the Animal Shelter from 8am till 4pm Open but with "social distancing" requirements

Open

TCB (Tourist Corporation Bonaire) front office is open: Monday - Thursday, 8-12; 1:30-5; Friday, 8-12; 1:30-4:30;

Washington Slagbaai Park is back to regular opening hours from Monday to Sunday as of October 26th. Hours: 8 - 5 (entry up to 2:30) (Some days closed because of bad weather--check STINAPA's FB page.)

Animal Shelter is open to the public by appointment only during our regular business hours (Mon.-Fri. 9-12 and 3-5, Sat. 9.-3 nonstop. Please call or Whatsapp 701-4989

Clubs & meetings

Open Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting. Every Thursday, 7 - 8 pm. International Bible Church, Kaya Papago 104 in Hato (Behind Bon Bida Spa & Gym and Bon Bida apartments). All are welcome to attend.

12 Step Meeting Wednesdays at Bonaire Basics, Kaya Korona 47. Meeting starts at 7:15pm. Info: 12stepsbonaire@gmail.com

I have no idea what to write about this time...

Sitting here on Christmas Eve day, without any questions from anyone, I was at a loss about what to write. So I thought, instead of a negative question and hopefully a good answer, I would change it up and praise some good work from our local telco, Telbo.

A friend, who shall remain unnamed, has been living on Bonaire for many, many a year, and currently resides alone on a kunuku which is located outside of the wired internet footprint on the island.

She has had an old style Telbo wireless connection for many years, with the dish up on the rusty windmill, but recently it has stopped working. She called Telbo, and a technician came and it worked again for a short time, but then failed miserably.

I went to try and help, and realized that the system had been sitting in the sun all those years and cables everywhere had deteriorated to the point of not working anymore. There was nothing I could do to assist and I recommended we take a step-by-step approach to try to resolve the issue.

Step 1 - Make sure that Telbo was actually able to get a signal to her router.

Step 2 - Make sure the router was working.

Step 3 - Make sure that the 90 meter cable from the

router to her computer was working.

Three or four times, over the course of the next two weeks, a Telbo technician visited, followed the steps and provided her with a renewed internet connection. But he was not alone in this endeavor. Another friend assisted in running the cable through some walls, and over the driveway. But when she turned on her computer, the monitor was on the blink, so another friend provided a monitor.

So, in the spirit of Christmas, a bunch of relative strangers came together to help a very deserving person and now she is able to communicate with the world, her family, and friends.

Let's hope 2021 is better than 2020.... Happy New Year!!!



Creating optimal health

by Irene da Cunda Costa

Discovering how we breathe

If somebody asks you to raise your left hand you will most likely have no trouble doing it. If you are asked to hold your breath for five seconds, you will be able to do it as well. If I ask you to hold your heart beat you most likely won't be able to do that. While you were reading all these lines you were breathing without focusing your attention on this act until you voluntarily switched your attention to your breath. Breathing is the magic bridge between the autonomic and the voluntary nervous systems and it is a wonderful tool.

There is a direct relationship between how we feel and how we breathe. If we are relaxed, we breathe slowly and effortlessly but if we are anxious, we use short, quick breaths using a lot of effort. If we inhale excessively and do not exhale enough, we feel short of breath. The accumulated carbon dioxide in the blood triggers the need to inhale more frequently. If we breathe and exhale fast and deep, as when we hyperventilate, we cause a drop in the normal levels of carbon dioxide in the blood. We might feel dizziness, numbness and tingling in the extremities and confusion. A person cannot be relaxed and breathe fast and short. The contrary also applies,

one cannot be experiencing an episode of anxiety while breathing slowly and in a controlled manner.

In a stressful situation, a certain cascade of neurotransmitters and hormones is triggered. When this situation is sustained for a long period, the performance of your immune system will be compromised. During relaxation the response of the body is the opposite. Breathing control will help you achieve relaxation thus creating a healthy cascade of neurotransmitters and hormones.

First it's good to know how you breathe. To explore this, you can start by wearing comfortable clothing and lying flat, preferably on the floor, on a thin mat or blanket, but you can also do it on your bed. Flex your legs, resting your feet about 20 or 30 centimeters (one foot) from your buttocks. Make sure your spine rests long on the floor or the mattress. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen, breathe normally and observe if one or both hands move and when.

The most efficient breathing is abdominal, since it uses the lower part of the lungs. The lower lungs are larger and work with gravity. Abdominal breathing lowers the diaphragm, generating space, so less energy is used. Only the hand that is resting on our belly should move. If the hand that moves is the one that is resting on the chest, we are doing a thoracic breathing. Thoracic breathing is less efficient and more costly since it needs to move the ribs up and out and uses the smaller, middle part of the lungs. If we are doing clavicular breathing, we will also notice that the hand that is on the chest moves

but this time towards the clavicles (collarbone). Clavicular breathing is the least efficient and most laborious of the breaths as it uses the upper vertices of the lungs and wastes energy to raise the shoulders to create space. Sometimes we do a combination of two or all three types of breathing.

