



Construction continues on 192 room Chocogo Resort
 Photo Julie Morgan

New rules coming, but construction booming under old rules

Even with the onslaught of Covid-19 last year, construction has not stopped on Bonaire. All over the island new structures are going up and the majority are buildings to fuel Bonaire tourism with new hotels, resorts and vacation apartments. Each one of the new edifices has required the builder to go through the process of submitting required documents to obtain a permit to build, a nature permit and a permit from the Law on Maritime Management. All of the permits are submitted, reviewed and then eventually land on the desks of the executive council. All in all, the process takes about 16 weeks unless there is a problem with the paperwork.

Areas are designated where certain types of buildings, homes, hotels, businesses, etc., can only be built in accordance to a Spatial Planning map designed by DROB (Department of Spatial Development and Management of the Public Entity) and Rho (advisors) in 2010. The map includes all of Bonaire, Klein and the surrounding sea up to a depth of 60 meters. The plan is supposed to be revised every 10 years and the agencies are currently hoping for completion of the map by January 2022.

Tom Peeters of EK VanDoorne said this revamping will include the legal framework of building permits with a new set of building codes and requirements as the ones in use now are 35

years old.

Some of the important revisions will take into consideration Bonaire's environmental laws that have changed considerably during this time.

According to Roland Bruijnesteijn of DROB, with the new plan, any building on the sea or coast will no longer be permitted.

Yet people are building on permits that are 30 years old and the government is honoring them.

Bruijnesteijn told us they are considering putting a time limit on the start of construction once a permit is received, but the time restriction could affect the plot owner's rights and land price.

Therefore, it could only apply to future permits.

So will the new environmental building policies be in force immediately? Or will old permits continue to be honored even if they violate the new policies?

Information was recently released that Europarc has purchased one of the plots between Eden Beach and Chogogo and plans to build the new Sunset Beach resort with 108 rooms directly on the water.

Bruijnesteijn said, "No permit has been asked or granted for Sunset Beach yet, although they sent a lot of documents and we may expect a request for a permit anytime soon."

Will they be expected to build in regard to guidelines that are 35 years old or the updated ones to be released in 2022?

Deputy Nina den Heyer said, "What we are trying to do now is to make it so that new resorts must comply with criteria that are supposed to be in line with our vision of high-end tourism instead of mass tourism."

In a 2010 report Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB) stated statistics for 2100 total units of hotel type room rentals. And the 2015 Master Tourism Plan suggested Bonaire needed to add 600 new rooms to be effective in the tourism market. That plan has been replaced with another one, but is this idea for increasing rooms still in effect?

Erection of new hotels rooms seems to be moving in reaching that 600 room goal with the current construction of 192 rooms at Chocogo, 128 at Delphins, 11 at Wanapa, 42 at Habitat and 374 at Plaza.

A look at the Spatial Planning document (www.bonaire-ro.nl) regarding requests for building reveals various plans. They include a new center of Kralendijk, an eco-resort and another hotel. We do not know if permits have been granted. Data regarding the number of new permits for the last year was not available. But in 2018, 294 were recorded.

Story and photos by Julie Morgan



Playa Lechi could be home to one more resort. Photo Julie Morgan

Knops warns Aruba

Secretary of State Raymond Knops of the Interior and Kingdom Relations says Prime Minister Evelyn Wever-Croes keeps avoiding the reductions in government spending Aruba must make in exchange for a loan from the Netherlands. His specific issue was cost cutting needed in Aruba's of General Health Insurance.

In February Wever-Croes requested a two month freeze on cutbacks. Knops refused. On April 1st a new drug list was announced. It contained cost-saving measures to take effect in three months, but was canceled on May 1st.

The government has proposed some positive cutbacks, consisting primarily of a 5.5% reduction in the contracts of health-care providers. A committee of experts from the healthcare sector is examining other alternatives to those cutbacks. Knops says he's looking forward to receiving their findings. *DMR (Koninkrijk.nu)*

Knops warns Curaçao

With a new coalition government forming on Curaçao, State Secretary Knops has warned both party leaders in advance, Gilmar 'Pik' Pisas of the MFK and Ruthmilda Larmonie of the PNP, that the Caribbean Body for Reform and Development agreement COHO is still in force—as written—and that support from the Netherlands will immediately lapse unless Curaçao continues to participate in it.

The new Pisas government has proposed to structure the COHO land package into an adjustment program to be created, guided and monitored by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Knops agreed that negotiating a role for the IMF might be useful. But he insisted the only acceptable involvement for the IMF would be to help implement the existing COHO agreement that both parties have already agreed to.

Knops warned that if Curaçao's new government fails to comply, its liquidity support would be discontinued immediately, as would a promised almost 50 million euros for one-off investments in educational housing and the economy. In addition, Curaçao would have to repay the liquidity loans provided from April next year and also repay the outstanding pre-COVID bullet loans at the end of the term. They currently amount to EUR 333.5 million. *DMR (Koninkrijk.nu)*

Knops cuts off St. Maarten again

State Secretary Raymond Knops has informed the government of Sylveria Jacobs that St. Maarten will not receive further liquidity support until it tackles the restoration of Philipsburg airport energetically. Because of old style government dysfunction, St. Maarten's airport cannot be repaired, an allocated \$120 million cannot be spent, and St. Maarten now has to wait for its 39 million guilder fifth tranche.

Hurricane Irma destroyed the St. Maarten airport in 2017. Little restoration work has been accomplished, even though the general director and the Supervisory Board have more than \$120 million available. The money includes \$51 million that was set aside for the recovery, a further \$50 million loan from the European Investment Bank, and \$21 in liquidity support intended to keep the airport operational during the corona crisis.

The \$120 million is subject to a number of conditions that are intended to restore confidence in the management of the airport. One condition is that, in line with international standards, security surveys be carried out on members of the airport management and supervisory board, both now and in the future. Profile sketches for the board members should also be drawn up.

According to Knops, the current general director and two members of the Supervisory Board are blocking the security surveys. He says they set their own agenda and push decisions without following proper procedures. They also actively exclude the third Supervisory Board member, who sits on the recommendation of the Royal Schiphol Group.

Knops says he has repeatedly called upon Prime Minister Jacobs, who represents the government's interests as a shareholder in the airport, to ensure that the reconstruction of the airport terminal proceeds unimpeded. Jacobs, he says, dismisses the evidence of misfeasance in the airport authorities as rumors and believes as shareholder he should not interfere. *DMR (Koninkrijk.nu)*

The Bonaire Reporter May 19 - June 2, 2021

Sabal Palm Park to be created



Bonaire has its own indigenous species of Sabal Palm, but only 24 fully grown trees have survived. Threatened by drought and by goats and donkeys, their existence as a species is tenuous. We could lose them forever. The small grove is located south of the road to Sorobon in an area already designated as a nature reserve in the Spatial Development Plan Bonaire.

A Sabal Palm Park will be created there, a joint effort of Bon Bèrdè, Montgomery Botanical Center, Seacology, and the Bonaire Island Government. The area will be fenced to keep out donkeys and goats so young trees can be planted and survive. Educational information will be provided for visitors of all ages. Walking and cycling routes will be constructed, with waste bins and information leaflets.

The park will provide a protected haven where the species can be propagated. It will also give scientists a place to monitor Sabal Palm reproduction and growth so we can better understand how to restore the species.

Echo Bonaire, as part of its program to restore indigenous tree populations on the island, is growing a small grove of young Sabals inside the fence of a private enclave at the north end of the island. *DMR; Photo by Johan van Blerk*

Flotsam & Jetsam, continued on page 7

Covid-19 round-up

Testing at airport for arriving passengers will be available beginning May 25. Arrival testing has been a condition for the start-up of direct flights from, among others, the United States, which are now scheduled for the beginning of June. For the time being, the test on arrival will still have to be combined with a negative PCR test before departure.

Bonaire has reduced restrictions to Level 3, given the relatively low rate of new infections and the steady, though slow, increase in the number of people who have been vaccinated. Level 4 will be reinstated if the infection rate increases again.

The Health Department continues to offer incentives for people to get vaccinated and to make it easier and more convenient. Many people still hem and hah, unfortunately. The island vaccination rate is still only 68%, and that's for the first dose only.

Governor Rijna speaks from the heart again. At a news conference someone asked why visitors from the U.S. have to pay so much more for testing on Bonaire than on Curaçao. Dr. Luinstra-Passchier explained it was a matter of economies of scale. Curaçao tests many more people than Bonaire and therefore can do it cheaper. Governor Rijna interjected to say that if Americans find testing too expensive on Bonaire, they are welcome to go to Curaçao. A number of groups have reminded the governor of Bonaire's campaign to encourage the restoration of tourism. *DMR*

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Covid-19 on Bonaire

totals as of May 17, 2021

15 active	8417 tested
1564 positive 6853 negative	0 hospitalized 17 deceased

For up to date covid news go to the online Reporter <https://bonairereporter.com> FB

Plenchi di Trabou works!



