



Dancing to the music of Dia di Rincon  
Photo Julie Morgan

## Dia di Rincon better than ever

Thousands upon thousands of people attended the 34th edition of the biggest festival on Bonaire, Dia di Rincon, on April 30. And this year it was a true celebration of culture, traditions and history spanning the entire month of April with more than 25 events. The Dia di Rincon committee got to work early to ensure 2023 would be the biggest year ever. Invitations were sent out in late March to other islands to join the various events, competitions or take part in the big parades. Various contests and displays were revived with the idea of celebrating the past. For the first time, a website in Papiamentu, [DiadiRincon.org](http://DiadiRincon.org) was available with event updates, maps and other information.

Dia di Rincon was first celebrated in 1989 initiated by local writer Francisco ‘Broertje’ Janga, author of *The Rincon I knew 50 years ago*. He wanted to honor and keep the traditions and culture of the oldest city in the Dutch Caribbean.

On March 25, 2023, the first of the month-long Dia di Rincon events paid tribute to Broertje as founder.

Also in March, for the first time ever, ‘Taste of Bonaire’ was held in Rincon by Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB). It proved to be a great success.

A revival of Festival Kanto Krioyo, singing and songwriting competition for both adults and children was held over multiple nights. The song that is chosen best typifies the heart of Dia di Rincon. The 2023 winner was former Miss Tourism Bonaire 2019 Rayshantaly Coffie for her song Den koba’ e huki tra’I seru.

Nos Zjilea at Mangazina di Rei celebrated a pre-Dia di Rincon’ with presen-

tations ‘Passing over knowledge and customs’. (see page 8)

Simadan (harvest festival) parades were held on three occasions leading up to the big event on April 30.

Following tradition, Dia di Rincon began early with the raising of the Rincon flag, a blessing at St. Louis Bertrand Catholic Church and an official opening ceremony. The crowds gathered early

including 98 motorcyclists riding from Kralendijk for the celebration.

The first parade began at 2 p.m., Parada di Antano, followed by Simadan di Rincon and Parada di Folklor and ended with Parada di union. Festively decorated semi-truck floats maneuvered the streets barely making the corners of the historic town. The floats carried DJ’s or live local bands the Foyan Boys, Kunuku Boys and others to accompany dance music for the nine lavishly costumed dance groups. To keep with the idea of the biggest year ever, TCB, the Diamonds and Nos Zjilea dance groups more than doubled in size this year. Favorite local musical group Tutti Trutti and a cultural dance group performed on the square for everyone to dance along. Food and drink stands lined the streets with local creole food, BBQ and tropical drinks. Chichi Tan’ museum was open for tours, with food and drinks for sale in the garden if anyone needed a break from the activity and noise.

Dia di Rincon 2023 was a great success and the committee is making plans for next year. This one will be difficult to top. *The Reporter* has additional photos on our Facebook page.

Julie Morgan



Simadan di Rincon Parade



## Rijna honored at farewell reception



**Bonaire's Lt. Governors, past and present**

The Public Entity of Bonaire (WOLB) held a reception for Edison Rijna at Wilhelminaplein on Friday, April 28. The former Lieutenant Governor of Bonaire has been appointed as a special envoy for the Caribbean Netherlands.

In his farewell speech, Rijna recalled his grandmother Chichia's warning when he was a boy. "Child, don't ever work in this yellow building," she said, pointing the administrative office. Nevertheless, he says he always dreamed of becoming Lieutenant Governor of Bonaire some day.

Deputy James Kroon said that Rijna was the 'constant factor' during the nine years they worked together. "His goal is for Bonaire to move forward and together we have taken great steps to achieve this."

Christopher Frans, the new island secretary, said Rijna "was always a person who strived for progress. He was decisive but often showed his human side. His door was always open."

Attendees at the event viewed video images of greetings and praise from other CN dignitaries. Snacks and drinks were served. The youth band 'Formashon Musikal Krioyo' provided musical entertainment. *DMR*



### Kroon resigns as head of UPB

James Kroon is stepping down after 12 years as political leader of the Union Patriótico Boneriano (UPB). Maritsa Silberie will be the interim leader of UPB until a new candidate is found and elected. *DMR*

## Island council warns Dutch to expect resistance

The new Island Council has voted unanimously to inform Secretary of State for Kingdom Relations Van Huffelen that the Dutch will no longer be allowed to unilaterally change the agreements that establish the relationship between the central government and the BES public bodies.

The Hague wants to amend the WolBES and FinBES laws that define the administrative and financial relationships between the public bodies and the central government. The islands want those laws changed too. For example, the Island Council wants the central government to relax its financial supervision of the public bodies. The council also wants to participate in determining the size of the island councils. The Hague wants to bring them into line with the size of the home municipalities.

The Island Council's motion invokes Bonaire's status as a former colony and asserts that it retains its right to self-determination, even though it has voluntarily joined the Netherlands. The motion is not expected to have much effect on the negotiations. The two parties have already been discussing the needed changes jointly for some time. *DMR (Dossier Kingdom Relations)*

### Recompression chamber to be reactivated



The first steps have been taken to restore Bonaire's ability to provide emergency recompression for divers. Dr. George Matook and two other Recompression Chamber qualified doctors have been hired.

Dr. Matook is well acquainted with Bonaire. He first visited the island in 1979, has owned a home here since 1997, and has lived here full-time for two years. Dr. Van Der Vaart took part in Matook's training in Hyperbaric Medicine and Recompression.

A certified diver since 17, Dr. Matook has been a Dive Medicine Practitioner in Key Largo. He's a Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeon who served as a medical doctor in the United States Air Force for eight years. *DMR*

## Tis the season for Freedom Meals and other essential celebrations



On May 4th, the Day of Remembrance, Bonaire's Krus Kora placed a wreath to commemorate the victims of the Second World War, other conflicts and peacekeeping operations. International Red Cross Day was May 8th. The island's chapter can be proud of their contribution to Bonaire's community, in quiet times, and in their readiness for emergencies, year after year, across the decades.

Time has been defined as Nature's way of preventing everything from happening at once. Time was suspended on Bonaire during April 27-May 8: King's Day, Rincon Day, Labor Day, Remembrance Day, International Fire Fighters Day, Freedom Day, Red Cross Day. Several appropriate celebrations were organized. The most newsworthy events were the Freedom Meals people shared all over the islands.

Freedom Meals are a growing tradition throughout the Netherlands, including all the Caribbean islands. In the words of Anja van Bergen, the driving force behind the organization Caribbean Freedom Meals: "The feeling that we are sitting down together with everyone in the Kingdom of the Netherlands on the same day and talking about this important theme is extra special. We all eat the same soup, we talk about the same theme, each from his own angle from a different place. It's a momentum that you all experience on the same day and that's great. It gives the feeling of being part of something bigger."

The structure of the events is informal. Dialogue cards in Papiamentu, Dutch and English are handed out and people are asked to talk about their experiences and points of view. "If you were the boss of the world, what would you change?" "What does freedom mean to you?" "Have you ever felt unfree?" are example conversation starters.

Freedom Meals have been organized at schools, in the hospitals, at work, in restaurants, in sentro di barios, in the neighborhood just on the street, in a museum, in restaurants, a gallery, at the naval base or just at home at the kitchen table. Just a few guests may attend, or 200 people.

Each island has its own Freedom Meals quartermaster, and many enthusiastic volunteers organize the meals, each in their own way. *DMR*

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 Email: [bonairereporter2019@gmail.com](mailto:bonairereporter2019@gmail.com)  
 Address: Box 603, Bonaire, Dutch Caribbean.

### The Bonaire Reporter Staff

Julie Morgan, Publisher  
 Production: Barbara Lockwood  
 Website: Michael Copini  
 Contributors: Angliet Baidjoe, Ria Evers-Dokter, Dee Scarr, Jane Madden-Disko, Don M. Ricks, Alan Zale, Caren Eckrich, Roxanne-Liana Francisca, Irene de Cunda Costa, Sanne Attevelt, Monique Degenaar, Kaj Schut, Wilma Nijland, Frank Bohm, Izaiñ Mercera, Gijs Borsten, Gary Barrett, Mary E. "Mel" McCombie, Brian Niessen  
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**Mother's Day  
Sunday, May 14**

**Flotsam & Jetsam, continued on page 9**

The Bonaire Reporter May 10 - May 24, 2023



# Sobremesa - A House of Art now open



**Karine di Witt and Ghislaine Monte with a work by Delno L.A. Tromp (Denchi)**

Sobremesa – a house of art is a dream come true for artist Karine di Witt. She bought the building four years ago with the sole idea of establishing a place for artists to work, meet, exchange ideas and show their work.

On May 6 the house of art officially opened its doors for its first exhibition with 31 Bonaire artists. Some you may know, and some are just getting started.

Karine and her Sobremesa partner artist Ghislaine Monte have created a beautiful and tasteful showplace and workplace. They are providing opportunities

for the art community that has sadly been lacking on Bonaire.

Karine said, “This is something that will improve the community of art. This is an invitation to you. There are 31 artists in the show and there are even more out there on Bonaire. Sobremesa is a place for artists to meet and work have ideas and dreams. We are focused on all artists in the cultural field. It’s up to you what you like to do.”

Karine and Ghislaine have set aside one room for a studio where artists can work. The house of art will have work-

shops and classes. Artists can also find inspiration from an assortment of art books and magazines. A gallery will display artists’ work available for purchase, a gift shop offers good coffee and tea.

Sobremesa is located at Abraham Boulevard 10 and is open Tues – Friday 2-5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Find out more [www.sobremesa-bonaire.com](http://www.sobremesa-bonaire.com) or @sobremesa.bonaire or call +599-700-7115.

*Story/photos Julie Morgan*



**Artist Dietrich Winklaar -  
Piskado di Slagbaai (not for sale)**



**Artist Eric Cremers -  
Tree Houses (\$1650)**



**Artist Adrie van de Ven -  
(no title) (\$1250)**

## FOR SALE Villa with Ocean Views! Crown Terrace 64



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# Health Insurance Challenges

Over the last couple of months rumors have spread over the island on the topic 'Health Insurance,' leading to unrest among, notably, pensionados permanently living on Bonaire. Story went that ZJCN health-insurances were to be cancelled, and Americans were supposed to end their American insurance policies (which is, IMHO, a very stupid thing to do). The rumors circulating were mostly false or wildly inaccurate, boosted by the all-knowing social media. As a consequence, insurance brokers reported an increasing number of applications for health insurance policies, showing the confusion among the general public.

The cause of this all appears to have been, or rather appears to be, the leaking of a planned reassessment of the BES health insurance system, to be effectuated by ZJCN, and the consequent re-evaluation of the underlying data. The administrative systems, that were slightly polluted by outdated data, are to be purged with the help of the civil registry (GBA) and immigration data supplied by the IND. The target groups - the residents involved - have to be defined, and a determination has to take place who is entitled to coverage by the BES health insurance, and who is not. Purpose of the re-evaluation isn't so much an intended reduction in expenses, as a fairer distribution of health care resources.

Bonaire's health care insurance is, according to the general belief, free for everybody owning a sedula. That assumption isn't correct, and has to be revised and clarified. Lots of immigrants come to the island, lots of pensionados being attracted by the supposedly cheap health care. Simultaneously, the premium for the health care system has to be coughed up by the working part of the population, which is, due to the immigration mentioned above, getting smaller in a relative sense. The non-working newbies don't contribute a penny to the system, and use up a relatively large chunk of the resources. They're old, remember?

Under the BES health insurance, those who (legally) reside in the BES islands and pay wage taxes on the BES islands are automatically insured by law. The BES health insurance applies equally to this group; for young and old, employee or self-employed, benefits recipient or worker. Unless otherwise decided by law, no one can exempt themselves from the insurance; this is an important condition for the anchoring of risk solidarity. It is not important whether someone has Dutch nationality or not. However, in general, the condition applies that they are a legal resident of the BES islands.

In order to prevent the system from eating its own tail, ZJCN management has decided to underline the original differentiation once again, being a two-stage categorizing of, specifically, the sedula-holders on the island, and re-emphasize the distinction between resident, (in

Dutch: ingezetene) and registered (in Dutch: ingeschreven) persons. A single registration in this administration is not sufficient to be considered a resident. In other words, not all registered (sedula holders) persons can be considered residents in accordance with the BES-health insurance.

To be considered as a resident one must be lawfully living on of the BES-islands. Whether someone lives on the islands will usually be easy to answer. If there is doubt, the circumstances of the individual case will be decisive. The key is whether there is a lasting connection between the individual and the BES islands (in Dutch: een duurzame band van persoonlijke aard). The center of someone's social life must lie on the BES islands. Factors that play a role in this regard include: housing, having a residence permit, the location of the family, employment (wage-tax payment) and registration in the basic administration. It should be reiterated that registration in the civil registry (GBA) is only a condition for receiving benefits, not for the establishment of health insurance.

This means that certain individuals like digital nomads and temporary residents, are not entitled to the health insurance coverage and have to take care of a personal solution. Pensionados could also be excluded from the insurance, depending on the circumstances of their case.