If we are doing thoracic or clavicular breathing, we can voluntarily transform it to abdominal breathing. A little concentration is necessary to use the diaphragm to push down the organs of the abdomen and thus let the air enter the lungs. When you are practicing, only the hand that is resting on the abdomen should rise while you inhale and sink while you exhale. It helps to visualize that you have a balloon in your belly that inflates when you inhale and deflates when you exhale. You can explore different types of breathing and take note of how you feel practicing one style or another.

A skill needs to be practiced and mastered before you use it in real life. When you are in a stressful situation you can relax by using your breath control, but you need to master it first by practicing. Only then, you will be able to use it to your benefit. Yoga training, meditation and mindfulness are very helpful to achieve breath control. In the next issue I will explain which is the most important part of the breathing cycle and why.

Irene is passionate about health, neurosciences and personal growth. Originally from Uruguay, she is an Integrative Psychotherapist (PNIE), Life Coach (ICF), Master in Nutrition(IUSC) and Yoga Instructor.

Looking at 2020 and 2021, continued from page 1

general. In the process we also lost a fellow STINAPA board member, personal friend and overall dive industry icon, Bruce Bowker, who passed away earlier this year. Not a great year to say the least.

But I'm a "glass half full" person and always try to see the upside of things. Bonaire has been able to control the COVID numbers on island very well. And because of that, we have been able to live in relative freedom compared to many other places in the world. I also feel that this crisis can be an opportunity for Bonaire to re-evaluate priorities and to implement some policy changes that fit the Strategic Tourism Plan that has been on the table since 2017. With that, and with some good hope that with good protocols and a working vaccine we will get things under control over the course of 2021, I look positively to the future.

I feel for all those who suffer at the moment. I hope you can look at the upside of things and hold on for better things to come. I wish you all the best for 2021!



Pam Teitel
Budget Marine, owner

If you think back on this year, Covid stands out as the main news here (I will ignore Trump who is trying his best to dominate the news everywhere and hope

that ends soon without anything remarkable to begin 2021!).

I recall hearing about the early reports in Wuhan and saying "could you imagine if this were in the States or Europe, they would never be able to quarantine a city!". Well, imagination was short lived. In a heartbeat, it was a worldwide reality, even Bonaire shut down. People stuck all over the world not able to get back home. Tourism, our mainstay locked down tight. How long would we be closed for? Weeks, months, or more?? Till there is a vaccination? Who could imagine nearly a year later and we are still in a state of confusion. Thankfully the government here stepped up to the bat and gave financial support, but for how long can we keep this up? With no real rhyme or reason we are open to some, yet not to others.

Bonaire has a large population of "snow birds" who leave Europe or the States when it begins to get cold who will spend the winter here. Many own homes, they dive, wind surf or kite surf, eat out and will greatly help some tourism sectors without much risk. They are willing to pay the price and quarantine and or test once here to assure our safety. Why not make this our first step to opening? Instead, we had floods from Amsterdam come for their vacations. Now proven by them, tests three days before does not mean you will not get it and bring it in those last days.

We need to do more to keep safe after all this time closed down, with the vaccine in sight we should only

open cautiously. We can open for everyone, but require the advance test and then require quarantine for three days and retest, or quarantine for 10 days complete without retest. Those committed to come will manage. Regular random spot checks with high fines can enforce this.

In all the confusion we remained lucky. But as Aruba saw, luck can run out fast. With the turn of the year, we all wish that this would go away and we could start fresh. If we believe in science, masks, distancing and the vaccine, this can in fact be true soon. We have come this far together, let's not get "bored" with it and drop the ball on the one yard line!



Carolyn Caporusso
Clean Coast Bonaire

By all reports, the Covid-19 crisis has also had a significant negative impact on the fight against single use plastic.

The use of disposable face masks, disposable gloves and plastic/styrofoam take-away containers has exploded in 2020. We're going to be finding these items on our coastlines for years to come. I implore people to make a New Year's resolution to switch to re-usable masks and containers wherever possible.

Looking at 2020 and 2021 part 2, will continue in our next issue.

At Your Service

The following businesses have been recommended by Bonaire residents.
Introductory rate - call or email for availability - 796-4055 - BonaireReporter2019@gmail.com

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Motor Vehicle tax 2021

Fuel	Letter on License Plate	Base Rate	All year	Half year	New Plate
Gasoline	B or V	B	USD 190.00	USD 95.00	USD 8.40
Diesel	B or V	D	USD 838.00	USD 419.00	USD 8.40
Gasoline	TX or AB	C	USD 137.00	USD 68.50	USD 8.40
Diesel	TX or AB	E	USD 209.00	USD 104.50	USD 8.40
Gasoline	MF	A	USD 137.00	USD 68.50	USD 5.60
Diesel	Z	G	USD 1,257.00	USD 628.50	USD 5.60

Happy New Year, from Animal Shelter Bonaire!

Animal Shelter Bonaire would like to thank all the Reporter readers and our supporters for their help and kindness this past year. It has been a difficult year for everyone and the variety of ways that you have reached out to help us is greatly appreciated. With paws crossed we are hoping that 2021 will bring each of you a better 2021 with much happiness and health. For those of you who have adopted from us this year, thank you for giving these wonderful animals a second chance! There are many more still waiting for their forever home, if you have room in your home and your heart in 2021, please call us to schedule an appointment to visit with our furry friends.