Selibon and Plenchi di Trabou celebrate new employees. Photo Julie Morgan

On May 15, 2020, Selibon became the first company to enlist eight unemployed Bonaireans into the new work training program Plenchi di Trabou. And a year later, on May 14, 2021, in a small event at The Bonairean, the seven men and one woman were recognized for completing the program.

The small crowd enjoyed refreshments and music as Siagneel Evertz announced the speakers that spoke of the positivity of the program and praise for all participants. Speakers included

Yajaira Niclass, Ruymia Tweed both of Plenchi di Trabou, Einar Wanga of Nosta Uno, deputy James Kroon, Rosaria Jefferson of Eagle Eye Media and Rudsel Letto, director of Selibon.

The once down on their luck participants of the Selibon training, were guided through the program by coach Rosario Jefferson of Eagle Eye Media. All now have full time jobs at Selibon.

The individuals came to the program with pasts of jail time, drug offenses or minimum education making it difficult

for them to find a job. They applied to the training program and are now leaving their pasts behind and looking to a bright future.

Jefferson said, "I want to let them be inspired, motivated and want to go to work everyday. When there was a problem they came to me. We are ONE!"

The training-workday required the

participants and their coach to arrive at 5:30am to begin at 6am. Jefferson said he showed up at 5:30 too, not so much to ensure they were on time but to lead by example.

Over the past year the trainees discovered what it is to work for a com-

Plenchi di Trabou works!
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Last week large floating rafts of sargassum invaded Lagoen and Lac (particularly in the area in front of Foodie's restaurant). STINAPA staff, members of the Mangrove Maniacs and other volunteers went to work to remove the stinky invasive seaweed manually with rakes, shovels and some heavy equipment. Unfortunately, much of the sargassum had already drifted into some of the sensitive mangrove areas before the booms could be placed to curtail it. OLB (Openbaar Lichaam) is the governing agency responsible for ridding the sargassum that for the last years each spring has invaded the mangrove eco-system.

The mangroves need to be protected from the suffocating seaweed as they are a major ecosystem providing a nursery for fish, crabs and other marine life. Photo Julie Morgan

FOR SALE Villa Morotin Ground Floor Condo in Small Resort



- Location : Perla Boneriano, Hato
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- 2 bedrooms / 2.5 bathrooms / storage



- Close to the ocean and dive shops
- Communal swimming pool with sundeck
- Furnished, gated community

3D tour



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POLICE REPORT

Property crime

Between May 3 - 4 thieves smashed the shutters of a restaurant window on the Kaminda Sorobon and took, among other things, two LED LG TVs, one Samsung TV, four JBL speakers, an iPad, bottles of liquor and cash.

May 5. Various tools and goods were stolen from a kunuku on Kaminda Sorobon. These include four batteries, two planers of the Powerplus and DeWalt brands and a number of Technical Data solar panels.

Between May 5 - 6 thieves broke into a restaurant on Kaya Neerlandia and took away various alcohol bottles, meat, cigarettes, two laptops and cash.

Between May 8 - 9 an unlocked bike was stolen from porch of a house on Kaya Hulanda. The black bicycle is a Ghost mountain bike.

May 14. A blue Sherco motorcycle, model 250 Trail was taken from a house on Kaya Serafina.

May 14. The owner of a stolen number plate recognized his number plate on another car parked at a snack at the Kaya Grandi. The driver, a man aged 21, was arrested for theft, and his car has been impounded for further investigation.

Between May 13 and 14 thieves stole a neon green colored Cube mountain bike. The bicycle was not locked on the porch of a house in Lagun Hill.

May 16. Between 1 am and 8 am thieves stole a regulator and jeans with the key to a rental car from the porch of a tourist accommodation.

Arrested/held in custody.

May 3. A man, 56, was arrested for assault.

May 4. A man, 52, was arrested for threats.

Traffic accidents/violations

May 7. Around 4 am a car hit the walled fence of a house on Kaya Korona. The driver was taken to the police

station for a breath analysis. Following the results, he received a report for driving under the influence and was banned from driving for 11 hours. He then was taken to hospital by ambulance. A water pipe was hit in the collision, releasing a lot of water. WEB immediately solved this problem.

May 7. At 12:30 am the driver of a quad was fined because the driver was "wheeling" on a public road with a passenger on the back. He received a police report for the celebration and for driving without a suitable helmet.

At around 11:25 am on Friday, a report came in about a truck overturned on the on Kaya Den Stashi, where two other vehicles were also damaged. The drivers of all three vehicles were unharmed. The ambulance came on site to check a few things. The truck driver did not have a driver's license or valid insurance. He received a police report for both violations.

A little later, around 12:20 pm, a pickup drove into a car on Kaya Nikiboko South. The driver of the car complained of back pain and was treated on the spot by ambulance personnel.

During a patrol on Friday evening around 8:15 pm, a moped driving without a license plate was stopped for inspection. The moped was impounded.

May 9. Around 11:50 am a motorcycle slipped on the uneven road surface of Kaya Nikiboko South and the driver fell. He was taken to the hospital by ambulance.

May 16. A patrol on duty encountered a collision on Kaminda Tras Montaña. A car ran into a crossing donkey. The donkey died instantly. The driver had no visible injury but was checked by ambulance personnel because she was pregnant.

Traffic checks

May 3 - 10. During traffic checks at various places, police issued 82 reports. Drivers were fined between \$30 and



Ask Kate Bonaire real estate advice

In each edition of the Bonaire Reporter, I look forward to your articles that offer great insight into the Bonairean housing market. We currently own a home that we plan to sell. In your experience, is it advisable to complete all repair work before listing or are there buyers who want to renovate and make the house their own? Liz

Hi Readers,
After receiving this question from Liz I contacted her to see what kind of repairs she was talking about, and she graciously invited me to her home. She has a lovely home that mostly required cosmetic repairs, although she was also considering some upgrades. I explained that most home buyers, when seeing an item that needs repair, tend to greatly overestimate the cost to fix it. They then subtract this amount from their offer for the home. The Seller would likely get

more money from the sale if she fixed those items first. I recommended that she paint the ceilings and trim in several rooms and put fresh grout between the bathroom tiles, and not replace the tiles or do any costly upgrades.

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.

\$225 for driving without: a seat belt (38); a license plate (2); valid insurance (14); a valid driver's license (14); and a helmet (1). Drivers were also fined for driving with a mobile phone in hand (9) and for driving in a prohibited direction (4).

During the check, a driver with a Venezuelan passport was found to be on the island illegally. He was handed over to the Immigration Department.

Fires

May 10. The police station received a report about a fire at a Stone Crusher in Santa Clara around 7 pm. Bags of cement were being burned when the fire suddenly got out of hand. The fire brigade quickly got the fire under control and extinguished it. No one was hurt.

Public service

May 5. At around 2:45 pm a patrol went to a home after a tip that dogs were being abused. Two puppies were found in a cage, in the sun and without water. The officers could see that the dogs were warm from their rapid breathing and

restlessness. Since no one was home the officers moved the dogs to the shade and water them. The owner of the house was contacted. The community police officer will continue to monitor this situation.

May 15. Between 9 am and 3:30 pm vandals destroyed the rear window of a pick-up with a stone. The pick-up was in the backyard of a house on Kaya Comanche.

May 16. At around 8 pm, the police station received a report that a two-year-old boy had been missing in Rincon since 1 pm. The police, the KMar and the fire brigade began a search for the child. A little later it turned out that the father of the child had taken him and had not told anyone. The man was harshly addressed by the police.

Several reports of street racing or "feveren" have been received in recent days. "Feveren" is punishable. It not only endangers the person who does it, but also other road users.

Selibon sets May clean-up

In May, the Clean and Beautiful Bonaire Foundation (Fundashon Boneiru Limpi i Bunita) organizes a cleaning action "Clean up Drive Through" in Belnem in collaboration with Selibon NV. This cleaning action takes place during the week and also during the weekend to continue our task of keeping Bonaire clean and beautiful. In this way we continue to ensure a clean and healthy environment for our society.

The waste containers are placed at strategic locations in Belnem for the "Clean Up Drive Through". The campaign focuses on bulky waste and garden waste, such as grass, branches and leaves. Belnem has responded positively to the "Clean Up Drive Through" and their bulky waste is properly separated

and delivered in the available waste containers.

In May Selibon NV also offers its services for the collection of old household appliances, such as washing machines and gas stoves.

To collect old household appliances, you can register by email at balie@selibon.com or by telephone on telephone number 717 8159. You can also contact the members of the Clean and Beautiful Bonaire Foundation - Fundashon Boneiru Limpi i Bunita directly.