So, health insurance coverage – to summarize the above – is in principle dependent on the question whether someone is a lawful resident (ingezetene) and/or employed on Bonaire. The revision of the island's health insurance system means much work. A lot of basic data – in Dutch 'Gemeentelijke Basisadministraties (GBA)' – need to be checked, brought up to date and combined, to form a trustworthy database containing the data of alive residents of Bonaire.

It will take time to complete the tasks described above. The legal implications have to be absolutely clear, and some sedula holders have to be judged on an individual basis.

We keep our eyes open for new developments, but to be on the safe side (*The Reporter* being published only bi-weekly) I suggest you keep an eye on all health insurance related news published by non-social news sources and governmental bodies, in order to keep in touch with the latest reports. Check websites like [bonairegov.com](https://bonairegov.com) and [rijksdienstn.com/care](https://rijksdienstn.com/care), [bonaire.nu](https://bonaire.nu) or, in Papiamentu, newspapers like Extra and Boneriano.

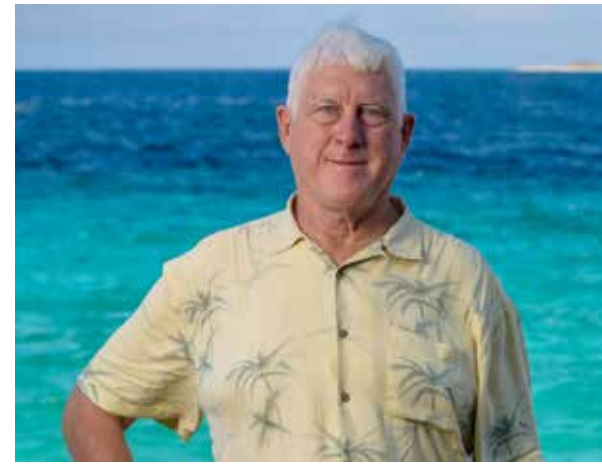
Important news in English is to be found, among others, on the ZJCN-site in English:

<https://english.rijksdienstn.com/care--youth/care/healthcare-insurance/insured-persons>

*Gijs Borsten*

# Ask Bob

**Bonaire real estate advice**



**Are there any restrictions on foreign citizens buying Bonaire property? How long can I stay on Bonaire if I'm not a resident? Agnes M.**

Hi Agnes,

Virtually anyone may buy a property on Bonaire, unless you are a passport holder from a country that is under financial sanctions from the Netherlands. You also do not have to become a resident of the island, unless you want to. The property laws in Bonaire are very strong, and nearly the same as in The Netherlands and comparable to the property laws in the US and Canada.

American and Dutch passport holders may stay on the island up to six months in a calendar year, passport holders from other countries are limited to 3 months in a 6 month period, with the 6 months beginning at time of arrival on the island.

You don't need a visa if you are a passport holder from a country whose nationals are exempted from the visa requirement (this includes visitors from European Union countries and the United States.) If you do need a visa, your time on the island is limited by the date on the visa.

We look forward to seeing you on Bonaire!

All the best, Bob .

*Bob Bartikoski,*

*Re/Max Bonaire Broker/Owner*

*Mobile: +599-786-7362,*

*US Toll Free: +1-866-753-2666*

**If you have a real estate question or want to buy or sell property, email me at [bob@bonairehomes.com](mailto:bob@bonairehomes.com) or call or WhatsApp me at +5990786-7362**

## Seven Bonaireans awarded royal decorations

Every year, on his birthday, His Majesty King Willem Alexander awards decorations to persons who have committed themselves to the well-being of other citizens, to their neighborhood, to their culture, to nature and to animals, and to worthy social groups or organizations that need a boost. This year seven award winners were named.

### **Knight in the Order of Orange Nassau**

- Corry Elsmarie Frederika Beukenboom, for her dedication to environmental stewardship and reforestation of Klein Bonaire.
- Arthur Sealy and Jan Hendrik van der Wier, who contribute within the community of Real Rincon.

### **Member of the Order of Orange Nassau**

- Glen Marcy Albertina, for his commitment to sports.
- Richinel Antonio Anthony, a talented musician active in various music groups.



- Daniel Lucas van Arneman, who shares his musical experience in free lessons with boys and adults.
- Adriaan Dominico Giovanni Lepelaars, a passionate football fan.

When presenting the awards, Lieutenant Governor Nolly Oleana said, "One by one you are the silent force that act as fuel and catalyst in our social developments. Without your commitment, willpower and a good dose of perseverance, Bonaire would look different." *DMR*



# POLICE REPORT

## Property Crime

**Apr. 25/26.** Around noon on Tuesday the 25th, the central control room of KPCN received a report of a theft in a store on Kaya Grandi. An employee of the store contacted the police after they suspected that a group of tourists had stolen a valuable leather bag from the store. With the help of a witness police were able to track down the suspects in the city center. To prove their “innocence,” the suspects invited the police to their hotel room to show that they did not have the stolen bag in their possession. Once in the hotel room, the agents found the bag in question. A suspect, 20, was arrested for theft. The bag was returned to the store from which it was stolen. On Wednesday, the 26th, a second arrest was made. During the investigation, the Common Crime Department (VVC) of the KPCN identified a second person, a man, 33, who was involved in the shoplifting.

## Arrests

**May 2.** A man, 43, was arrested for driving with a revoked driver's license. The suspect's vehicle was taken to the police station for safekeeping.

**Apr. 27.** Around 11 p.m. the central control room received a report of a collision on Kaya Dr. Jose G. Hernandez. During a check of the necessary documents, the driver who allegedly caused the accident could not show a driver's license because it was confiscated by the police last month when he was driving under the influence. The man, 62, was arrested for driving with a revoked driver's license.

*Driving with a confiscated license is a criminal offense and you risk imprisonment or an extension of your driving ban.*

**Apr. 27.** In the afternoon, the central control room received a report of abuse at Sorobon. The suspect, a tourist, allegedly abused his minor child and also a woman who tried to mediate. Two witnesses detained the man until police arrived. When the patrol arrived, they arrested the man, 58, for assault.

## Driving under the influence

**May 2.** A man, 38, was arrested for drunk driving at Kaya Dr. Jose G. Hernandez. After a report was received at the central control room, the driver was stopped and a breathalyzer was taken. His vehicle was taken to the police station for safekeeping.

**May 1.** In the night hours a man, 18, was arrested on Kaminda Gurubu for driving under the influence. The suspect was snaking on the road and was stopped for a check. He had no driver's license, was without a seatbelt and was driving under the influence. His vehicle was taken to the police station for safekeeping.

**Apr. 27.** A man, 38, was arrested on Kaminda Tra'i Montaña for driving under the influence. The suspect drove swaying on the road and was spotted and checked by a police patrol during a surveillance. The moment the police approached him, they immediately recognized an alcohol smell coming from the car. The suspect refused to do a breathalyzer test and was therefore transported to the police station for a breath analysis, which showed that the suspect was under the influence. As a result of the results, the suspect's driver's license has been confiscated.

**Apr. 27.** At approximately 8:15 a.m. a man, 33, was arrested for driving under the influence. During the check it turned out that the suspect had a driving ban and that his driver's license was confiscated four months ago for driving under the influence. For this reason, the suspect's car was seized.

## Traffic Accidents

**Apr. 29.** Around 2:15 p.m. a passenger car and a pickup collided on Bulevar E.E.G. The passenger in the pickup was taken to hospital by ambulance.

**Apr. 26.** Around 5 p.m. two vehicles collided on Kaminda Nikiboko South. One of the drivers turned out not to have valid insurance and was ticketed for it.

Around 4:15 p.m., two vehicles collided on Kaminda Nieuw Amsterdam. Both drivers were ticketed for driving without insurance.

**Apr. 25.** At approximately 10:15 p.m. a scooter and a car collided on Kaya Grandi. The driver of the scooter was taken to hospital by ambulance. Both drivers received a ticket. The driver of the car couldn't show a valid driver's license and the driver of the scooter couldn't show a valid driver's license and proof of insurance. The scooter was confiscated.

## Traffic Control

**Apr. 30.** Two drivers were ticketed, one for driving without a seat-belt and the other for driving without a driver's license.

**Apr. 29.** A police patrol encountered a golf cart with five people in it at Kaya Internashonal. The driver was ticketed for driving without a license. The golf cart was taken to the police station for safe-keeping.

**Apr. 27.** In the afternoon two people on a scooter were stopped on Kaya Neerlandia and fined for riding without a helmet. In the evening hours, a patrol spotted the driver of a scooter who was riding without a helmet on Kaya Beni. The moment the driver saw the police, he accelerated. The police immediately gave him a stop sign and a document check showed that he had no insurance or valid license plate number. The driver was fined for all three offences. On the same day, at a later time, the driver of a scooter on Kaya Internashonal was checked because he and his passenger were both not wearing helmets. The driver did not have valid insurance documents. The driver and passenger were both fined.

**Apr. 26.** Five people on two scooters were ticketed for traffic violations. Around 10:30 a.m. during a general surveillance, officers saw two scooters driving one behind the other. Three people were riding on one of the scooters and the passengers of both scooters were not wearing helmets. The police gave the drivers a stop sign and checked the necessary documents. Neither of the two drivers could show a valid driver's license and they were fined as a result. Both scooters have been seized. The three passengers were ticketed for not wearing helmets.

*The police want to call on scooter drivers not to carry more than one passenger on a scooter. This can be dangerous on public roads.*

## Public Order

**Apr. 30. 'Dia di Rincon' went smoothly.** The day started with a church service and the hoisting of the Rincon flag by KPCN police from Rincon. During the day the activities went well. In the evening during the last simadan procession, a brawl took place at Kaya C.D. Crestian. A young man, 17, was arrested for public violence, assault and for resisting an official in office. Another young man, 17, was arrested for open violence, for resisting and assaulting a civil servant in office, for failing to comply with a demand from the police and for obstructing an official act. A number of plain clothes officers tried to stop the brawl while assistance was requested from colleagues. Upon arrival of the officers on duty, it was necessary to use the service weapon to fire a warning shot. The case is under investigation.

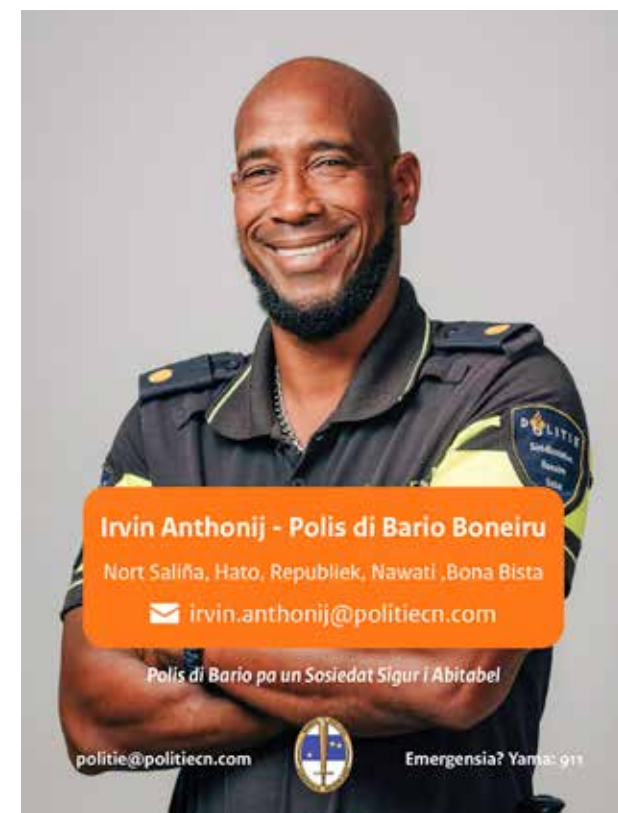
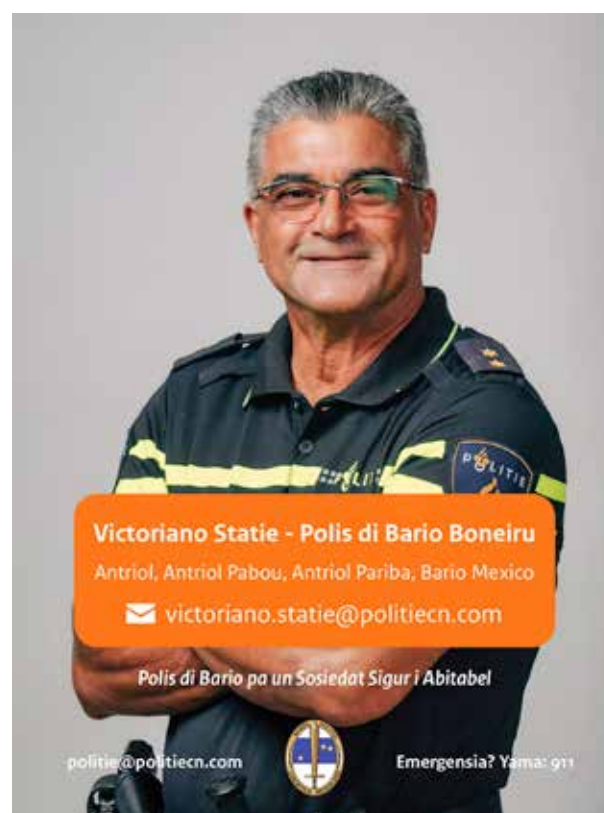
All in all, it was a quiet 'Dia di Rincon' in which the population and visitors once again showed that together we can ensure a pleasant and safe day. Together we bear the responsibility for a safe island.