Fireworks reminder

The fireworks will be in full gear this week. Please take care that your pets are protected. In addition to the tips in the last issue of The Reporter, please remember the following.

If your pet goes missing or you find a lost pet, please post a photo and notice on the Facebook page Pet Alert Bonaire. Also message the Animal Shelter via Facebook Messenger that your pet is missing or you have found a pet with a description and location.

If you find a wandering pet, please check with your neighbors first to see if it lives nearby. If possible, care for the animal until its owner can be located. The Shelter is always overwhelmed

with lost animals during this time of year. We will accommodate as many as we can but we are very full and cannot take them all. You can contact us to see if we have room if you find a lost pet. And a reminder of the basic tips:

- Walk your dogs during daylight hours to avoid times when fireworks are likely
- KEEP YOUR PETS INSIDE WHEN FIREWORKS ARE BEING SET OFF
- Close windows and curtains to muffle the sound of fireworks
- Put on some music or TV to mask the firework sounds
- Prepare a quiet space or hiding place for your pet where it can feel safe and comfortable – perhaps under a bed with some of your old clothes. They may like to hide there when the fireworks start.
- Ensure your pet is wearing some form of easily readable identification – even in the house. They should have at least a collar and tag with a phone number.
- Let your pet pace around, whine, meow and hide in a corner if they want to. Do not try to coax them out – they are just trying to find safety, and should not be disturbed.
- Stay calm, act normally and give lots of praise for calm behavior. It's OK to cuddle and stroke your pet if it helps them relax, but if they prefer to hide under your bed, then let them do this instead. Jane Disko

Pet of the Week: Tinsel



Meet Tinsel

This sweetheart is still at the shelter. Tinsel is a quiet, sweet lady who is 3 years old. She really loves attention and fully enjoys it. She comes to you easily but she needs to get to know someone better before she shows her joy and enthusiasm. Tinsel gets along with other dogs, but just like us humans, she likes to decide who to hang out with.

This lovely lady has been with us at the Shelter for over a year and she deserves a loving owner who will take good care of her and is willing to take the time to give her a chance to get used to her new home and surroundings. You can make an appointment to meet Tinsel in person by calling the Shelter at 701-4989 or message us on our Facebook page, Animal Shelter Bonaire.

Story and Photo: Glenn Doeze

If you have a car or motorcycle, you will soon have to pay the motor vehicle tax for 2021. The tax is the same in 2021 as it was in 2020. You will receive a letter called assessment notice about this by post no later than the beginning of January 2021. It states how much you have to pay and when you pay.

Do you want to pay in two parts?

You can pay the amount in two parts, if you wish. This is how you do it:

- You pay the first half before April 1, 2021.
- You pay the second half before July 1, 2021.

If you have not paid anything by April 1, 2021, you must pay the entire amount on April 2, 2021. The letter you receive will contain more information about paying in two parts.

Do you want to pay earlier?

You can pay the motor vehicle tax before you receive the letter. You can pay with internet banking or at your bank's counter. Put your CRIB number / 01>letter for base rate>20>plate number under "payment reference". Example: 123456789 / 01B20B1234.

You can transfer your payment to:

- R.B.C. : 8400000180872997 - RBTTBQBN
- ORCO BANK: 7601000195 - ORBABQBN
- M.C.B. : 402.917.08 - MCBKBQBN
- B.D.C. : 30638802 - BDCCBQBN

Your bank statement is proof that you have paid.

In the diagram below you can see how much you have to pay. Look at the fuel and the letter on your license plate.

Responsibility for license plates

You are responsible for the number plates that you have received from the OLB, if there are any changes, you must inform the OLB's Finance department. If you sell a car and you no longer want the license plate or your car is defective, we advise you to return the license plate. Then you can be sure that you no longer have to pay the tax.

If you have handed in your license plates to Finance or sold and mentioned this to us in the month of December, you will receive an assessment. You will receive this with a reduction on the amount you have to pay. The assessment will be sent by the end of January 2021 at the latest.

Want to know more?

Do you have any questions about the tax or licence plates? Then email to be-lasting-olb@bonairegov.com. Or call 717 5330 with extension 2637 or 715 5326. Department of Communication OLB

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We wish you the best of the season and a successful and happy 2021!

Thank you to *The Bonaire Reporter* advertisers, online subscribers and readers. Without you we wouldn't be able to do what we do. We truly value you.

Assembling a newspaper requires

a small army of talented writers, photographers, layout artists, press operators, delivery people and web specialists.

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone and we look to 2021 for

a brighter future for Bonaire and the world. We have all taken a hit from the scarcity of tourists over the year, but we have learned how important the nature of our island is and what is truly important to Bonaire.

Thank you for supporting *The Bonaire Reporter*. We promise to do our best to keep you informed, educated and entertained in print, online with the web Reporter and on Facebook. *Julie Morgan*

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