We want to make the people of Bonaire aware of using this time of crisis to keep our environment clean and beautiful, in order to ensure a healthy and safe lifestyle.



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.

Plantation Bolivia is in immediate danger

Recently, a Facebook post asked me to sign a petition to “demand the island government to designate a large swath of tropical dry forest as a much-needed nature and recreation park”. The land in question encompasses approximately 27.5 hectares which support a variety of plants and animals including protected birds, bats and reptiles. It is located in the area of Kaya Amsterdam and Kaminda Djabou. The remarks about the importance of the petition close with it being an “unique opportunity to enhance the island’s nature-friendly image by preserving this beautiful area of land and aquatic nature....”.

I plan on signing the petition because I think that conserving land from thoughtless development is a good thing but frankly, I don’t see any urgency here. Putting it another way, it would be great to have this “green zone” in the city environs, but the petition speaks of no immediate need. Nothing in the request mentions that the government has put the land up for sale nor that it has already been sold to a developer who has a plan to that will destroy the unique tropical dry forest or destroy the environment that provides habitat for the various flora and fauna some of which are endangered.

Yet, there is an urgent situation on the island that does demand immediate island support. Like the land at issue in the petition, Plantation Bolivia, also contains an unique dry tropical forest and, is home to countless birds, bats and reptiles including several endangered species. Plantation Bolivia also happens to encompass 3,000 hectares, 100 times

the land mass which is the subject of the current petition. Further, its 14-kilometer coastline is adjacent to a pristine coral reef seldom dived due to the difficulty in entering the water. It also has treasured structures of cultural and historical significance. Is it strange, that despite similar petition efforts, Plantation Bolivia isn’t getting the attention it needs?

Yet, unlike the parcel of land, which is the subject of the recent petition, Plantation Bolivia is in immediate danger. A developer has bought the land and plans to develop it with features such as a golf course, a hotel and 1,500 houses. He has already broken ground without the requisite permits. This activity alone is harmful as it results in land erosion as well as removes habitat for the existing species. The fact that some of the developer’s initial activity is within 25 meters to the sea is also a violation of the law. Yet, in neither instance is the Government particularly concerned. In fact, it has turned a blind eye and done nothing to enforce the regulations covering these activities.

There are close to 1,000 signatures on the petition to protect Bonaire’s “town” dry forest yet less than 500 on the Plantation Bolivia petition concerning a dramatically larger dry forest that is in immediate jeopardy.

What gives? I can only guess.

Perhaps it is a question of “out of sight, out of mind” or the fact that people cannot comprehend how the massive development of a “remote” parcel of land which people don’t use or see on a daily basis could have such an enormously adverse effect on the island. Or maybe, it has something to do with the fact that people don’t want to “rock the boat”. With development come jobs and we

through false economy on travel costs, delayed medical treatment and administrative inertia.

It seems your ZVK knows a lot more than you do when it comes to telling lies. But not saving lives...

Forget roundabouts and let me quote an example of administrative ZVK failure only last week from a patient who has waited a painful nine months for a hip replacement.

ZVK informed the patient that a hip operation was possible in Curacao even though the hospital concerned was not conducting such operations due to the Covid pandemic. They therefore refused medical referral to the Netherlands. Let’s quote from a recent article in the Bone & Joint Journal: “It is not benign to delay or deny patients arthroplasty surgery; patients live with pain and disability that is more severe than many other chronic health conditions.”

ZVK in Bonaire informed the patient that they do not want to talk to them but they should talk to Statia doctor. The only



Bolivia escarpment overlooks 3000 hectares of wilderness worth preserving for the future..

could sure use some. Yet, there are many. For more suitable places on the island for development. There is land adjacent to areas that are already under development or are planned for development which would not put Bonaire at risk. Yes, the entire island at risk. No, not today but also in the not-so-distant future. Maybe not during our lifetimes but in the lifetimes of our (grand)children.

I am not being dramatic. The loss of species’ habitat and biodiversity that Plantation Bolivia provides will, in time, seriously adversely affect the entire island. “Fragmentation” is the biggest threat to nature on any island. Development of Plantation Bolivia would result in the loss of the natural corridor connecting the North and South of the island. Development would also reduce,

or worse, eliminate the existing bat and/or Lora population, the cacti at Plantation would languish or worse, die. The resulting soil erosion would have a direct adverse effect on the Bonaire’s sustainability.

Look at the big picture. Yes, let’s save 27.5 hectares in the environs of Playa, AND, at the same time, let’s save 3,000 hectares of Plantation Bolivia’s wilderness to ensure that Bonaire, as we know and treasure it, is here for our (grand) children and other descendants. Please go to saveplantationbolivia.com. There you can read more about the imminent consequential danger to Bonaire if Plantation Bolivia is developed. And please sign the petition found there.

Anne Joseph

The roundabout that is ZVK on Statia

DEAR MISTER KNOPS

Welcome, Dutch caretaker State Secretary to Statia where you are likely to open a roundabout that communicates with about ten lonely vehicles per hour per day. Never have we seen on Statia such magnificent progress from you and your local civil servants and what a great investment for Dutch and local taxpayers money?

Whereas your ceremony this week - in the round - will be populated by a nepotistic circus of agreeable senior civil servants, please do not fall sick.

Mister Knops, if you do, let me describe what roundabouts sick Stadians have to go round for medical treatment from your hopeless health insurance organization (ZVK).

For many years, ZVK has wasted millions of Antillean Guilders, US Dollars, Colombian Pesos and therefore Euros

solution was to have the operation in the Netherlands. ZVK then said that the patient should organise it all themselves - which they did. The patient was told to pay all costs upfront and be reimbursed later. But confirmation that the entire medical costs would be reimbursed in full only arrived at the very last moment so that the hospital operation and flights to Schiphol had to be cancelled. Patient never received anything on paper.

At one point, a Bonaire ZVK official refused to discuss the situation on the phone. Imagine that from a health insurance organisation? The result is that the patient is now taking expensive and addictive pain relieving pills per day that cost more than a hip operation in the long run. False economy? You bet Mister Knops.

Dear Mister Knops, it is time to reorganize. Many ZVK complaints have been logged and nothing happens. In 2018, The Dutch Government took over local government on Statia in the belief that corruption and abuse diluted the princi-

ples of good and efficient governance. How ZVK operates does not seem the epitome of efficiency or care about patients to say the least. Or: now that you have made your rare hospital bed, it is time to lie in it.

Please reorganize the ZVK or your reputation or both. We do not need local roundabouts but a central government turn-around. We need a ZVK that cares about individual healthcare not saving money. Privatize or revalitize!

Your ZVK is about saving money not caring for customers that have to go around thousands of useless roundabouts very much like the one you are opening this week.

Since your role already serves as a source of fortune, I wish you fortitude and clarity to do the right thing.

Please do not fall sick! You may be a caretaker Minister but your ZVK falls very short of care taking.

E.B.



Reef Glimpses

by Dee Scarr

The Secret Life of Hamlets

When I first noticed hamlets, it was because they looked kind of like damselfish -- but not really. Years later, when I began doing REEF fish surveys, I was surprised to discover that we have several species (or at least types) of hamlets on Bonaire's reefs. I was surprised, because, although I recognized each type, not much about the hamlets had registered on me over the years -- except the confirmation that some hamlets resemble damselfish.

Did it cross your mind that the resemblance could be advantageous to the hamlets? You're right, it is! Hamlets are predators, especially of small shrimp and crabs, but the fish they strongly resemble are -- not coincidentally -- not hunters of crabs and shrimp. The advantage to the hamlets is clear: prey critters, who would bolt if they saw a hamlet, stay relaxed around these other fishes who are not a threat to them -- giving the hamlet an easy chance to sweep in and gobble them down.

For example, look at the black hamlet

and the black damselfish, or the yellow-tail hamlet and the yellowtail damsel. Their resemblances are apparent, but not too significant to us unless we're doing a fish survey. However, the damsels are algae-eaters; a little shrimp has nothing to fear from them (and may even be living in their garden). Then one day the damsel turns its back and the hamlet seizes its chance. Black and yellowtail hamlets are aggressive mimics; they have features of a non-predator which increase their chances of capturing prey.

I saw this "hamlet-damsel non-relationship" in action on my last dive: a yellowtail damsel aggressively chased a yellowtail hamlet. The hamlet moved more than 6' (2m) away before the damsel returned to its garden. I suspect in this case the hamlet was unsuccessful, but if the damselfish were gone longer...

Around dusk, hamlets lose interest in predation and turn their attention to reproduction. They're not alone in that; many fishes spawn at dusk. All the other fishes, though, complete their pre-mating



Dr. Ronald Thresher's books *Reef Fishes* and *Reproduction in Reef Fishes* were a great help and are wonderful reading, including a series of photos of hamlets in a mating embrace which were taken in lab aquaria. We chose not to take photos. Since fish have no eyelids, flashes of light from photography would have disturbed the mating hamlets. The butter hamlet portrait here was taken by editor Julie Morgan.

rituals, dart upwards in pairs or groups, the males release sperm and the females release eggs in the same general area, and then they all dart back to the reef to finish feeding and get ready for bed.