**Apr. 27.** At approximately 12 p.m. the central control room received reports that a person who gave no sign of life had been found in a home on Kaya Shoshori in Rincon. Police and forensics went to the house. After their investigation, medical examiners declared the natural death of an 80-year-old man born on Bonaire with the initials B.A.M.

**Apr. 24.** Around 9 a.m. the Aliens Supervision Department of the KPCN and the Labor Inspectorate inspected a construction site at Kaya J.N.E. Crane. Officials checked documents and whether the site complied with rules for occupational safety. The inspection revealed a number of irregularities affecting occupational safety and construction was ordered to stop until the rules were followed. Construction was able to resume at 3 p.m. after the required measures had been taken.

## Fire

**May 3.** In the night the fire brigade extinguished a fire in a house in bario Santa Rosa. There were no people in the house. Shortly afterwards, the central control room received two consecutive reports of fire at the same house. After both reports, the fire brigade went on site to extinguish the fire. Residents of Santa Rosa are asked to keep an eye on children to ensure that they do not enter the burned-down house due to the risk of collapse. An investigation into the cause of the fire is ongoing.



## Community Police Officers introduced to the island

The Dutch Caribbean Police Force (KPCN) is now assigning Community Officers to the different districts on Bonaire. The officers are tasked with getting to know the residents and becoming familiar with the different challenges in each community. As they become more familiar with the districts, the police will be able to intervene more quickly and knowledgeably when problems arise. See facebook page: [Korps Politie Caribisch Nederland](#). DMR



# 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.*

## Standing up to The Hague?

So we finally have an island council that's willing to stand up for Bonaire's sovereignty. Or maybe some Bonaire politicians are just yearning for a return to the good old days. They're talking the way politicians on Curaçao, St. Maarten, and Aruba have been talking since 10-10-10.

Remember when the potholes were permanent and there was no money to

build roundabouts? Remember when the schools couldn't be improved? When medical procedures routine elsewhere couldn't be performed on Bonaire? When people with low incomes had to do without? When the badly needed sewage treatment system was a neglected proposal buried forever on a desk in Curaçao? Remember when so many things could not be done because the money had disappeared and no one could

account for it?

Remember when a license application took months to process and we didn't know what decisions were being made, why and by whom, in the interim? When government jobs could always be found or created for those with the right connections? When government employees were very nice people to deal with but didn't seem to have much to do and little authority to do it?

When the Dutch pushed for reforms, the coalition that took power in 2019 and Lieutenant Governor Rijna joined in rather than dragging their feet. Bonaire's governance has accomplished huge improvements since The Hague became involved. Bonaire's sovereignty has been empowered, not violated.

*Signed, Don Ricks*

## Might the former oil transshipment terminal serve Bonaire to cruise to a brighter future?

*The Bonaire Reporter* has provided insight about increased number of cruise ships that are docking at Kralendijk pier. While visiting in April ships from Princess, Royal Caribbean, Carnival and Celebrity cruise lines called on the island.

Clearly the island economy is able to benefit from cruise ship passengers who stop off during brief visits. Maybe island government should give thought to an option that might yield strategic and sustained growth by converting the former oil storage facility to a cruise ship destination!

Given the oil terminal has not been in use since (date) and many countries are shifting their energy consumption away from oil, it might be timely to scrap terminal tanks and sell metal to be used for recycling as a source of revenue and to recoup part of the investment.

The docking facility could be converted to receive cruise ships and terminal property converted to a facility dedicated to cruise ship passengers.

Having an island or part of an island



dedicated to cruise ship passenger visits is not new and in fact is already something that exists. As of 2021 there were already 8 "cruise ship private islands"!

Disney Cruise Lines established Coco Cay in the Bahamas which provides a "bubble" type experience much like their amusement parks where they are in full control.

Norwegian Cruise Lines developed

and manages another island in the Bahamas Great Stirrup Cay. Given their initial success, they replicated the initiative with what is Harvest Caye in Belize.

Another island in the Bahamas, adopted or adapted by a cruise line is Half Moon Cay is used by Holland America Line.

In the 80's Royal Caribbean ventured into this type of initiative in Haiti where

they established Labadee. Based on their initial success, RC Group developed what is now "a perfect day at Coco Cay" which recently received \$250 Million for a water park that features tallest water slides.

Princess Cruises have Princess Cays and MSC Cruises established Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve in 2019.

Just as Bonaire was innovative in establishing a marine park in the Caribbean, the island with the support of the Netherlands and US cruise line companies might develop one of the most modern cruise ship destinations that would incorporate state of the art treatment of waste and at the same time provide unique environmentally friendly experience for cruise ship passengers. As the island does not currently enjoy an infrastructure to accommodate an increasing number of large cruise ships, it may be timely to upcycle the existing oil terminal by converting it to a destination that could receive cruise ships from with visitors that might opt to stay longer than a few hours. Challenge the government of Bonaire to consider this concept!

*Louis F. Dessau, MBA*

## FOREIGN 'pop in' companies must be slowed down

How is the Bonerian market served by the foreign pop-in companies?

We increasingly see on social media that companies (also during their holidays) come to sell or offer their products and/or services on Bonaire without complying with the rules of our economic market.

A company from the Netherlands that comes here to measure curtains and have them shipped, others are looking for guides with knowledge of our caves, to make a film for a project for children in the Netherlands, with a fee of \$11/hour. B&B and second home owners offer their rooms and home for payment abroad and there are several other examples.

In the examples of the services and sales offered, there are local companies that offer these services. How can it be that our local small businesses also have to compete with these foreign providers.

It uses a Facebook page such as "Dare to ask" and or "Bonaire 4 Sale type pages" (with a large friends database) and then the algorithm picks it up on the FB page of residents of Bonaire.

If a local company wants to offer its services or products, they are required to have at least the following:

1. A sole proprietorship or a BV (incorporate at the notary around \$700)
2. Settlement Permit (\$120)
3. Chamber of Commerce registration

and (annual subscription fee around \$90 to \$130)

4. Register with the tax authorities!

What is stated above costs the local, starting, entrepreneur money.

Programs are offered at "BusinessSpark" to help entrepreneurs develop a market for our local people themselves.

Our Enforcement, who are supposed to deal with these foreign "market invaders", are not doing this. How on earth can there be a just market development on our island?

These "invaders" simply come to offer their products and/or services, receive money for this, without meeting all the above conditions, and are most likely not able/will not be able to declare this extra income in their country. Our island, read the Tax and Customs Administration, is of course missing out again.

As locals, let us pay more attention to this kind of practice and put the brakes on it.

The local government in collaboration with The Hague does expect our local companies to cooperate towards an increase in salaries in order to achieve a social minimum on Bonaire.

This kind of practice of these "market intruders" must be stopped. Local government OLB and Tax Office RCN it is up to you to tackle this and do your job properly that benefits our local entrepreneurs!

*Gianni van den Heuvel - Guerrero*

## Thanking the protectors of the reef

STINAPA and Bonaire Marine Park are to be congratulated by their sustained initiative that contribute to environmental protection on the island of Bonaire. An article in Bonaire Field Guide No.9 published by STINAPA mentions that "on May 9, 1969, the National Park was officially inaugurated by Governor Dr. Nicolas DEBROT". My first visit to Bonaire took place Easter 1969 while my most recent visit was Easter 2023. It was a source of much satisfaction to read in The Reporter April 12, 2023 edition about current initiatives of Bonaire Marine Park.

It was of course disturbing to learn about current threat of Stoney Coral Tissue Loss Disease and to actually see impacted corals while SCUBA diving in April. Initiatives to alert divers as noted while diving with Carib Inn are admirable and inspire confidence the threat will be mitigated thanks to efforts of current Bonaire Marine Park administration.

Another source of encouragement is the establishment of a Water Circle group as it is timely for the island to anticipate

wastewater treatment as the island population grows. Hopefully some monitoring is taking place given increase in frequency of very large cruise ships that generally are allowed to discharge their wastewater when 3.5 miles away from the coast in the US.

Visiting Bonaire frequently to dive, the reef and its sea creatures are a tremendous source of joy. Seeing corals, a variety of fish, sea anemones, turtles, eels, or rays on each dive is fantastic. Observing on the surface flamingos, iguanas, lizards, pelicans, banana quits or ruby topaz hummingbirds is also a source of appreciating the diversity of life on the island.

In the Second Quarter 2022 issue of *Alert Diver*, the magazine of Diver Alert Network it was wonderful to read recognition Bonaire has received from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Bonaire Marine Park and STINAPA are to be not only congratulated but more important respected and supported going forward. Hasten to extend thanks and praise to those involved.

*Louis Dessau,  
Underwater Photographer*

**Guardian Group Walk & Run Bonaire Sunday, June 4.**



# Did You Know

## that a pufferfish is extremely poisonous?

The sharpnose puffer (*Cathigaster ros-trata*) is known for its distinctive sharp nose and striking coloration. They are typically found in shallow waters near coral reefs, where they feed on a variety of small invertebrates such as crustaceans, mollusks, algae, and other plant material.

Sharpnose puffers, like all pufferfish, are toxic. One of the toxins in sharpnose pufferfish is called tetrodotoxin which is produced by certain bacteria that live in the fish's skin, liver, and other organs. This toxin affects the nervous system by blocking the movement of positively charged ions, sometimes resulting in paralysis and death of its predators. Interesting right? Well therefore, pufferfish are among the most toxic animals in the world! It is important to note that not all pufferfish are equally toxic and that the level of toxicity can also vary depending on factors such as diet and environment.

Several months ago, a spawning event of sharpnose puffer larvae settled in Bonaire and everyone noticed that there

were more of these beautiful little fish than ever before. As with most population explosions, these little fish were left with too few shelters, too little food and lots of competition among themselves and other fish. When a species becomes so abundant, a population crash is usually inevitable. Articles about mass mortality events often show a correlation between high densities of populations and a lack of resources, environmental factors, and/or disease outbreaks causing high mortality. This occurred in Akumal, Mexico in 2008 and scientists surmised that the die-off of the overly abundant sharpnose puffers there was caused by a virus.

We think that larger fish and sea turtles may have switched to feeding on puffers since there were so many of them and they were easy to prey on due to limited shelter. After the puffers began dying, more sea creatures including scavengers like crabs may have preyed on them. This could explain the numerous reports of dead fish and sea turtles we have been receiving.



Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) performed necropsies on two of the dead sea turtles and the stomachs were full of sharpnose puffers! Together with STCB, STINAPA is monitoring the situation, taking samples and reaching out to partners to learn more about this very concerning die-off.

*Written by Jilly Sarpong – Senior ranger  
Connecting People With Nature.*



**Sharpnose pufferfish  
photos Julie Morgan**

## Remember Captain Don Stewart



© Chicago Tribune Syndicate, 1976

Bonaire has seen countless changes since the late Captain Don Stewart of California first landed the Valerie Queen on the island May 21, 1962. That was 61 years ago and as crazy as it sounds, the father of diving on Bonaire is unknown to many. Then there are others that have forgotten his legacy of bringing dive tourism, conservation and environmentalism to Bonaire.

Today over 24,000 people live on the island, but back in 1962 the population was 4000 and a mere 300 cars. Back then many people didn't know what scuba diving was and the idea of tourism to Bonaire was a bit far-fetched. There was one hotel, Zee Bad, that grew from the remains of a German internment camp.

When Captain Don sailed in, Lieut. Governor Hesteron told him that he could stay if he made "his island" a better place".

It turned out the Lieut. Governor had high hopes for tourism on Bonaire and one of the first steps was building a 30-room hotel at Playa Lechi. Bonaire Beach Hotel would house Don's dive operation Aquaventure.

Don brought in the late Bruce Bowker as his first dive instructor to teach and certify guest and his local dive staff that included dive legends Ebo Domacasse, Ady Everts and Eddy Statia. 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 (The Deep) arrived to publicize and record Bonaire in photo and video. In 1976, Irwin Hasen's syndicated comic strip 'Dondi' featured Don teaching the boy to dive and reef conservation. Dive tourism and Bonaire's nature was becoming a viable source of income.

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 the first ever permanent mooring system. Captain Don was fundamental in establishing the Council of Underwater Resort Operators (CURO) which limited the number of resorts and dive shops on the island. He was also fundamental in creating the Bonaire Marine Park and named most 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.

Remembering the man Captain Don Stewart and what he accomplished is important. But remembering his leg-

acy, principles and ideas in regard to our environment and conservation could be a guide in dealing with excessive tourism, over development, sewage, coral reef disease and climate change.