Hamlets do things differently. A hamlet swollen with eggs will approach another and they'll dance for a bit like other fishes, but then, just off the bottom, the two hamlets will wrap around each other in a full-contact embrace! None of that "same general area" stuff for the hamlets. They hold each other for 20 seconds or so, then sink to the bottom and separate.

But they're not ready for bed yet. In fact, despite their previous mating, one of the hamlets is swollen with eggs. They do the pre-mating dance again and embrace again and fall back to the bottom again. And as you watch all this, you find yourself trying to figure out which hamlet is the male and which is the female.

It turns out that determining the sex of hamlet is reeally

easy. When hamlets fill out an identification form, under

"Sex: M- F" the hamlets have to add a third category: H, for hermaphrodite (both male and female). And, unlike many marine fish who change from one sex to the other as they grow or age, hamlets never change sex. From the time they reach maturity, every hamlet is both a functioning male and a functioning female. The term for this rolls trippingly off the tongue: simultaneous hermaphrodite. The reason that a hamlet who has spawned once can be swollen with eggs is that that individual released sperm in the first mating. S/He (will be a she, and) will release eggs in the second one; a hamlet mating requires several embraces, in which the two fish alternate sex roles until dusk turns to darkness.

Once we learn this, another question pops up: what determines their initial roles? Dr. Eugenie Clark, one of the first biologists to study the simultaneous hermaphrodites, figured out the answer: "Whoever is most swollen with eggs gets to be the female first."

There's a sentence we don't hear every day! *Dee Scarr*



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FlamingoFun

On May 7th, Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB) selected Elly Hazewinkel from Loosduinen as the winner out of 55 qualifying video submissions in the #FlamingoFunBonaire social media sweepstakes.

The contest generated more than 500 new Dutch social media followers for Bonaire. In addition, the videos surrounding the #FlamingoFunBonaire contest reached more than 28,000 Dutch residents, with nearly 2,000 people engaging with the videos and Bonaire-related content.

Winner Elly Hazewinkel dressed up in a flamingo suit and moved "like a flamingo" across the landing of her apartment complex. She won two roundtrip Amsterdam to Bonaire flights, and six nights in a Penthouse at Resort Bonaire including daily breakfast. Watch the clip.

<https://www.facebook.com/elly.hazewinkel/videos/10226035126884981>





Bonaire has seen a lot of changes since the late Captain Don Stewart of California first landed the Valerie Queen on the island May 21, 1962. That was 59 years ago and he is known by most people as the Father of Diving on Bonaire. But unfortunately, as crazy as it sounds, there are people that have never heard of him. Then there are others that have forgotten his legacy of bringing dive tourism, conservation and environmentalism to Bonaire.

Today we are pushing a population of 21,000, but back in 1962 there were only 4000 people a mere 300 cars. Many people didn't even know what scuba diving was and tourism seemed to be a pretty far-fetched idea. There was one hotel, Zee Bad, and it was built from the remains of a German internment camp.

The Lt. Governor Hesteron told the Captain when he sailed in, that he could stay if he made "his island" a better place" or otherwise he had to go.

It turned out the Lt. Governor had high hopes for tourism on Bonaire and one of the first steps was building a 30 room hotel at Playa Lechi. It was known as the Bonaire Beach Hotel, and then later Sunset Beach and it would house Don's dive operation Aquaventure. Don brought in the late Bruce Bowker as his first dive instructor to teach and certify his local dive staff including Ebo Domacasse, Ady Evertz and Eddy Statia, and of course the guests. Word spread of this great new place to dive and before long dive groups and individuals came from all over to explore Bonaire's amazing reefs. Skin Diver magazine (published for over 60 years) and underwater photographers such as Geri Murphy, Carl Roessler and cinematographer Stan Waterman (Jaws) arrived to publicize and record Bonaire in photo and video. And in 1976 the syndicated comic strip 'Dondi' by Irwin Hasen, featured Don teaching the boy to dive and preserve the reef. Dive tour-

ism and Bonaire's nature was becoming a viable source of income for the island.

Don called himself a born again conservationist and caretaker of Bonaire's precious environment. He was instrumental in banning spearfishing, tropical fish collection and developed a permanent mooring system. Captain Don was fundamental in establishing the Council of Underwater Resort Operators (CURO) which actually limited the number of resorts and dive shops on the island. He was also fundamental in creating the Bonaire Marine Park and named the majority of dive sites along with Bruce Bowker. And then of course, he established Captain Don's Habitat, the first resort hotel owned by a dive shop and dedicated to diving.

Two years ago *The Bonaire Reporter* and Captain Don's Habitat held an event celebrating the Captain's arrival on May 21, 1962 with hope of establishing an official "Captain Don Day". The evening included a slide show of old 'Don' photos sent in by former guests and friends, a raffle with prizes, music from Ralph "Moogie" Stewart and speeches by anyone who wanted to pay homage to Don. Lt. Governor Edison Rijna applauded Don for his contributions and condoned the idea of an official Captain Don's Day on May 21. Unfortunately, after submitting a proposal to the government we are still hoping to make this happen; perhaps on the 60th anniversary...

Remembering the man Captain Don Stewart and what he accomplished is important. But remembering his legacy, principles and ideas in regard to our environment and conservation could be a guide in dealing with the tough questions of excessive tourism and over-construction.

We celebrate Captain Don Stewart on May 21. *By Julie Morgan (References taken from Captain Don's "Reef Windows" and "The Adventures of Captain Don")*

Road work continues

Work has started on Kaya Commerce, the main road in Rincon. Kaya Carlos A. Nicolaas is the next renovation scheduled, while work will begin on Kaya Gramel and Kaya Hermandad in May and on Kaya Neerlandia in June. Planning is underway for the renovation of other roads as well. The Road Program largely funded by the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. DMR

Remembrance Day commemorated

A small, covid restricted audience attended the Remembrance Day ceremony commemorating all those who lost their lives during wars. Lieutenant Governor Rijna and acting government representative Jan Helmond spoke on the theme "after 75 years of freedom." Both talked about how the sacrifices made in World War II assured the freedom that we enjoy today.

Wreaths were laid at the memorial for the fallen in the center of Kralendijk by representatives of the OLB, the central government, the Dutch Caribbean Police Corps, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, and the Veterans Association. The ceremony closed with the playing the national anthems of Bonaire and the Netherlands. DMR

Man convicted of corona fraud

On May 18 a project developer (M.D.K.) was convicted of illegally receiving monthly EZK support for fixed costs and for collecting monthly support as an entrepreneur while he was employed at another job. He was sentenced to six months suspended imprisonment and 240 hours of community service. He will likely lose his right of residence in the Caribbean Netherlands.. DMR

Two police officers back to work

Two police officers who were suspended, pending an investigation, in connection with an arrest on April 17 have been allowed to return to work. An internal investigation concluded one of the officers did fail to act entirely in accordance with official instructions but only internal sanctions were warranted. DMR

Sint Maarten investigation force declared non-functional

The Council for Law Enforcement reports that Sint Maarten's National Criminal Investigation Department (LSM) cannot perform its statutory duties because there is no policy, no management, no direction, no independence, and insufficient funding. The Council says it has been reporting the same inadequacies since the LSM was founded, but nothing has changed.

The National Criminal Investigation Department Sint Maarten was created ten years ago to investigate suspected criminal activity within the civil service and the police service on behalf of the Minister and the Public Prosecution Service, and to assist the Attorney General. Those functions are largely neglected on the island. DMR (*Koninkrijk.nu*)

MCB Bonaire meets privacy standards

According to a press release from the MCB, "more than a year" after the Data Protection Authority BES (CBP BES) identified privacy risks at the MCB on Bonaire, CBP BES is now satisfied that the MCB on Bonaire complies with the legal standards set for the processing of personal data at a financial institution. "MCB Bonaire has energetically taken up and implemented the recommendations," the release stated. DMR



These new employees of the Caribbean Netherlands Fire Department (BKCN) from St. Eustatius and Saba are on Bonaire to start the first module of a one-year training program that leads to 'Manschap A' qualification. In this module they will be trained to assist at traffic accidents, including casualty care and cutting vehicles open to rescue trapped passengers, and to fight fires that involve hazardous substances.

Bonaire Culinaire returns May 20 through June 3

The second edition of Bonaire Culinaire is just around the corner beginning May 20th through June 3rd. The 15-day culinary event is an opportunity for diners to discover the wide variety of restaurants the Island has to offer. Bonaire's top 20 restaurants have created a three-course menu at a set price of \$33.

Bonaire's restaurants have been challenged over the last year as we all have. Everyone needs a little positivity and something to look forward to so the restaurant association created Bonaire Culinaire, to help the restaurants and diners alike. Bonaire Culinaire is an event to promote the restaurants on the Island and spread some joy after the storm.

Owner of Rum Runners, Floris van

Loo remarks: "Previous edition of Bonaire Culinaire was a major success. I love seeing people and smiles at our restaurant, especially in these tough times. I cannot wait to welcome everyone and participate in the second edition of Bonaire Culinaire!"

Each restaurant is putting their best foot forward in providing diners the opportunity to experience Bonaire's greatest cuisine. Some of the establishments offer a choice for your Culinaire experience while others have a set menu.

Sebastian Schöndorfer, owner of Sebastian's tells: "In March we opened our second location Sebastian's Beach Sorobon. This edition of Bonaire Culinaire, we share our love of fresh food and ex-

quisite wines at the beach for lunch and dinner at our Restaurant. We can't wait to welcome everyone!"

In the course of the event, you can scan the QR-codes on the menu to get the chance to win a variety of prizes like a bottle of Rom Rincón from Cadushy Distillery, a day pass for a cabana at Hillside, breakfast for two and much more.

Please visit the Bonaire Culinaire website to see the restaurants and their menus for the event, www.bonaire-culinaire.com. And don't forget to visit the Facebook page 'BonaireCulinaireEvent' of Instagram @bonaireculinaire.

Make your reservations for this unique

dining opportunity; as availability is limited.

Bonaire Culinaire is an initiative of BONHATA, endorsed by the Bonaire Restaurant Association (BRA) and Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB) and Powered by The Cadushy Distillery



Sebastian's gives us a sneak peak

The Reporter was given a sneak peak of the Culinaire dining experience at the new Sebastian's Beach restaurant that opened its doors in March. The open-air restaurant inhabits the old "Beach Bar" although they've added a lighter look to the place with fresh paint and rustic wood floors in the main dining area. But don't worry, the view and feet in your sand atmosphere is still there. The Culinaire three-course meal is taken directly from Sebastian's new menu. Manager Sebastian Schoendorfer Jr, told us they wanted to give diners the opportunity to try menu options at a cheaper price than normal.

The three-course meal is not a sampling but regular size portions so bring your appetite. The selections seemed to mesh perfectly in the seaside setting. We ate our lunch as we looked out at the windsurfers sailing with a light breeze from the ocean. The Culinaire meal begins with a large appetizer: fresh Baby

Spinach Salad and other greens with blue cheese, bite size Granny Smith apples, walnuts and crispy croutons. The salad was splashed with a nice balsamic vinegar dressing and accompanied by a baguette.

Next up was the main course, a Spaghetti Vongole, linguine with open Venetian clams, fresh Parmesan cheese and basil leaves. The pasta was perfectly cooked and seasoned with the whole clams and Parmesan providing a surprisingly light beachside meal. The finish was a soft serve vanilla ice cream with a special caramel topping flavoured with Cadushy Distillery's Rom Rincon. But the best part was a surprise at the bottom of lightly frozen watermelon, melon and papaya. My dining partner and I agreed that Sebastians could be the answer If you are looking for something different than burgers and snacks after a day at Sorobon. But hey, they've got that too along



Sebastian's Beach Sorobon is one of the 20 great restaurants taking part in the spring edition of Bonaire Culinaire that runs May 20 to June 3 L-R: Madelief van den Berg, manager Sebastian Schöndorfer Jr, owner Sebastian Schöndorfer Sr, Jordi Geurts and Nena Wijnhoven. Photo Julie Morgan

with a full bar to enjoy the view. Sebastians Beach menu is available everyday

from 9:30am to 5pm. For reservations call 701-6060. *Julie Morgan*

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Beautiful, new oceanfront 5-bedroom, 5 1/2 bath villa located at Punt Vierkant. Available for vacation rental starting from US\$ 679 a night.

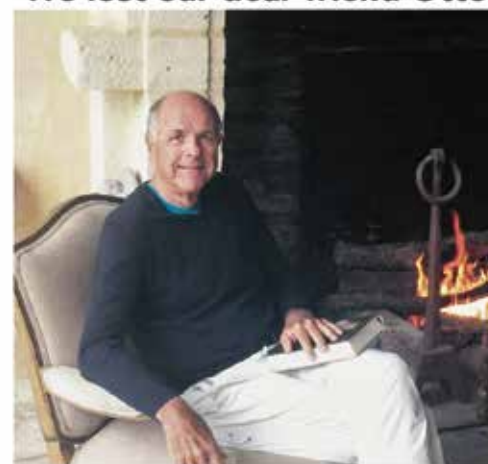
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We lost our dear friend Otto



Otto de Graaff passed away unexpectedly at the age of 68 on May 8, 2021 at his home in Amsterdam. Otto was a resident of Bonaire from 1993-2003. We remember him as an open, positive, helpful and jolly person. He will be missed by many.

George & Patricia Winkle, Ronnie Goené & Anki Nijboer

familie@degraaff.be

Volunteer



As a School

Gather a class or all students at your school and help with a job nearby. For your students it is an educational experience to help in social organizations and perhaps their first introduction to volunteering.

With Colleagues

BON DOET is an excellent opportunity to show that your organization is committed to a better and liveable society. BON DOET is also a great alternative to the traditional "team building" or day out.

With Family & Friends

Gather your family, friends or members of your sport club / foundation and find a fun job. It is a great way to do something good together!



Dive Friends PADI IDC produces three new instructors



Every quarter instructor candidates travel to the beautiful blue waters of Bonaire to work with PADI Course Director, Annie O., at Dive Friends Bonaire to achieve their dreams of becoming a PADI Scuba Diving Instructor. This April was no different as three divers made their way across the oceans from France and the United States to successfully earn their Open Water Scuba Instructor rating.

The Instructor Development Course (IDC) ran over 11 days. Jason, Max and Millie all successfully earned their PADI OWSI Instructor, Emergency First Response Instructor, Enriched Air Instructor and Dive Against Debris Instructor certifications. But the journey for

these candidates started long before they landed on our charming island! The candidates participated in PADI's revised DC by completing online learning and studying their dive theory for weeks before they arrived. Their pre-course preparation was only one of the reasons this course was such a huge success!

The candidates' skills and dedication to the sport of diving were most evident. They were all prepared, enthusiastic, eager to learn and open to improve. Throughout the courses the candidates worked as a team to help each other grow and improve knowledge and skills. It is no surprise that the laughs and good times were as abundant as the course information they were learning.

Jason, Max and Millie along with Course Director Annie O. woke up early on the morning of the May 6 to take the PADI facilitated Instructor Exam. The two-day exam is the most prestigious Instructor evaluation process in the world, but the guidance and coaching the candidates received during the PADI IDC gave them all the confidence they needed to find complete success. And, they even had FUN during the exam.

Their shared passion to become the absolute best instructors possible created a bond that we don't think any of these PADI Instructors will ever forget! *By Annie Olszewski, PADI course director and manager at Dive Friends @ Yellow Submarine location.*

Dive Friend locations re-open

Our Dive Friend locations are open again! Store opening times are as follows:

Dive shops-

Hamlet Oasis, Sand Dollar, Gooddive, Yellow Submarine and Port Bonaire locations are all open daily from 9am to 5pm.

Delfins Beach location is open Mon to Sat 9am to 5pm and 9am to 12pm on Sundays.

Dive Inn location is open 2pm to 5pm Mon to Fri.

Resort Bonaire location is open daily 9am to 1pm.

Retail stores-

Dive Friends Dive Retail at Gooddive is open every-day from 8am to 5pm.

Dushi Shoes, Dushi Style and the Reef Store are open from Mon to Sat 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm.



Creating optimal health

by Irene da Cunda Costa

Boost your immune system with laughter

Humor is one of the highest capacities of the human being. It might be possible that other animals also have it, but surely it would not be accessible for us to understand them. Our sense of humor has to do with the symbolic capacity of the human being and it allows us to take distance and generate a new perspective on whatever is happening to us.

Among the many benefits of laughing we can mention massaging and relaxing the whole body. This simple act boosts the immune system as it decreases stress hormones and triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Laughter also protects the heart as it improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow. And, best of all, laughter burns calories, although it shouldn't be used as a substitute for your regular visit to the gym. Looking at the funny side can put problems into perspective and enable us to move on from confrontations without holding onto bitterness or resentment. Laughter brings us closer to others and this can have a profound effect on all aspects of your mental and emotional health as laughter is contagious. Shared laughter is one of the most effective tools for keeping relationships fresh and exciting.