We celebrate Captain Don Stewart on May 21!

*Julie Morgan*





DCNA Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands NATIONALE POSTCODE LOTERIJ

**Free! Big Live:**

**Nature Quiz Dutch Caribbean**

**Grand prize:** Sailing & Snorkel trip

**SATURDAY 13 MAY '23**

**6-7PM (AST)**

**Play at:** A participating location or online via Zoom

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

ENG NL, PAPTU & PAPTO

Photo credit: Miro Zumrik

To compete participants can play online via Zoom from home with friends and family. Or, in Bonaire, go to a Hillside Bar & Restaurant where the quiz will be broadcasted live. Participation is free, but if you wish to participate at Bonaire's live broadcast location, you must also reserve a spot at the Hillside Bar & Restaurant. (See link below.)

To reserve your spot at Hillside: [https://hillsidebonaire-com.translate.google.com/eten-drinken/?x\\_tr\\_sl=nl&x\\_tr\\_tl=en&x\\_tr\\_hl=en&x\\_tr\\_pto=sc](https://hillsidebonaire-com.translate.google.com/eten-drinken/?x_tr_sl=nl&x_tr_tl=en&x_tr_hl=en&x_tr_pto=sc)

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## April's Nos Zjilea Passing on the traditions



Gacho Coffee illustrates how to despise a cactus for Kadushy soup while Izain Mercera translates into English for the crowd.

Nos Zjilea April edition at Mangazina di Rei on April 29 was packed with great cultural presentations. The theme 'Passing over knowledge and customs' was perfect for the day preceding Dia di Rincon. And many locals and island guests attended.

A spirited group of 12 elderly people from Hofi Kultural were some of the first to arrive. Bea van der Harst of Foundation Council for the Elderly organized a bus, a hot lunch and drinks for the group. And many in the group were brought to their feet to dance and sing along to the music of local bands Sabor Kri-oyo and Karino.

Izain Mercera, Mangazina's experience director, led the crowd through the various presentations as he translated from Papiamentu to English. Gacha Coffee gave instructions in making Kadushy Soup starting with despining the cactus. Gonsalvo 'Kora' Goeloe provided the cactus and illustrated how to hold the prickly plant with historical cultural tools, Chi and Cha. The soup is traditionally served with fresh funchi and Gacha spooned up bowls of the local specialty for anyone to try.

A children's dance group in cultural dress entertained with traditional dances and everyone's favorite cultural dancers Monique and Donny Winklaar performed. Monique even danced with some of the more ambitious members of the crowd.

Jude Finies de Wolf, director of Terramar, announced that the island will be celebrating International Museum Day (IMD) initiated by

ICOM (International Council of Museums) on May 18. Events will be planned at five museums: Tanki Maraca is holding an event for kids on May 7 and Washington Slagbaai Park Museum is holding a family information day on May 14. On the 18th, Terramar Museum is free all day with an evening symposium by UNESCO and KIEN <https://www.immaterieelergoed.nl> and Museo Bonaire will also have free admission.

In honor of International Museum Day Bonaire's museums will emphasize their community collections and their educational value. Bonaire museums are: Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei, Bonaire Museum of Natural History, Terramar Museum, Museo Boneiru (SKAL), Museo Chich'i Tan, Tanki Maraka, Washington Park, Museo Kadimo, Fuhikubo, Collection Bonaire and the Obersi Collection.

Referring to Dia di Rincon, Finies talked of the book written by Broertje Janga, "The Rincon I knew 50 years ago." Janga is the founder of Dia di Rincon.

Nos Zjilea is known for their delicious local soups, creoles and drinks. And a new all 'vegan' food booth, Kunuku Kitchen, was introduced at this April Nos Zjilea. The booth features dishes like papaya stoba, banana stoba, combos and of course funchi and tutu.

Always so much to enjoy at Nos Zjilea. "See, Feel and Taste the culture of Bonaire." The next Nos Zjilea will be May 27. *The Reporter* has additional photos on our Facebook page. *Story/photos Julie Morgan*

**CELEBRATE WOMEN'S DIVE DAY WITH US**

**July 15th 2023**

Check our socials  
[@divefriendsbonaire](https://www.instagram.com/divefriendsbonaire)

**DIVE FRIENDS BONAIRE**

**PADI WOMEN DIVE DAY**



# Piss and Vinegar

## by Gijs Borsten Room Rate Rambles

Alongside ‘Occupancy Rate per room,’ the parameter ‘Room Rate per night’ is one of the performance indicators to measure the success of a tourist accommodation. Bonhata, a silent subdivision of TCB, periodically provides insight - to enlighten us poor sods, having to live off a mere 7 bucks per hour - into both parameters, producing an overview of a bunch of seemingly relevant data on the successes of the sector.

Thanks to them, we now know, that the median rate for a hotel room on Bonaire, during the first months of 2023, was \$189 per night. Or an 11% increase compared to the same period in 2022, or a hair over the inflation rate (9.7%). There’s no mention on the source of their data, but the number seems, at least at first glance, more or less plausible. (CBS.nl, Bonaire.nu)

Besides, it’s not clear whether the hotels lowered their rates to compensate for the \$75 entry tax, pocketing the old taxes themselves instead. Apparently, tourists pay double under the new tax regime.

An important deficiency of the outcome, however, is that it’s unclear how the data was retrieved. The results seem to be coughed up - which is the most effortless way - by the participants themselves, the hotels. That makes the data intrinsically unreliable because a source must be verifiable to be considered trustworthy. Something like a butcher inspecting his own meat. So, let’s try to find out how the data should be assessed. What’s its value?

A short exploration of relevant sites like Expedia and Booking reveals that a Bonairean room can be booked from less than \$50 up to almost \$500 per night. (At Har-

bour Village. But then: you’ll live next door to the King and Queen. They can be noisy though, at times.)

And, tourists, beware: for some resorts, Booking.com charges an extra fee of up to 15%, for taxes and surcharges, their website shows in very small print (Taxes? WTF, I just paid 75 bucks at that shitty little airport of yours, just to be admitted to your shitty little island...).

So: the 189-dollar average seems more or less plausible at first glance when using those booking sites. But then there’s the vast majority of (Dutch) tourists, booking their trip using a local travel agency, offering different, lower, rates.

And that’s where the picture - as well as the tourists, probably - starts to change. I checked the sites of TUI, Corendon and D-Reizen, to get a global overview of the room rates, global, because all published rates include the flight from AMS (Schiphol) Airport to Bonaire. Some include meals, some a rental car - an option that is (at about €200 per week, a steal!) widely ignored, considering the number of pedestrians on the pristine islandic sidewalks. I only included bed-only arrangements.

As a reference, I took the last week of May. Because all trips are including flights, I deducted €350 per booking. That should be about right.

Thus, Corendon offers a number of nine day, 7-night trips. (It took me a while before I retrieved the missing night. I now know where it was.) The trips start at €619 (€695 average), which has a room rate of €38/\$42. Corendon’s more expensive trips average at €777, or €45/\$49 a night.

TUI offers her clientele (‘The Mongols,’ in vernacular; I think the term isn’t meant to belittle people having Down’s Syndrome, but rather to depict them as the savage hordes racing their horses down the steppes somewhere between Russia and China, wearing those funny little furry hats.) a number of trips ranging from 837

(€63/\$69) up to €1565 (€173/\$190 a night). The average room rate at TUI is 81/\$89 a night.

D-Reizen offers trips ranging from EUR 704 (€50/\$55) up to 1529 (€168/\$185), with an average of €954 (€85/\$93 a night).

Although an exact calculation isn’t easy to be made, one thing is clear: the median of \$189 is way out of reach. For every €38 (\$42) a night spent, someone, somewhere on the island has to spend \$336 for a night; for every €63 (\$69), there has to be someone willing to cough up \$309 for a room to compensate for the underpayment. The only place that charges that amount is Harbour Village, way too small to lodge every big spender needed to compensate for the shortage.

Considering the thousands of low budget tourists entering the island, the \$189 as an average room rate on Bonaire isn’t very likely. There are simply not enough high-class lodgings to compensate for the cheap ones, and if there were, there probably wouldn’t be enough well-to-do tourists to fill them. I haven’t seen a private jet at the airport for many months.

Producing false numbers to convince people everything’s going great isn’t very bright. Believing in them yourself, and relying on them to determine your future policies, is just plain stupid. It makes every decision you take the wrong one. Like, for instance, those based on the assumption that more and more nature and culture loving people come to the island. Because they don’t.



*Gijs, originally from Leiden (NL), has been living on and off on Bonaire for about twenty years. He has no clear focus, and loves to be surprised by actors in politics and administration. Originally into The Fine Arts, then a career in (forensic) accounting, then a PhD in German Philology, now operating rake & shovel at Mangasina The Storehouse.*



### Can you help Pakus find a new home?

For years Animal Shelter volunteers have been operating a Saturday Flea Market, Pakus di Pruga, in a building near the Cathedral. The building, which was loaned to the Shelter rent free, now has to be vacated. The flea market is looking desperately for a new home. The Animal Shelter needs either 250-300 square meters of indoor space or empty land, minimum 750 square meters, where it can park containers. If you have any ideas, or can help in any way please contact Paul Wichers at [paulenamina@gmail.com](mailto:paulenamina@gmail.com).

The island would miss Pakus di Pruga badly. It’s a dependable source of revenue for the Shelter. The proceeds go directly to covering expenses. People can buy goods and clothing at next-to-nothing prices. The shelves are stocked with hundreds of used books. Supporters donate items that rarely show up elsewhere on the island, and that otherwise would end up in the landfill. On Saturdays repeat customers show up to search for bargains together and socialize.

### Taxes due May 15, but...

The deadline for filing the 2022 income tax return is May 15th, 2023. Contrary to what has been previously communicated, you will automatically receive an

extension until July 17th, 2023. You do not have to do anything for this. If you expect to receive a refund, please submit your declaration before the 15th of May, so that the declaration is processed by October at the latest.

### Delta names Flamingo the Station of the Year

Delta Airlines has selected Flamingo International (also known as Bonaire International/BIA) and Air Handling Services Bonaire (AHSB) for its Station of the Year award. Ten airports in Flamingo’s category made the short list.

Airlines assess airports and handlers on friendliness, efficiency, on-time performance, and similar criteria. Flamingo International is a destination for many airlines, especially U.S. carriers. American airlines such as Delta usually set high standards. Therefore the local handling staff must be trained regularly and well supervised. *DMR (BESReporter)*

### Man jailed for Christmas Eve death of cyclist

Emiliano T. (32) has been convicted of causing the traffic accident in which cyclist Paul Berezinski died last Christmas Eve. T. was driving under the influence

of alcohol and at high speed when the accident happened.

The court sentenced T to three years in prison, two years of which are suspended. He will then be on probation for two years and be conditionally banned from driving for 36 months. T. must also pay the victim’s relatives \$27,974 in compensation.

Defense lawyer Marga van Lieshout said the verdict gives Emiliano the opportunity to reintegrate into society. The Public Prosecution Service (OM) notes that the sentence imposed is lower than usual and lower than the OM’s requirement, but it will not appeal.

T.’s mother was relieved. “My son didn’t go out to kill anyone that day. But I also feel for the family. For a mother, the loss of a child is very hard; you live with it for the rest of your life,” she said.

*DMR (Boneriano)*

### Venzie fruit boats to return

Barges from Venezuela with fruit and vegetables are in transit from Vela di Coro to Curaçao, and from Paraguana to Aruba. Venezuela had banned exports, and the islands had banned imports.

Fresh produce from Venezuela will be arriving on Bonaire later, after an agent has been signed up and other formalities are arranged.

Flight service between Curaçao and Venezuela has also been resumed. An amphibious Albatross is flying the route.

Aruba says its air borders will remain closed to Venezuela for at least another three months. *DMR (Bonaire.nu)*

### Pre-fabs to be built in Hato

Fundashon Cas Bonairiano has announced that a Dutch construction company will soon build a factory in the Hato district for the manufacture of modular homes.

Modular construction uses components that are manufactured in a factory, then assembled at the construction site. A house is built by attaching pre-manufactured wall, roof, and floor components—prewired and preplumbed—to a steel frame mounted on a foundation. A newly assembled house can be wind and watertight within 48 hours. The finishing can follow.

The construction of the first homes in the Hato district will start in June. Initially, the modules will be produced in the Netherlands and transported to Bonaire by ship. As soon as the factory on Bonaire is ready, the modules will be produced locally.

The 3500 square meter factory will include a showroom and offices. Personnel from the Netherlands will initially manufacture the modules on Bonaire. Then local personnel will be trained to do the work. A starting date for construction has not been announced. *DMR*



# Reef Glimpses

by Dee Scarr

## Baby Boom Consequences

Baby boom! A phrase that sounds so innocent.