How can we incorporate more humor and laughter into our life? Smile as much as you can. Smiling is the beginning of laughter, and like laughter, it's contagious. Smile at others and notice the effect this has on them. Count your blessings. Spend time with fun, playful people, people who can laugh at themselves and at life's absurdities—and who routinely find the humor in everyday events. Simulated laughter can be just as beneficial as the real thing. A Georgia State Univer-

sity study found that incorporating bouts of simulated laughter into an exercise program helped improve older adults' mental health as well as their aerobic endurance. Plus, hearing others laugh, even for no apparent reason, can often trigger genuine laughter. Make a point of introducing simple things like watching a funny movie, TV show or YouTube video in your life. You nurture yourself not only with food, but also with what you are exposed to. Seeking out funny people will nourish you in this direction. Watch your pets playing or play with them yourself will surely increase your endorphin level.

It is important to learn not to take oneself too seriously and laugh at our own mistakes and misfortunes. Look for the comedy in the tragedy. I have my own collection of tragic-comic stories that I can gladly share with you over a cup of coffee. So looking for humor in a bad situation, uncovering the irony and absurdity of life is always helpful. When something negative happens, try to make it a humorous anecdote that will make you and others laugh.

A sense of humor might also help you live longer. A study in Norway found that people with a strong sense of humor outlived those who don't laugh as much. So, keeping all this in mind, is there something that you can or want to do about it?

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.



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Street Colors Bonaire kicks off art route

On May 9th Street Colors Bonaire, a project by Fundashon Plataforma Kultural, said goodbye to visiting artist Kenneth Letsoin in a special way. Participants and others involved in the project traveled by car along an 'art rally route' to view Bonaire's many street art contributions.

The number of murals on the island has exploded over the past few years and Street Colors Bonaire has played a major part in that development. The wonderful art along the route included work from Garrick Marchena, Roy Wanga, Henk Roozendaal, Loes Hak, Tymon de Laat, Solveig van Wijngaarden and Ghislaine Monte and others. Visiting Plataforma Kultural Street Colors artist Kenneth Letsoin, contributed quite a few works along the route that he painted during his five weeks stay on Bonaire. His love of neglected and deserted spots like old shipping containers, wooden fences around building sites and dilapidated buildings gave him plenty of places to paint on the island.



A few examples of the amazing art created during the Street Colors project with visiting artist Eduardo 'Dodici' Trionfera, Tymon di Laat and Kenneth Letsoin

Part of the rally was counting the many birds he painted almost everywhere but it seemed near to impossible to keep track of all of them. To Kenneth these birds represent freedom. He says a bird isn't bothered by borders or by walls that obstruct our view or block our way. They fly wherever and whenever they want to go.

Apart from his own work, the Rotterdam based artist worked with the Street

Colors talent group. Together they painted a 40 meter long wall in Bolivia pabou, practiced painting sessions at Hotel Esmeralda and made a three dimensional wall of art at Höfi Kultural, Street Colors Bonaire home base in Antriol.

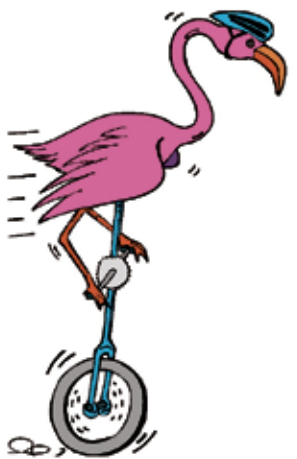
The art route rally was a pilot program. Street Colors is developing several art routes in cooperation with MBO students. The routes will soon be added to the Street Colors website www.street-colorsbonaire.com

so all art lovers and tourists, can take a tour whenever they want.

Street Colors Bonaire is a project of Fundashon Plataforma Kultural in co-operation with Rewriters Rotterdam and supported by Openbaar Lichaam Bonaire, Fonds 21 and Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie.

Karine de wit

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Plenchi di Trabou works!
continued from page 3

pany that cares about their employees. They earned a salary, received a year-end bonus and even received a paid vacation last December.

Jefferson told us when the individuals did something good they were praised which builds self-esteem and motivation. One individual a month received a ‘worker of the month’ certificate.

The new employees have the opportunity to move up the ladder at Selibon thanks to the company’s director Rudsel Letto that believes strongly in the program. One person has already done so and others are being considered for higher positions at Selibon.

According to Jefferson, no one dropped out or was eliminated from the program and it wasn’t easy for them but it was worth it.

Many of the jobs were cleaning up around abandoned homes, properties and neighborhoods to keep our island clean which is what Selibon is all about.

Participant and new employee Mai-ron Weyman said, “We keep the streets and roadsides clean to make it look nice. We’ve been working for a year and now we get to start again.” *Julie Morgan*

Volunteer for Bon Doet and get happy



Bon Doet Rincon 2019. Photo Julie Morgan

The biggest volunteer event on Bonaire and the Kingdom, Bon Doet, is just a little over a week away, May 28 and 29th. There are a record number of 113 different jobs this year with many spaces to fill and not enough volunteers to do them. Last year we had over 1600 volunteers for 98 jobs. This year only 381 people have registered for the 113 jobs.

There are 51 jobs on Friday and 62 on Saturday and all require more than one volunteer so it’s a perfect way to spend time with your friends, family or co-workers. Many companies sign up their employees for a great team building experience. And, hey, it’s fun and you might even learn a new skill.

Plus, there is that added feeling of doing something good for the community making us feel happier and increasing our self confidence.

All registered volunteers receive a goodie bag with Bon Doet T-shirt and cap, a personal waterbottle and covid precautionary mask and hand sanitizer.

On May 30th a final celebratory event is scheduled to give thanks to all the organizations and participants for their hard work.

Visit www.bondoet.com for more information, scan through the jobs and sign-up to participate. Hasi bon, pasa bon! *Story and photo Julie Morgan*

What’s
Happening

Washington Slagbaai:
Wed-Sun open. 8-5 (entry up to 1 pm)

STINAPA headquarters: *Mon-Fri 8-2. +599 717 8444. +599 777 8444.*

Animal Shelter: *Open by appointment Mon-Fri 10-12:30; 2-3:30. Sat. 10-3. phone/whatsapp: 7014989 or 7174989. Email: animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com*

Pakus di Pruga (Shelter flea market store): *Saturdays from 8 - 4. Masks required.*

May 28 - June 3 **Bonaire Culinair.** *The top 20 restaurants on Bonaire have created a three-course menu at a set price of \$33. Enjoy unique dining experiences all over the Island. See article below.*

May 28 - 29 **BonDoet weekend.** *See story on this page and announcement on page xx for details.*



Live Inspired Today!
by Malcolm Wilson

Ignite your daily success with a *Reflection For Today* to stimulate your thinking, a *Tip For Today* to equip you and an *Affirmation For Today* to empower you.

Your Mental Health Matters!

Reflection For Today

““One in five people live with a mental illness in a given year, but five in five people deserve mental health support. Mental health shouldn’t be a luxury.” - *Mental Health America*

Tip For Today

Did you know that May is Mental Health Awareness Month?

Not to worry, Chichi didn’t either. But after consulting her online best friend Google, she couldn’t wait to boast about her newly acquired knowledge.

“Swinda, mental health matters! And countries all over the world are paying attention to it. Canada has honored it the first week of May for nearly 70 years, the UK does it in the third week of May for the last 20 years, and the US does it in the entire month of May for the last 70 years. Several organizations reach out to millions of people through social media, local events, and online screenings.”

Swinda was somewhat impressed.

“Chichi, I see you’ve been Googling again! But what does mental health awareness have to do with me?”

“Your mental health influences how you think, feel, and behave in your daily life, Swinda. It also affects your ability to cope with stress, overcome challenges, and recover from life’s setbacks. And on top of that, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the

mental health of people of all ages, not just you and me. So now more than ever it is critical for us to increase our awareness and take action!

Swinda’s interest was now piqued and she was eager to apply the following suggestions to improve her mental health and hopefully you will too...

1. Increase your awareness and ours. Many credible websites provide valuable information about mental health: what it is and why it matters, online tests, ready-to-share messages and visuals and much more. Spread the word to your followers on social media. By the way, when was the last time you spoke with your doctor about how to live mentally healthy?
2. Take care of yourself. Are you eating and drinking well? Are you getting enough sleep? What about staying positive, exploring your creative side, and exercising regularly? Talking about your feelings with someone you trust also helps.
3. Take care of your loved ones. Check-in with family and friends, they might be dealing with some mental hardships. Remind them that you care, listen empathetically, and ask how you can help.

Remember...

Being mentally and emotionally healthy is not only about coping with depression, anxiety, or other psychological issues. It’s also about building healthy habits like increasing your awareness, taking care of yourself, and taking care of your loved ones. And when your efforts to improve your mental and emotional health isn’t working, seek professional help.

That’s how successful people do it!

Swinda gained a broader perspective on personal health. And now that she knows better, she’s willing to do better.