I remember two fish baby booms from years ago. One was balloonfish, the smaller spiny puffers with the glorious eyes. All of a sudden, finger-length balloonfish were everywhere! They were between sponge tubes, under ledges, inside trash. I knew an octopus who lived in a pipe. Over four days I found one balloonfish carcass outside the octopus's den each day. I envision the octopus patiently waiting, either at the very back of the den or outside the den. Eventually a balloonfish would recognize the pipe as a good shelter and enter – and the octopus could grab it.

The other baby boom was queen triggerfish. Seeing a single queen trigger on a dive is usually noteworthy. Then, suddenly, they were all over the place! On one dive I was watching a scorpionfish, and a baby queen trigger came close. Before I could wave the little triggerfish away, the scorpionfish ate the triggerfish.

But, in each of those baby booms, it looked to me as if every time the babies doubled in size they halved in number. The other half would have succumbed to predation; the ones who remained were growing well.

This perfect balance is completely disrupted in the case of pufferfish, including our sharpnose puffers, because of one simple difference between puffers and most other fish: puffers are highly poisonous. Jilly Sarpong states it short and sweet on page 7: "pufferfish are among the most toxic animals in the world." The poison is mostly internal, but some puffers, including sharpnose puffers, also have some in or on their skin.

In fact, puffers are remarkably well-defended. They can put on a burst of speed to flee. If caught, they immediately inflate themselves; this can make them too big for the predator to bite. At the same time, the predator feels the weird effect of the poison inside its mouth.

Once, back in the late '80's or '90's, I offered a piece of fish to a scorpionfish. A bold little sharpnose puffer came in to nibble on the food. I waved it away, it came back, I waved it away, it came back, I waved it away, the scorpionfish lunged – and sucked in both the food and the little puffer. The scorpionfish's mouth moved as if it were gargling, then it spit out the inflated puffer (but not the snack)! The puffer deflated as it swam off.

The toxicity of sharpnose puffers keeps them safe from most predators, most of the time. A turtle or moray may catch one once in a while, but eating a single sharpnose puffer isn't likely to have a serious effect. Kind of like enjoying a big ice cream sundae.

The effect of eating a bunch of puffers is very different. Bonaire's huge overpopulation of puffers wasn't



The Babies. Above: Sharpnose pufferfish. Top right: balloonfish. Bottom right: Queen triggerfish. Photos Julie Morgan

being preyed upon with much enthusiasm, and finally we had a sharpnose puffer population crash. I saw five dead ones on one dive; in the next four days people saw hundreds of dead puffers. I suspect that the longer a puffer is dead, the weaker its bad taste would be, and of course it wouldn't be swimming or puffing up, so its most useful defenses – those that keep it alive – are gone.

In only a few days the dead puffers all seemed to be gone and there are noticeably fewer puffers hanging around on the sand. Apparently, the puffer population explosion pretty much fixed itself.

But there was a consequence we hadn't foreseen.

With all those dead puffers, any critter at all interested in eating pufferfish was in paradise – until the poison kicked in. Turtles, morays and other creatures were found dead with no external injuries. Most significantly, 37 puffers were found in the stomach of one of the turtles who died. Other turtles died before they were found.

Luckily for our turtles, they have the expertise of Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) to help them. If you see a turtle that's behaving strangely, not moving well, or floating, please phone STCB's emergency line (+599 780 0433) to get help.

There's one more thing we can do to protect all our animals from puffer poisoning: collect any dead puffers we see, and dispose of them where no creatures, including birds, can get to them. This procedure is not illegal (taking dead fish out of the BNMP is not prohibited, thank goodness). No action will be necessary if the



puffer population remains low enough. But just in case:

1. Remember: No matter how hungry you are, and how available they are, don't snack on pufferfish. There is no antidote for puffer poisoning, and it can be fatal to humans as well as other animals.
2. Use a small net bag or plastic bag (don't let it get away! We won't help the turtles if they die from eating lost plastic bags). You can wave/scoop dead fish into the bag if you have broken skin, or if you're more comfortable not touching them.
3. Transfer dead fish into a trash can or freeze them until trash day. \*\*Make sure the puffers can't be mistaken for food!\*\*

Florida is doing what they can to fight the coral disease, including sending out samples of healthy corals to aquaria all over the U.S. to keep a breeding population safe. The pufferfish explosion affected other places than Bonaire. But only on Bonaire are we divers able to participate in the measures to fight these problems. As the coral disease becomes contained and the turtles regain their health, it's encouraging to know that our gear disinfecting routines, our dive site choices, and our puffer collecting helped to achieve these goals.

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 through [touchthesea.com](http://touchthesea.com).



Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) has been protecting Bonaire's turtles since 1991. Throughout the years their work to save and nurture Bonaire's three critically endangered species: hawksbill, green and loggerhead has grown with the advancement in scientific technology. The staff and volunteers are active in monitoring nests, in-water surveys, Seagrass protection, fishing line cleanups, rescues, advocacy and education and collaboration and employ satellite tracking. For a look at STCB's annual report 2022 visit: <https://www.bonaire-turtles.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Year-Report-2022.pdf>



## Cash is no longer accepted at Landfill Lagun

Selibon NV informs that as of June 1, 2023, cash is no longer accepted at the Waste Center Lagun (Landfill). This means that both private individuals (households) and companies that hand in their waste at the Landfill must use a debit card to pay. Credit cards are not accepted.

Selibon NV would also like to remind you that on January 1, 2023, the levy for handing in waste at the Waste Center Lagun (Landfill) increased and is \$ 6.25 per 500 kg (incl. ABB).



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# Make Bonaire Accessible

by Ria Evers-Dokter

## A change is going to come...

There have never before been so many elderly. Of course, this is because of the baby boomers but somehow hardly any government seemed to be really prepared. One project after the other has been opened: day care, home care, special care, etc., but opening projects is not enough. Finances need to be in order, staff needs to be trained and people have to be trained as specialists in the field they are working. Housing needs to be adapted and/or created.

Everything for special needs will have to be adapted. More wheelchairs, walkers and scooter mobiles will be needed. Good rehabilitation is very important. You should not have to leave the island for treatment, recovery or need revalidation after a stroke.

People with a good eye for business should already be prepared to fulfill all the necessary jobs and needs. And for the economy, times will be very good. Of course, all pension funds pay out more than usual and will hopefully go on to do so.

And as time will teach us, more change is going to come. This is a good time for Bonaire to rethink their strategy for

tourism. There will be a large quantity of well-to-do elderly who will want to spend their vacation on Bonaire. And those elderly who live on Bonaire will want and need their housing adapted for special needs if they aren't willing to live in the care housing offered.

Housing and boarding will have to get adapted to special needs and public transportation will also be needed in special ways. All housing being built now will have to be elderly friendly.

The airlines will have to rethink their policy and offer more and better seating in their aircrafts. They simply cannot go on asking their elderly clients to wear diapers during the flights. Travel agencies have a big job waiting for offering different types of travelling and tours.

You can already see it on television and in magazines. More and more advertising is shown where the elderly are used as models.

This list can go on and on...it is endless. Elderly people and their needs are not the same anymore. They are educated and won't accept what is currently being offered.

Conferences and workshops need to be organized where the elderly preside and participate. Because who else knows more about being elderly than the elderly themselves.

A national council of elderly needs to be installed and this council will have to advise all institutions and the government. And of course, our streets and sidewalks need special attention. Better accessibility for all is what we need. All shops, supermarkets should be prepared and the churches as well.

With our new island counsel in place, plans and discussions should begin as soon as possible. Remember, you too will reach the age of 60 as well. You will want to be prepared as well.

And for those who would like to read a bit more about the topic, I recommend doing so. The change is going to come, whether you like it or not.



*Ria Dokter is living happily on Bonaire, where she also used to work as a director at FKPD and started Special Olympics Bonaire. She took care of her husband (R.I.P) for many years and feels that accessibility is the most important issue on our island.*

# Creating optimal health

by Irene da Cunda Costa

## Sense of smell affects decision making

In recent issues I wrote about the relation between smell, memories and emotions. The amazing functions of smell keep surprising me, and luckily science is bringing them forward through research. Training our sense of smell and following our nose can help us make better decisions. Although we are not always aware of how odors affect us, we do have an utterly remarkable sense of smell. While it's true that we are predominantly visual creatures, our olfactory sense can be compared to that of dogs and other mammals, as the number of neurons in the olfactory bulb is equivalent to theirs.

For example, we can detect the scent added to cooking gas in as little as 0,2 parts per million. The truth is that we neglected this sense and we have also disguised our natural odors. Fortunately, sense of smell can be trained and improved. A study made in Berkeley in 2006 showed that humans were able to follow an odor trail with pretty much accuracy. About 2/3 of the participants were able to follow the scent till the end of the trail. Some participants received further training and they were able to double their speed to follow the trail. Why is this important for us? Well, many decisions we make are totally or partially based on smell. There might even be some decisions we make that we are not at all aware of how much they are influenced by surrounding scents.

The obvious example is having to choose between our favorite dessert but smelling like sewage or a bowl of fruit with yogurt with a normal smell. That will also count for choosing a partner, if the choice is between someone that looks like Brad Pitt or Julia Roberts, but smells like sewage, and a regular looking guy/girl with a neutral odor, most likely the winner will be the regular person. But sometimes the effect on smell in our decisions is not that obvious.

Since 1996, many studies indicate that when choosing a partner, smell preferences can determine the best survival option for the offspring. When exposed to human odors we tend to choose a mating partner whose immune system is the most different to ours. This will provide the potential offspring with a broader spectrum of genes to form a better immune system to fight against disease. Of course, it is not only smell that counts when taking the big step, but who knows if the success rate in marriages would be better if that was the case.

In another study involving pole dancers, it was shown that ovulating women were receiving higher tips than when they were not ovulating. This means that their tips fluctuated. Whereas women who were on the pill received an even number of tips during the entire month.

Hexadecanel, a volatile compound present in the smell of babies' heads, has been proven to reduce aggression in men and increases aggression in women. In the wild, paternal aggression is often directed to offspring and maternal aggression is often protective.

Humans send a different body odor in a state of fear. It

can be smelled by dogs, and this popular knowledge and has been scientifically demonstrated. Humans can also smell the fear in others which arouses our sympathetic nervous system putting us in a state of alert.

Going back to dogs, they conspicuously smell when they meet other dogs. But humans....we don't sniff strangers... or do we? There is an ongoing study connecting the handshake and the number of times we smell our hands after it. The point is, we smell ourselves constantly. Further research including an electronic nose indicated that clique friends smell similarly.

In expressing emotions, Darwin devoted an entire chapter to tears. He couldn't find a functional purpose. Tears are apparently odorless but when men sniff tears their testosterone levels reduce their aggression about 40%.

One of the goals in smell research is focusing on medical diagnostics. It is very likely every disease has an odor, as metabolic functions translates into volatile chemicals. The future looks to having an electronic nose in our bathroom that would act as a scanner of our metabolism and overall state of health.



*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.*

# Can you trust AI?

by Brian Niessen

With all of the hype about AI (Artificial Intelligence) happening around the world, and all of the search engines jumping on the bandwagon, I decided to give it a small simple test.

The question "Who owns the Bonaire Reporter newspaper?"

Below are the AI's tested, and their results.

<https://deepai.org/chat> "As an AI language model, I do not have access to current information about the ownership of the Bonaire Reporter newspaper. However, as of 2014, the newspaper was owned and operated by George and Mary Will. It is possible that the ownership has changed since then."

So I repeated the question and the response was "I don't know."

<https://huggingface.co/chat/> "As far as I can tell from my knowledge cutoff date of September 2021, there was no clear owner mentioned for the Bonaire Reporter. They describe themselves as "an online daily newspaper focusing on local news" based in Bonaire, which is part of the Netherlands Antilles. However, they

have not mentioned any specific ownership information on their website <https://www.bonairereporter.com/>."

<https://chat.openai.com/> "The Bonaire Reporter is owned by George and Laura DeSalvo. They started the newspaper in 1993 and continue to operate it to this day. The Bonaire Reporter is an English language newspaper that is published every two weeks and covers news and events on the Caribbean island of Bonaire."

A Private AI Chat: "The Bonaire Reporter was started on February 10th 2019 by Bonnie Brackin, owner/publisher. According to her LinkedIn page, she continues in those roles today."

Another Private AI Chat: "In February 2020, George DeSalvo sold The Bonaire Reporter to Claire Seidl and David Radtke. Claire Seidl and David Radtke are the current publishers of The Bonaire Reporter, as of February 2020."

<https://www.cleverbot.com/> "He does."

<https://bard.google.com/> "The Bonaire Reporter is owned by Bonaire Media Group. The company was founded in 1999 by David and Wilna Colmer. The Bonaire Reporter is a free biweekly newspaper that is distributed throughout Bonaire. The newspaper covers local news, events, and businesses. It also has a website that provides additional news and information."

<https://www.perplexity.ai> "The ownership of The Bonaire Reporter newspaper is not clear from the search results. The newspaper is a bi-weekly news publication in English, and it operates in the Newspapers industry."

<https://you.com/> "The ownership of the Bonaire Reporter newspaper is not explicitly stated in the given search results or Wikipedia summary."

<https://koala.sh/chat> "The Bonaire Reporter newspaper is owned by George and Laura DeSalvo."

So, as you can see, the information is varied, but in most cases, is presented as fact. Unfortunately the facts are that the Bonaire Reporter was owned by George and Laura DeSalvo until 2019 when it was purchased by Julie Morgan.

Not only did none of the AI's know about Julie, four of the responses gave totally false ownership information.

My take-away on this, AI is cute and fun for now, but do not trust what it tells you.

*Brian Niessen is a grandfather in the computing industry providing leading edge consulting services. If you would like to contact him for any reason, he can be reached at [BonaireReporter@BrianNiessen.com](mailto:BonaireReporter@BrianNiessen.com)*



# In honor of the ocean



Map of Bonaire  
by Moltenwolf Glass

"In Honor of the Ocean," at Terramar Museum, April 28 to June 17, was well received on opening day by Bonaire residents concerned with the plight of our seas. A second collaboration between Terramar and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the exhibit is a part of 'Boneiru bibu: Bou di Awa.' The program's goals: to remind us of the beauty of our local ecosystems, their importance for our survival and how we can impact and destroy them.

Local nature organizations and artisans contributed diverse works of art, including even mini-movies.

## Contributions included:

- The Mangrove Maniacs: a 3-D diorama of the mangroves above and below the waterline.
- Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire: an interactive game about critically endangered sea turtles.
- Jong Bonaire: craft paintings from recycled bottle caps transformed into sea creatures and candy suckers in the form of sealife.
- Moltenwolf Glass: oversized glassworks on large canvasses - a Bonaire map with highpoints of the island, a mangrove tree with marine life and Bonaire's local birds.
- Greenpeace: an information board and display and an artefact of their very first action on Bonaire.
- Fuhikubo: historical photos of fishing and boats.
- Sharking Daily: multi-media art reminding us of sharks importance to ecosystems.
- Nu Kua Ceramics Bonaire: a piece stressing the ocean's importance.
- Paintings from artists Ferf Acrylics (Rosa Lyte), Janice Huckaby and Carlo Maria Corbetta.

Terramar Museum, 3 Kaya Isla Riba, is open Mon - Friday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. and Sat 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. 599-701-4700 Story/photos Julie Morgan



A 3-D diorama by Mangrove Maniacs



REDDAY

## Give where we live

Keller Williams (KW), an international real estate company working in 56 countries, opened on Bonaire in August 2022. On the second Thursday of May each year, KW's agents donate their time to volunteer in their communities to "give where we live."

In this, their first May on Bonaire, the new KW team is stepping up to the 'Red Day' challenge by painting the exterior of the Krusada Walk-In-Antriol. The Antriol location caters to Bonaireans requiring support for alcoholism, drug use or recent prison release. The clients have access to laundry and hygiene services, clean beds, breakfast and /or lunch and assistance to combat their addiction.



## Book signing raises money for Junior Rangers

Davin Goodwin, author of *Diver's Paradise* and *Paradise Cove*, Bonaire based detective mysteries, held another philanthropic book signing on his recent visit. On April 22 Goodwin donated the sales of a book signing to Animal Shelter Bonaire. On April 27 at a book signing at VIP Divers he donated \$825 to the STINAPA Junior Rangers program. The sale of 18 books brought \$235. That amount was tripled when it was matched by both Davin and his wife Leslie and by VIP Divers. Then a final \$120 was donated by Goodwin's brothers.

At VIP's pool LR: VIP's Kevin O'Brien, Leslie Goodwin, Davin Goodwin, VIP's new co-owner Jan van Nieuwamerongen and STINAPA education coordinator for the Rangers, Monique Grol.

The Paradise books will be available for sale at VIP in the near future but the books can also be ordered through Amazon.



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# Darien Satterfield explains her 3-D research

*In April Bonaire's reef fish became the focus of research by Ph.D. candidate Darien Satterfield from UC Davis. Darien is a behavioral ecologist and functional morphologist. She uses video/photo to collect data with a minimum of disturbance. While on Bonaire, Darien explained her research study.*

Reef fish are incredibly diverse. Some live their whole lives close to the bottom, in and around the coral structures and others exist entirely up in the water column. They range in shape and diet and behaviors. Until recently it wasn't possible to observe fish behaviors in the field. We were limited to bringing fish into a lab, which as you can imagine, would really change the way they behave naturally. But with the advancement in sports video cameras like Go Pros, we now have the ability to get long sequences of videos of fish swimming undisturbed in the field.

In the past researchers were handicapped because a single camera only records video in 2D, limiting the way you can observe how a fish uses a three-dimensional space on the reef. I've solved this problem by creating a camera rig that will hold two Go Pros and so effectively we are filming in 3-D. This enables us to measure distances using triangulation: measure speeds, distances traveled, size of the fish and turning radius (used to estimate agility). With these newly accessible variables we can more accurately characterize diversity in the range of fish behaviors.

We place our camera rig on the sand near a reef for two hours at a time. Using the camera rig also involves the use of a large 3D metal cube frame to calibrate the two cameras for the 3D space being recorded. A checkerboard is used to calibrate for the distortion of the water.

This gear is big and heavy. It weighs over 100 lbs (45.35 kg) and makes diving with it pretty difficult.

Try to think of all of the reef fish behaviors as a big bubble. We know that as reefs die, certain species of fish are more susceptible to mortality. And with the loss of species comes the loss of behaviors. One of the questions I want to answer is how does the bubble of behaviors used collapse, or shrink, as reefs begin to die. With the recent coral disease outbreak we are interested in how behavioral diversity in reef fish responds to changing coral health.

Once home in California, I will CT scan museum specimens in our lab of some species we have captured on film as I'm also interested in how the internal anatomy is related to differences in the behaviors fish can use. In other words, do fish that swim much faster have very different muscle and bone structure?

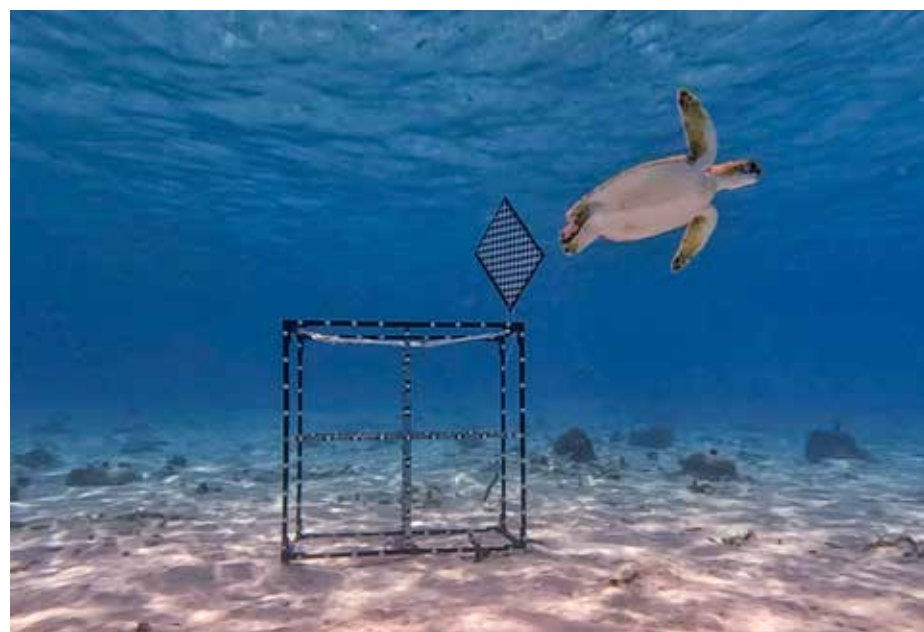
Some of the challenges we've been facing are that Go Pros can only film up to 4k video and the cameras overheat after about 20 minutes if you film at any resolution above 1080 at 30 frames per second. So there is still a lot of growth to make in this area of using video for research.

For most of the research the camera rig was placed between 5 and 90 ft (1.5 – 30 meters). Some fish species only live in 1-3 ft depths, so keeping our 2.5 ft tall camera rig stable in surge has been a challenge.

Back at UC Davis, Darien will assimilate the video research into what will be her fourth and final study toward her PhD. Darien's fish study concentrated on damselfish species that can be found at every depth on Bonaire's reefs. The team consisted of Darien, her husband Jeremy and Jonny and Meghan Holst. We look forward to the results of Darien's research in the future and to calling her Dr. Satterfield. . *Julie Morgan*



Darien's team: L-R Jonny Holst, Meghan Holst, Darien Satterfield, Jeremy Satterfield  
Photo Julie Morgan



For a glimpse of Darien's work visit [tinyurl.com/drsatterfield](https://tinyurl.com/drsatterfield) To watch an interesting video of her research go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=850X-4KZgM4>

## CURO reorganizes and changes

The organization once known as the Caribbean Underwater Resort Operators or CURO started in 1977 by the late Captain Don Stewart is getting an update. The idea back then was to "proliferate reef/sea management to maintain a productive underwater environment and to guarantee the economic health of our community and our industry".

In a meeting on May 3 dive operators and others were invited to attend a reorganization meeting. CURO was once strong and united but today has only a few members.

Al Catalfumo of the Black Dungen Inn and one of the original members of CURO was invited to speak and explain the history.

"As dive operators we should have a voice. Even before STINAPA made the rules, we worked very close with the Bonaire Marine Park. Everyone worked together and helped support each other. We didn't try to steal business from anyone. Don designed and installed the moorings along with Ady Everts, Eddy Statia and Ebo Domacasse. We paid for the moorings at our own expense. Tom van't Hoff [Bonaire Marine Park] took everything that Don said and we did it on paper." said Al. "We were a group of 10 and one of the important things was, we policed ourselves – we operated for years that way and we need to get back to that, this was before the Dutch showed up and everything fell apart," said Al.

Many of the attendees expressed their need for a voice with STINAPA, saying they need to be a partner at the table. They want STINAPA to understand what the dive operators need and that they want to work together.

Others complained saying STINAPA wants to shut everything down to protect the coral without consideration of the dive operators.

One participant said, "Everybody wants to live here on the island. Everyone buys a boat and gets a license and they have a business."

Since 2010 the moratorium on the number of dive operators was lifted and today the Bonaire business registrar lists over 200 dive operators.

Another voice in the crowd said, "Diving is our bread and butter on this island... environmental law cannot lead us into a huge economic loss, unless we are trying to stop it [SCTLD - Stony Coral Tissue Disease]. We need to know what we can do and not do."

Since that first meeting Hagen Wegerer director of watersports operations at Plaza Resort/Toucan Diving said, "A meeting will be held May 9 to elect a new president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. The name of CURO will now stand for Council for Underwater Recreational Operators."

CURO will now include other water sports, not just diving.

According to Wegerer, the new CURO is hoping to join the task force on SCTLD with STINAPA and OLB and hold a seat on the STINAPA board of directors. Both require approval from the government.

"We need an industry behind us; we need to be an active organization. We need to look at what's happening on Bonaire and make things work for everyone and change things. We can't look back 30 years ago," said Wegerer.

*Julie Morgan*

*The Bonaire Reporter May 10 - May 24, 2023*

**FREE COMMUNITY EVENT**

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# Parrots and People

## Pandemonium of Parrots

by “Mel” McCombie

I love inventive collective nouns—a murder of crows, a parliament of owls, a flamboyance of flamingos—and if you have witnessed an evening convocation of Loras, a pandemonium of parrots says it all. You may have noticed, perhaps with some irritation, that in the half hour before sunset, wild Loras gather together for an evening squawkfest before tucking themselves in for a night’s sleep.

One of my buddies here is Susan Davis, who runs Bonaire Bird Tours. She got me interested in the Lora’s evening gatherings. You can see and hear evening gatherings around the island in areas where there are trees and shrubs that offer shelter for nighttime roosting. Though Loras like trees best, one often sees them perched on power lines as they gather. I’ve enjoyed watching the Loras in Dos Pos, where Echo is headquartered. Loras follow the food—they are menu-driven—so during the rainy season, when the trees in the north are robust, they stay up there. As the rains dry up, the Loras move south. Susan Davis tells me she has found an evening roost as far south as Tera Cora.

Parrots are prey animals, so flocking together helps with security and safety. Susan mentioned one evening she was waiting at a usual site for the evening gathering, but no Loras had shown up. She looked carefully and



saw a merlin (a raptor) perched in a tree, surveying the area for prey. Ten minutes later, it took off, and as soon as it was gone, the Loras showed up.

Research has shown that parrots name their young, so what you hear as “noise” is actually specific communi-

cation. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/grrlscientist/2012/sep/22/1>

What are they saying during their evening gathering? Certainly they are exchanging information. Here’s my interpretation:

“Food! I found food!”

“Hi, Dushi. It’s Weebo. How was your day?”

“Mom? I’m here.”

“I’m a good looker, and looking for love!”

“I’m here! Where are you? Marco! Polo!”

“I love you.”