“Chichi, I wonder how aware people living here in Paradise (also known as Bonaire) are about the impor-

tance of their mental health. There’s so much each of us can do to improve it! I’m gonna check-in with my family and friends, how about you?”

Affirmation For Today

Today I am increasing my mental health awareness and taking better care of myself and my loved ones. My mental health matters, our mental health matters, now more than ever

So...think, be equipped, feel empowered, and ... **Live Inspired Today!**

Malcolm Wilson is an inspirational speaker, success coach and certified John Maxwell speaker, coach and teacher. Born and raised in Bonaire, his purpose in life is to inspire, equip and empower students and adults to be successful in school, at work and in life. Success is a journey and Malcolm defines success as “Living your purpose, growing into your potential and serving people.”

Bonaire’s hospital teams
with one in Netherlands

Fundashon Mariadal and Kennemerhart in Haarlem are teaming to improve the quality elderly care by consulting on line to exchange information, to learn from each other, and to innovate. Giovanni Frans, director of Fundashon Mariadal, says, “On each side of the ocean, some matters are approached differently and happen in a slightly different way. We can provide better care by means of knowledge and information exchange.” *DMR*



Making Bonaire Accessible

by Ria Evers-Dokter

Happy Nurses Day!

This week I had an appointment in the hospital. I was very happy, because the Corona-situation made having appointments very hard. But things seem to be getting back to normal again.

The first thing I noticed was a huge line for catered food, mostly females walking around with decorated bags. They came and left and then there was a group that got to the catering line alone.

It seemed very odd, but then it struck me: it was Nurses day!!

Normally this special day is celebrated every year on the May 12th. I quote:

"International Nurses Day is a day

observed every year on May 12 to honor nurses. The International Council of Nurses (ICN) celebrated the day for the first time in 1965. In 1974, May 12 was chosen to celebrate the day as it is the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing."

I remember so well the day I started my work in a psychiatric hospital. I had just finished teachers college and did not know what to do. The psychiatric hospital was in a foreign country and 20 years post war. It was the first secular nursing school in the world, now part of King's College London. The wards were located in huge two or three story buildings.

Every story hosted a ward for 30-40 patients. We were to wear a uniform and a cap. And to keep that clean we had a really huge apron on.

There was hardly anything for the patients to do. They were fed three times a day and had tea, coffee or water in plastic cups five times a day. Medication was handed out three to four times a day. This was important, because all patients needed to be kept quiet. When a patient protested, he/she was immediately removed from the ward into a special room until they were quiet again.

There were two sides: the left side of the hospital was for the women and the right side for the men. Persons with mental retardation had other buildings to live in. In those times the children and adults were all called children. Take in mind, not that long ago many of them had been killed.

We worked long hours, 6 am - 6 or 7

am - 7 or 8 pm.

Nurses Day was not celebrated. You had a job and it was a hard one. And if you did not like it, there were many other people who did. Thank heavens those times have changed.

Now, during the pandemic, the nurses are working harder than ever. Wrapped up in layers of protecting gear and masked they do their job. They keep coming to work on their ward and give all they have to care for their patients. Long hours, sweating, exhaustion.... they are there and the nurses give it all.

That is why this breakfast is so special. Because of pandemic regulations they cannot celebrate, cannot hug, kiss or have appreciation shown.

I hope that every bite and every sip hit the spot, and that it makes them feel special anyway.

Thank you nurses, for all that you do.

Ask a Geek

by Brian Niessen

Our Disposable Society

I have previously written about 2FA (Two Factor Authentication) where you have a program on your mobile phone that generates a code that you have to enter into your banking website to access your account. It's purpose is to make sure that the person accessing the bank account is the same person who is physically holding the phone.

So, two weeks ago I went to access my bank account, and when I was asked for the 2FA code, I dutifully picked up

my phone and tapped on the ENTRUST program, only to be greeted with "There is a newer version available, you must update now."

I did the update and when I ran it again, I was blasted with "Your phone is too old to run this software, sorry." I was miserably shocked, since my phone was only two years old.

Being stuck between the proverbial "rock and hard place" I had no other choice... But where does one buy a new phone at 7PM on a Thursday on Bonaire?

Fortunately for me, there is a new Indian grocery/clothing/appliance/phone store where "More 4 Less" used to be in Nikibokko that is open from 8AM to

8PM where I was able to purchase a nice, brand new Samsung for a great price.

I installed my SIM chips from the old phone and within minutes, I was able to install the Entrust program, access my bank account, and be on my way.

But this experience left me with two bad tastes: First, there is no reason the Entrust update required a newer phone. Our lives are controlled by programmers who arbitrarily decide what we have to do as a society with no empathy for the millions of users who have to buy new phones to access something they already had access to.

Second, the amount of electronic waste that is generated by this action is staggering. I had to take the "old" phone and add it to the pile of three other phones that were "updated out of existence" and drop the pile of plastic, batteries, screens and other electronics at Selibon to be "recycled". After seeing what is "under the hood", there is no way that anything other than the plastic cases are able to be recycled.

What a waste!

Frustratedly, the Geek.

If you need help with your computer you can contact me at: geek@bonairetechsupport.com or +599 700 9094 (Phone/Whatsapp)



A Garden? Just Do It!

by Angliet, Nature Lover

Gardening Hints La Niña

My neighbor used to clean his garden tools like he does his dishes. One by one he removes all the dirt, clay, rinses with water, dries them in the sun and then applies oil when dry.

I asked him what the reason is for all this cleaning. He said that there is a lot of salt in Bonairian soil. The tools get rusted because of this salt. By removing all the dirt and oiling the tools, it keeps them in good condition and they last a long time. Since then I do that too and it works. By handling the tools well you save money. Garden tools cost a lot and you need many different types of tools if you have a large variety of plants.

As I often say, share hints and ideas and give a hand if needed to friends and neighbors. I recently visited someone at her home and saw something a little strange; milk boxes around the trunk of big papaya trees. I asked her about it and she said the milk boxes keep the iguanas away from

the trees. The iguana has no grip on the smooth carton box so he can not climb and eat the leaves. She cuts the boxes open, puts it around the trunk and tapes it. It's a perfect idea and it works.

You can also keep iguanas away if you put plastic buckets such as paint buckets on top of each other. Then on top of them put the plant pot. Two weeks ago I was watering the plants in the garden when a young iguana came down from a tree right into a bucket half full of rainwater. He tried and fought to climb out the bucket but he had no grip on the smooth surface of the plastic. So now I know for sure, an iguana can't climb against a plastic surface or anything else smooth.

This year is the weather year for La Nina (Ninja) in the Caribbean meaning we will get more rain than normal. When it's El Nino, we get hardly any rain.

With La Nina we can garden the whole



Milk boxes around papaya trees prevent iguanas from climbing the trunks

year through with milder weather, cloudy skies, less hard sunlight and more rain showers. Because of La Nina we can also enjoy healthy, chemical free fruit grown in untouched Bonairean soil.

Many of these fruit trees have green fruit: papaya, mango, tamarind, bacoba, mispel, maka pruum, starfruit, pomegranate, koko, soursop, seagrapes and the cher-

ry trees are full of blossoms. Also the cashew trees have a lot of young fruit and my birambi trees are bearing for the second time this year. Everywhere I see big bunches of plantain on the trees. So with all this fruit right here, you have all the vitamins needed for the body.

If you like to have fruit trees, this is a good time to start planting the seeds in containers. Cut big plastic fruit containers and plastic water bottles in two. Make holes in the bottom and add dirt and the seeds. The plants will develop in these containers and by the end of the year when it's the full rainy season you have young fruit trees that can go into the soil. Make sure you don't let water gather in the containers as it could be a breeding ground for dengue mosquitos.

Last but not least, everyday I watch from my bedroom window, the little birds hanging on the purple flower of the bacoba bunches drinking the sweet liquid there. It's so wonderful to see them enjoying their breakfast with two- or three hanging on the big flower, fighting sometimes to be the first. And sometimes there is a cat hiding close by - grrrr!! Its all in the game.

Nature is beautiful, if you only want to see it.

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Pets of the Week

Iggy



Hi there! Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Iggy. I'm super handsome, as you can see, and about 10 months old. Unfortunately, I was unwanted and came to the shelter as a little cutie pie, about nine months ago. I'm really enjoying my stay at the shelter. You can find me climbing like a little monkey trying to impress the ladies. Also I enjoy getting attention from the people that come around. But I'm sort of getting bored. I think it's time for a new adventure and a new home. Are you also adventurous and looking for a partner in crime? Please contact the Animal Shelter at 701-4989 (call or whatsapp) or email us at animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com to make an appointment for us to put our heads together.