Loras mate for life, and are also bonded to their flock. We can see Loras affirming their bonds by feeding each other (or by mimicking feeding) to express affection, just as they would feed a chick. Another way to bond is by preening a fellow Lora, using the beak to smooth feathers, to remove the keratin sheath of growing feathers, and to distribute preen oil on feathers to keep them smooth and ready for flight. To preen is to live—remember, Loras are prey animals, and keeping their flight feathers in good order is a survival technique!

From the human perspective, the evening gathering is, above all, loud. After all, parrot vocalizations are meant to carry; a noisy call can be heard across the treetops. It’s a matter of survival. To me, the brief 30 minutes or so of Lora pandemonium is a joy. Seeing hundreds of wild Loras means Echo’s efforts to preserve this charismatic endemic species is working. The noisy pandemonium is a joyful noise, a testament to conservation.

*Photo Mel McCombie, PhD*

## Clean Coast Bonaire survey results from Boka Onima

In April, CCB volunteers found 4,306 pieces of marine litter at Boka Onima, including 2,376 pieces of plastic/polystyrene, 216 bottles, two covid tests and much more. Because the survey fell on Easter Sunday, they also found two eggs (left by the Easter Bunny!) Thanks to all of the participants for their hard work to make this beautiful boka clean and litter free!

Sadly, in addition to the litter, the volunteers also came across a dead sea turtle. Although marine litter has been shown to be a significant hazard to marine life, it has not been confirmed that marine litter was the cause of death for this particular juvenile sea turtle.



### Sea Turtles & Marine Litter

Sea turtles are at significant risk of ingesting plastic debris at all stages of their lifecycle with potentially lethal consequences. Globally, it is estimated that approximately 52% of all sea turtles have ingested plastic debris. A 2018 study linked plastic ingestion to sea turtle mortality. It found a 50% probability of mortality once an animal had 14 pieces of plastic in its gut. These results provide the critical link between recent estimates of plastic ingestion and the population effects of this environmental threat.

Why do sea turtles eat plastic? Plastic bags look very similar to jellyfish, fishing nets often look like tasty seaweed.

*CCB May 2023 Newsletter*

## A Garden? Just Do It!

by Angliet, Nature Lover

### Hay Fever



**Lemongrass with Mexican mint**

Last week I had a visit from Julie Morgan the owner and publisher of *The Reporter*. She had a bad sore throat, was

hoarse feeling weak, tired and more.

She is not the only one. These days there are a lot of people with these symptoms. The question is; is it a cold or is it hay fever? Both have the same symptoms so how do you know what is what?

I did some research and tried to put together how to recognize what you are dealing with.

I will write about hay fever since it’s the time of year that it goes around. Hay fever occurs the first months of the year when plants, trees and grass start to bloom but the same phenomenon happens later in the year too.

Hay fever

- frequent sneezing
- runny or congested nose
- itchy, red or watery eyes (allergic conjunctivitis)

• an itchy sore throat, mouth, nose and ears

- cough, caused by postnasal drip
- swollen, bruised-appearing skin under the eyes

- strange, extreme tiredness and poor sleep.

- headache

Hay fever is caused by an allergic response to a harmless outdoor or indoor

substance the body identifies as harmful allergen.

Allergens that can trigger hay fever symptoms include pollen, dust mites and dust of which we have a high concentration on Bonaire from the strong wind these days. So don’t clean the yard when grass is blooming. Cut grass and trim trees when there are no blossoms or pollen in the air; this will prevent hay fever.

Hay fever triggers are: tree pollen, grass and ragweed pollen early in the year; dust mites, cockroach, dander from pets (especially in houses that are closed up), spores from fungi and molds.

Hay fever usually attacks early in the morning. Problems that may go along with hay fever: reduced quality of life; poor sleep; worsening asthma; sinusitis and ear infection.

**There are certain plants that help against a bad throat.**

The bark of the cashew tree and guayaba tree will help. Make a tea and rinse the throat every two hours. Sage is a perfect herb to clean the throat and get rid of the pain. Rinse the throat and spit out every two hours.

Lemongrass is good against fever. Tam-

arind, local cherries, lemon-ginger tea, fresh fruits like local mango, morenga tea and in soup and Mexican mint. All are good to make the body strong and fight weak tired feelings. Tea made of Soursop leaves is good to sleep. Passion fruit leaves in a tea calms the body. Cucumber and watermelon peel used as a skin mask gives the face a fresh look.

So, since you have this information about hay fever, you might know better if you have hay fever or a cold. Protect yourself according to your problem. Take care.

Just do it.



*Angliet grew up in the Surinam jungle, moved to the Netherlands as a teen, where she trained as a teacher, then in Alternative Healing. She has traveled the world - north to Russia and Alaska, south to Tierra del Fuego and Africa and all points in between. Returning to the Caribbean with her young family, she taught in St Eustatius and Bonaire. Everywhere she has lived, she has planted a garden and grown her own food.*



# What's Happening

**Animal Shelter:** Mon-Fri 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; 2-3:30 p.m. Sat. 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. phone/whatsapp: 701 4989 or 717 4989. Email: [animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com](mailto:animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com)

**Arts & Crafts Market in Wilhelmina Plaza.** Weekly schedule can be found at: <https://www.bonaireartsandcraftscruisemarket.com/market-schedule> or <https://www.facebook.com/BonaireArtsandCraftsCruiseMarket/>

**Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei in Rincon:** Tuesday - Friday -10 - 4

**Library:** Mon. 12-5; Tues. to Thurs. 8-5; Fri. 8-4:30; Sat. 8-12. Kaya Gramel 715 5344. Anyone can become a member. Free for residents between 0 and 18 years. Adults \$6 a year. Members can borrow ebooks online. [www.onlinebibliotheek.nl](http://www.onlinebibliotheek.nl)

**Pakus di Pruga (Animal Shelter flea market. Central Kralendijk):** CLOSED.

**Terramar Museum** Mon-Fri 9-2. Kaya J.N.E. Isla Riba 3. Admission \$10. Residents \$5. Tours \$20. Children under 12 free. +599 701 4700

<https://www.facebook.com/terrarmuseumbonaire/>

**STINAPA headquarters:** Mon-Fri 8-4. +599 717 8444. +599 777 8444.

**Washington Slagbaai Park:** Closed on Mondays Apr. 3 - Nov. 27. Otherwise open daily. 8-5 (entry up to 1 p.m.)

<b>April 28 - June 17</b>	<b>Terramar Museum Exhibition In Honor of the Ocean</b> Opening April 28, 5 - 8 p.m. See this issue.
Saturday, May <b>13</b>	<b>The Big Live Nature Quiz Family &amp; Friends Edition:</b> 6-7 p.m. for people in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten. The online quiz is in English, with Dutch, Papiamentu and Papiamento subtitles. <a href="https://dcnanature.org/quiz/">https://dcnanature.org/quiz/</a> See page 8.
Sunday, May <b>14</b>	<b>Mother's Day</b>  <b>Global Big Day</b> Join other bird lovers and count the birds around you. An annual world wide celebration and challenge <a href="https://www.facebook.com/globalbirdweekend/#">https://www.facebook.com/globalbirdweekend/#</a> . <a href="https://ebird.org/globalbigday">https://ebird.org/globalbigday</a>
Monday, May <b>15</b>	<b>Personal Income Tax deadline May 15. Contrary to what has been previously communicated, you will automatically receive an extension until July 17th, 2023.</b>
Monday, May <b>18</b>	<b>Ascension Day</b> A public holiday. Much is closed.
<b>May 25 - June 8</b>	<b>Bonaire Culinaire.</b> Use this 15-day event to discover the wide variety of restaurants Bonaire has to offer. Bonaire's culinary hotspots have created a 3-course menu for only \$39.50 per person. <a href="https://bonaire-culinaire.com">https://bonaire-culinaire.com</a>
Saturday, May <b>27</b>	<b>Nos Zjilea Cultural Event</b> 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei, Rincon. Enjoy the music, dancing, crafts, amazing food and drink.  <b>Barrio Festival Tera Kòrá</b> - 6 - 10 p.m. Tourists can get acquainted with Bonaireans, the island's culture and its products.
Sunday, May <b>28</b>	<b>Classical concert.</b> 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Hofi Cultural, Kaya Skandelchi, <a href="https://classicalmusicbonaire.com">https://classicalmusicbonaire.com</a>
Sunday, June <b>4</b>	<b>Guardian Group Walk &amp; Run Bonaire.</b> Starts at 6:30 a.m. at Bachelor's Beach. Ends at Frans Paradise, Sorobon (8km). \$10 per person. Proceeds to charity. Online registration required. <a href="https://walkrun.wufoo.com/forms/my-guardian-group-walk-run-bonaire-2023/">https://walkrun.wufoo.com/forms/my-guardian-group-walk-run-bonaire-2023/</a>

## Coming Up

# JUNE WELLNESS FESTIVAL

Bonaire Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB) is organizing the first Annual Yoga & Wellness Festival for June 19 - 25, 2023 in partnership with Bindu Yoga and Bonaire's wellness sector.

The week long festival will include two yoga retreats focusing on gentle healing and positivity run by the renowned Ashtanga yoga teacher and influencer, Laruga Glaser, in tandem with local yoga teachers. Restaurants and hotels have signed up as participating partners and will offer a special deals. Featured island treatment programs include healing, rejuvenating, relaxation, and exploration. On the last day, a Yoga Festival with music and food will offer visitors wellness activities such as yoga, meditation, and fitness workshops. See page 14.

## International Flights to Bonaire

<b>Amsterdam (AMS)</b>	<b>KLM</b> Daily flights connecting through Aruba <b>TUI</b> Daily
<b>Atlanta (ATL)</b>	<b>Delta</b> has a weekly Sat. flight.
<b>Miami (MIA)</b>	<b>American Airlines.</b> Three weekly flights on Mon. Wed. and Sat.
<b>New York (EWR) &amp; Houston (IAH)</b>	<b>United.</b> A weekly Sat. flight from both Newark, New Jersey, and Houston, Texas. Return flight on Sunday.
See <i>The Reporter's</i> online update pages for TCB's chart of flights to Bonaire.	

# Events, Meetings, Sports

**12 steps meeting:** 12 Step Meeting, Wednesdays at Kaya Den Haag 30 in Hato. Meeting starts at 7:15 p.m till 8:30 p.m. Info: [12stepsbonaire@gmail.com](mailto:12stepsbonaire@gmail.com)

**Alcoholics Anonymous open meeting** Every Thursday, 7 - 8 p.m. International Bible Church Kaya Papago 104 in Hato (Behind Bon Bida Spa and Gym and Bon Bida apartments). All welcome, regardless of primary addiction or no addiction at all.

**Beach Tennis Bonaire** Kaminda Djabou (behind Budget Marine). Open daily until 10 p.m. People can play for free or register for training and tournaments for a fee. Wednesday evenings Apr. 19 - June 14 The Stoked Men and Women Doubles League.

**Bridgeclub Bonaire** organizes a bridge evening Wednesdays 7:30 - 10:30 p.m. All playing levels are welcome. Info: 795-0128 (only whatsapp text messages), [bridgeclubbonaire@gmail.com](mailto:bridgeclubbonaire@gmail.com). <https://www.facebook.com/bridgeclubbonaire>

**Cyclovia Kids Street Park** Wilhelminaplein 4 - 7 p.m. Free monthly event. Children of all ages can bike, scooter, skate or skateboard. Expect a bouncy castle, music and a hot dog cart. First Sunday of the month: May 7, June 4, July 2, Aug. 6, Sept. 3, Oct. 1, Nov. 5

**Pickleball.** Wednesdays & Fridays 6 - 8 p.m. at Jong Bonaire. Come join the fun and see what it is all about. A sport for all ages.



**Echo Conservation Tours** - Weekdays at 8 a.m. or 5 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. To reserve email at [info@echobonaire.org](mailto:info@echobonaire.org)



**Manta Monday** - Nicole Pelletier of the Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation Program. Presentations **BREAK- BACK AGAIN FOR** May 22 at Divi (8 p.m.); May 29 at VIP (7:30 p.m.) Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation Program facebook email: [Caribbean.Islands@mantatrust.org](mailto:Caribbean.Islands@mantatrust.org)



**Reef Renewal Bonaire.** Sundays 5:30 p.m. Blennies Restaurant - Buddy Dive Resort. Free. Open to everyone. Want to learn about coral reef restoration on Bonaire? Come listen to a staff member, instructor, or volunteer give an informative presentation about Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire and the importance of restoring and protecting Bonaire's coral reefs! Questions? email: [info@reefrenewalbonaire.org](mailto:info@reefrenewalbonaire.org)



**Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB).** Free public presentations at Yellow Submarine, every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month, at 8 p.m. See facebook.

## Coming Up

**Second Annual Bonaire Rum Week,** June 12 - 17. Tastings, parties, bartending, competitions, dinners & cigars. For more information visit <https://www.bonaierumweek.com>. For questions, [contact\\_rum@caribjournal.com](mailto:contact_rum@caribjournal.com)

**First Annual Yoga & Wellness Week** June 19 to 25.

**Pride Bonaire.** June 22 - 25. Sponsors and volunteers welcomed. <https://www.facebook.com/EQBonaire/>

## You can help keep Bonaire clean

Saturdays	<b>One Hour Clean up Power.</b> Weekly coastal clean up every Saturday, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Location given on FB page: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/OneHourCleanUpPower/">https://www.facebook.com/OneHourCleanUpPower/</a>
Sunday, May <b>14</b>	<b>Clean Coast Bonaire.</b> 4-6 p.m. Piedra Pretu. Donate your time. Work as a citizen scientist to collect marine litter & data. <a href="https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=clean%20coast%20bonaire">https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=clean%20coast%20bonaire</a>

## Tentative cruise ship schedule

DATE:	CRUISE SHIP	TIME	PIER	CAPACITY
Wed. May. 10	CELEBRITY EQUINOX	0730-1600	South	2852
Wed. May. 24	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION (LAUNCHING 2022)	0800-2200	South	5282
Wed. May. 31	CARNIVAL HORIZON	0700-1500	South	4683
Thurs. June 1	CELEBRITY EQUINOX	0730-1600	South	2852
Wed. June 21	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION (LAUNCHING 2022)	0800-2200	South	5282
Wed. June 28	CARNIVAL HORIZON	0700-1500	South	4683
Thurs. June 29	CELEBRITY EQUINOX	0730-1600	South	2852
Mon. July 17	DISNEY FANTASY	0630-1500	South	4000



# STINAPA holds update on SCTLD

STINAPA Bonaire's April 28 update meeting regarding Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) received the full attention from the dive and watersports community with the announcement of 10 northern dive sites closing and no diving in Washington Slagbaai National Park (WSNP).

STINAPA biologist Roxanne-Liana Francisca provided background of SCTLD and the seriousness of the problem.

SCTLD is one of 25 coral diseases with causes unknown that have infected Caribbean corals. Until SCTLD, white band disease made the largest impact destroying 90-98% of staghorn and elkhorn coral across the Caribbean. Where white band affects only two coral species, SCTLD can attack 20.

A test for SCTLD has not been found therefore a diagnosis is never 100%. Only one symptom is reported – they turn white and then die. The disease is most likely a bacteria that progresses very quickly, advancing by 3-4 cm per day with a potential for devastation.

Francisca said, "White patches appear and move really fast. Other diseases take months or years, but SCTLD can kill coral colonies in days or weeks. Treatment with antibiotics can kill it but that doesn't mean it won't spread throughout an entire colony."

The disease was first spotted in 2014 at the Port of Miami and moved to Jamaica, Trinidad/Tobago, Haiti, Cuba and other Caribbean islands. Florida has received 60% loss with a reported 400 miles of coral reef affected. Currently St Maartin reports a 90% loss, Curaçao and Bonaire corals are infected but not Aruba.

In 2022, STINAPA discovered a disease affecting pillar coral but as to whether it was SCTLD was never



Photo Julie Morgan

confirmed. In February similar symptoms were noticed on Maze coral on Calabas reef.

"We are not blaming anyone and most likely we will never know, but it doesn't matter, it is here, and we are trying to combat it. It's our job to try to control it," said Francisca "One week we find 48 infected corals and the next week there are 60 corals. But 87% of the reef is still healthy. We should all take this very seriously."

STINAPA has reacted in phases: Phase 1 was to alert and inform; Phase 2 is present guidelines and monitoring and Phase 3 is active intervention.

The disease has spread over 2.5 km with very little mortality. Francisca suggests it could be that overall Bonaire has healthier corals than other islands with an average of 40% coral cover while other islands have only 18%.

Francisca noted that higher temperatures slow the spread of the disease. Whether or not small fish pecking the coral could spread the disease is unknown. But it is clear the disease accumulates on neoprene wetsuits and other gear. Divers and snorkelers must therefore follow disinfection protocols.

Francisca explained that the disease is already in the

water column. Currents move the water and where the currents meet it pushes the water out and much of the polluted water is going north. (see map)

This is why the northern dive sites on the west coast were closed May 1: Carel's Vision, Taylor Made, Candyland, Nukove, Wayaka, Slagbaai, Bisé Morto, Playa Funchi, Playa Benge and Boka Bartol. Moorings on these sites have been removed to prevent boats mooring. Swimming and snorkeling are allowed.

A marine park boat is stationed at Karpata to monitor possible illegal diving. Any vehicles entering WSNP will be checked for dive gear. If the gear is found it will be removed and kept at the entrance to pick up later.

In hopes of curtailing SCTLD on Klein Bonaire, it was announced that beginning May 15, Klein would be closed to all boats after 2 p.m. This is to prevent infection from other Bonaire sites visited earlier in the day.

After these initial announcements, meeting participants voiced their concerns regarding scheduling times for boats, loss of client bookings and income and the additional cost of providing decontaminating tanks for their clients' gear.

Ernest de Lanoy, president of Piskabon, spoke to the crowd saying, "I'm afraid my grandchildren won't be able to enjoy the coral. Few people here have offered support to STINAPA. Most are only concerned about their own business. I can imagine if it [the coral] dies they will pack up their business and go to a different island. If we don't all work together, then my first concern will come true."

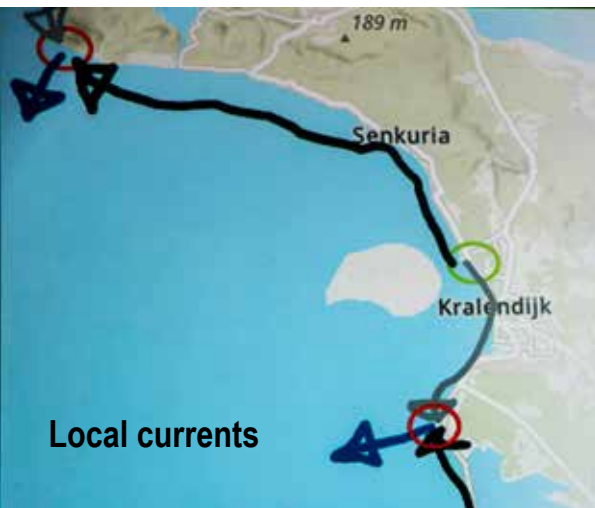
Since the April 28 meeting, SCTLD has been identified on Klein Bonaire at dive sites Jerry's Reef, Just a Nice Dive and Buddy's Reef. STINAPA is continuing to monitor other Klein Bonaire sites and will provide updates regarding their plan as to whether a 2 p.m. closure will be in effect beginning May 15.

Francisca said, "Decisions are based on limited data, but it's the best data available from other island's experiences. Bonaire reefs are very resilient. Our reefs are a lot healthier than other islands and we might be better able to fight all the disease. But if we do nothing, then we will lose our coral."

STINAPA is holding monthly updates to keep everyone informed. But everyone must do their part. Disinfect your gear and follow the rinse protocol outlined at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laVvK0FgF5A>

A weekly updated map of the spread of the disease visit <https://www.agrra.org/coral-disease-outbreak/>

Julie Morgan



Local currents



If you are quick, there's help to fill in your online income tax. Once again this year, the BelastingdienstCN, in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce (KVK), offered help with completing your online tax return. The last session is Thursday, the 11th of May from 6:30 - 9 p.m. at the Chamber of Commerce. Do you want to participate? Register quickly via [register@kvkbonaire.com](mailto:register@kvkbonaire.com).

## LOBSTER SEASON IS CLOSED

STINAPA Bonaire wants to inform the public that from May 1st to October 31st it is prohibited by law to catch lobster in the waters around Bonaire, Klein Bonaire and in Lac. Venezuela also has prohibited the catching of lobster during the same period. Do not catch, buy, serve, sell or eat fresh lobster from May 1st to October 31st.

When lobster season opens again on November 1st, lobster may be taken only between Willemstoren and Malmok, on the east coast. Lobster that is taken during this period must be larger than 12 cm if you mea-

sure from between the eyes to the beginning of the tail, meaning that you do not measure the tail.

Spiny lobsters breed and spawn when the ocean is warm during the summer and female lobsters may produce hundreds of thousands of eggs twice during the reproductive season. She lays the eggs and holds them under her tail for up to ten weeks, until they are ready to hatch. It is strictly prohibited to take lobster during this time.



ARTICLE 11 ISLAND RESOLUTION  
UNDERWATER PARK AB 2010 # 14

## Attention Readers:

**Climate policy must go hand in hand with combating poverty,**  
a new report by Ed Nijpels of the Climate Table Bonaire  
A summary can be found in our online UPDATE pages.

**"Bonaire is vulnerable to climate change. In his advice, Nijpels warns that climate policy on the island threatens to become 'secondary' if poverty policy is not forthcoming. To prevent "administrative congestion" from the Netherlands, he also advocates a task force of twelve officials from provinces, municipalities and water boards."**



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# Shelter News



Pakus di Pruga now has to vacate its current location, and we are still desperately looking for a new home. Can you help us? See page 9.

## Pets of the Week



Johnny

### Johnny

People say puppies are the cutest, but wait till you see these beautiful faces. Let's start by introducing the gentleman of the group, Johnny. Johnny is 12 and came in with his best friend and brother Jimmy, who unfortunately passed away of natural causes at the age of 11. Johnny is such a gentle soul and with his age also comes manners. He is a smaller sized dog, but the size of his heart is big enough! All Johnny needs is a loving home with lots of cuddles.



Tante Truus (L) and Tante Thea (R)

### Tante Truus and Tante Thea

Then we have our gorgeous duo Tante Truus and Tante Thea. These golden girls came in together after living their entire 10 years of life with their owner, who unfortunately had to give them up. And like the golden girls, they are caring and just in need of love. The ladies won't take up a lot of space in the house, but they will take a lot of space in your heart! So, who says you need to be young to look this cute! Come meet one of these "oldies" and, who knows, your heart might be stolen!

### Izzy

Izzy is the youngest of the group at two years old, but she has an older soul. Izzy is a very loving girl and is very gentle. She still likes to play here and there, but there is nothing that she loves more than cuddles and kisses! She is also a smaller sized dog and does really well with other dogs.

*Story Nicole van Egmond  
Photos Femke Meester*



Izzy



### Meet Toby and Tess

They are brother and sister and were brought to the shelter six weeks ago.

They get along with other cats and and both are very sweet. Tess is a real lap cat and Toby wants to sit next to you so you can give him a belly rub.

We have one wish and that is that they can stay together because they have lived together all their lives.

So please come to the shelter and visit them. Once you've seen Toby and Tess they will be in your heart!

Toby and Tess have had all the vacci-

nations, been tested Negative on FIV and leukemia and will be chipped once you decided to take them home.

*Photo/story Monique Degenaar*

**If you would like to meet our cats and dogs, please come to Animal Shelter Bonaire, Kaminda Lagun 26A. Open Monday - Friday 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 2-3:30 p.m. Saturday 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. nonstop. You can also call 701-4989 or 717-4989 to make an appointment, via whatsapp, facebook messenger, or email [animalshelter-bonaire@gmail.com](mailto:animalshelter-bonaire@gmail.com)**

*If 'pakus' is 'shop' or 'market' in Papiamentu, what does 'pruga' mean?*  
**Please help the Shelter's flea market find a new home.**

See more on page 9.



# Artie and Ryan lunch with the royal family

“Why me?” Artie thought as he sat down that day in April to have lunch with King Willem-Alexander, Queen Maxima, and his mother, the former Queen Beatrix. “I don’t do this alone. There are other people who help.”

More than 9,000 people had been nominated to help the king celebrate his tenth anniversary as monarch at a festive luncheon in the Paleis Huis Ten Bosch in The Hague. All had distinguished themselves for their service to others, to their communities, or to the general good. That day 100 of them were seated in the dining room. Two were from Bonaire, Artie de Vries and Ryan Marta.

Artie spearheads cleaning up the beaches, and helps out at Pakus di Pruga, the long running Flea Market that Animal Shelter volunteers operate every Saturday. He is involved in the Regatta and sailing races. He also volunteers for the Paden Project at MiVaBo, building paths and ramps, placing bars in bathrooms, making the houses of the elderly safe, and repairing roofs of old Bonairean houses. In issue #23, 2022 of *The Bonaire Reporter* you



can read how he arranged for the navy to carry textbooks no longer needed on Bonaire to other islands that could use them in their schools.

As the guests enjoyed the three-course meal, the royal family moved from table to table to converse with the guests about their work. Each guest was given a number and went to shake hands with royalty when it was called. A palace photographer recorded

the event. No other cameras were allowed.

“Over the past ten years I have met many people who make fantastic efforts for others, for the neighborhood or the general interest,” the king said. “I would like to thank them all for their commitment to the Netherlands.” *DMR*

Pictured are lunch guests from the Dutch Caribbean, L-R: A guest from St. Maartin; Artie de Vries, Bonaire; Maya Mathias, Curaçao; Denice Bezemer-Hower, Curaçao and Ryan Marta, Bonaire. Ryan is involved with sports for Bonaire’s kids.



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