Story by: Thamar Cachemir Photo by: Sanne Attevelt

Layla



Hello everyone! I'm Layla, I'm a 10 month old mixed breed puppy with a cute small tail. I am playful, loving and a happy doggie. A couple of weeks ago I was brought in to the shelter, I've managed to get to know some other dogs and became friends with them. My biggest dream is to have a forever home. It can be a home with other pets too, I would love that! Would you like to meet me some time? Maybe we can arrange a date? Don't hesitate to just contact the animal shelter by phone/whatsapp: 7014989 or 7174989. Or by Email: animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com. Hope to see you soon!

Story and Photo by: Edseyenne "Zaza" Pietersz

Shelter News

Now that Bonaire is down to Risk Level 3, what a perfect time to get out and about with a new dog or snuggle on your sofa with a new cat! Animal Shelter Bonaire is brimming with wonderful cats and dogs that are more than ready for their "fur-ever" homes. And new puppies and kittens are arriving almost daily. We have all sizes, ages, shapes, colors and personalities of cats/kittens and dogs/puppies for you to choose. We are open by appointment only to insure the safety of you and our staff. Appointments are available from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 2 - 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. nonstop on Saturday. Please make your appointment to meet your future companion by calling 7174989, 7014989, or via Whatsapp, Facebook messenger or email animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com. We are all waiting for you!



Bonaire's sky park

Two conjunctions

Planets are in conjunction when they appear to pass close to each other in the sky. On May 29 Mercury and Venus pair up, passing within 1° on the sky's dome. The following week the Moon will zoom past both Saturn and Jupiter.

To find them: First follow the sun below the horizon and look for Venus. Every night for a week Venus will get closer to Mercury. Mercury will be tough to see but on Friday the 28th, the two will be less than a pinky-width apart. Then on May 30, the moon will approach Saturn and Jupiter in the southeast coming within a fist-width of gas giant Jupiter on June 1st.

The sky might seem static, but it's constantly moving. Don't miss it! Keep lookin' up.

A lunar eclipse (but not here).

On May 26th a total lunar eclipse of the moon will be visible from Australia, parts of the western US, western South America, and South-East Asia. Total lunar eclipses happen every 2.5 years when the orbits align so the Earth is exactly between the sun and the moon. When that happens the earth's shadow, or umbra, falls entirely across the face of the moon turning it a shade of rusty pink for about 15 minutes.

Sources: <https://earthsky.org>; <https://www.star-gazersonline.org>; <https://www.timeanddate.com>

STCB's Beachkeepers record first 2021 nest



On May 1st, volunteer Beachkeepers from Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) conducted the first nest monitoring patrols of 2021. They visited beaches on Klein Bonaire, Te Amo, Donkey Beach and south Bonaire. Patrols on Playa Chikitu, in Washington Slagbaai Park, will begin in June, when the first nesting green turtle females are expected to arrive.

STCB's Field Coordinator Daan Zeegers and Beachkeeper Sue O'Brien recorded the first nest of this season on May 10th on Klein Bonaire, Bonaire's main nesting site. The nest was laid by a loggerhead that usually nest on Bonaire between May and August. The first hawksbill and green turtle nests aren't expected till June.

Without the support of their Beachkeepers, STCB would not be able to patrol all the nesting sites every day of the week.

Daan Zeegers said, "We are extremely grateful for the support of our volunteers! Because of their help, we can confirm all nesting activities and collect important data on which management actions to protect Bonaire's sea turtles are based. Our Beachkeepers not only support our work by checking the beaches, they also help us with the confirmation of new nests and the excavation of nests that have hatched. They also collect trash that may form obstacles for nesting females and hatchlings, making the beach beautiful for turtles and for people."

If you would like to volunteer for STCB or want to join them for a nest monitoring patrol on Klein Bonaire, you can send an e-mail to Daan at field@bonaireturtles.org. If you'd like to support the work of STCB in a different way, you can also symbolically adopt a hatchling or adopt an entire sea turtle nest. For more information, please contact STCB at stcb@bonaireturtles.org.

In 2021, the following nest adopters are supporting the work of STCB with a generous contribution to the organization: Best Cellars, VIP Diving, QVillas, BUTS Technical Consultancy, Dive Friends Bonaire, Bruce & Donna Hood, Novis Family, Gaia Concepts, Cargill, Blue Jay Holding, Harbour Village, The Laughing Seahorse, Enjoy2Stay, dNM Interim, Sand Dollar, Nederlands-Belgische Schildpaddenvereniging and anonymous donors. Thank you!!

Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) is a non-governmental research and conservation organization that has been protecting sea turtles since 1991.





Did You Know? that the American Flamingo's knees bend backwards...or do they?

When a flamingo walks, it looks like its knees are bent backwards, right? Wrong – what looks like its knee is actually its ankle! Its knee is higher up on the leg. So, half of its 'leg' is actually its foot and most of the time you see a flamingo standing or walking, it's on its tip-toes! Japanese illustrator Satoshi Kawasaki shows what it would look like if people had the skeletal structure of a flamingo.

During a bird guide workshop here in Bonaire a few years ago, one of the expert birders giving the workshop stopped and gawked at the flamingos that the rest of us were ignoring. He had never seen a flamingo and was over the moon with how gorgeous and vibrant our flamingos were! I was ashamed to say that I and probably most of the locals in the group had gotten use to them and had forgotten how incredible it was the first time we saw one in the wild.

Flamingos are one of the most beautiful birds and surely one of the funniest birds to observe. Sometimes, as your car rounds a bend, you see one with its head underwater doing what flamingos do – searching for food in the salinas – and all of a sudden, its head pops up and it gets quite a fright when it realizes there is a vehicle full of people staring at it. We've all seen flamingos standing on one leg with its head tucked into its feathers. Every wonder why? A scientist, Matthew Anderson, tested several theories as to why flamingos do this and found out that, when standing in water, especially cooler water, flamingos do this more often leading him to conclude that they do this to conserve body heat.

Then there is courtship season when some flamingos form large groups and it looks like they are doing some sort of Jerusalema with their heads moving back and forth in unison and their wings flying up every now and then flashing black. How about sitting on the shore down south around sunset and watching the flamingos leave Bonaire and fly off into the blue. But every now and then, one gets cold feet and turns back – not quite ready for the migration to who knows where. My very favorite behavior is when a lone flamingo with gangly legs runs haphazardly along the shoreline, long neck

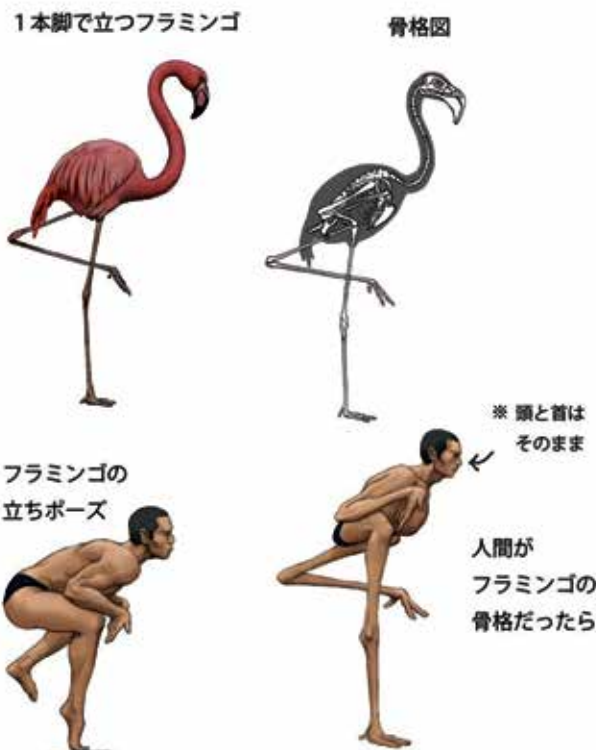
down and head swinging back and forth just above the sand. The first time I saw this, I thought the poor thing must be drunk on some fermented brine shrimp, but then I saw the gazillions of tiny brine flies swarming just above the sand in its path. Low and behold, it was eating flies!

Just remember, flamingos are shy and need their space, especially when they are young and when they are nesting. Please keep your distance. This is also the season when some shorebirds lay nests on the shoreline, so please be especially careful when walking along the shore. If you see a tern, black-necked stilt, laughing gull, etc. making all sorts of noise and dive-bombing you, this is their way of telling you that you are too close to their nest! The nests are on the ground and very camouflaged. When disturbed, birds will sometimes leave their nests so long that the unprotected eggs and/or chicks die in the hot Bonaire sun. Dogs are especially dangerous to nesting birds.

Sometimes we forget how fortunate we are to have wild animals like flamingos, shorebirds, parrots, sea turtles, parrotfish and so much more all around us here in dushi Bonaire. Don't forget to stop, watch, admire, protect and conserve.

Reference: Anderson, Matthew J., and Sarah A. Williams. "Why do flamingos stand on one leg?." *Zoo Biology* 29.3 (2010): 365-374.

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



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