

FREE**BONAIRE**
The REPORTER**Jan. 31- Feb. 14, 2024 Year 31, Issue 3****Box 603, Bonaire, Caribbean Netherlands, Phone/WhatsApp (+599) 786-4055,
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Photo by Julie Morgan

The 'Roses' rides, walks and swims again

Over 673 adults and 40 kids set their alarm a little early on January 28 to support the fight for cancer by joining Bonaire's seventh edition of the Ride, Walk and Swim for the Roses. Showing up for the "Roses" has become a kind of unspoken duty or pledge for many island residents and frequent visitors. Everyone has been touched by cancer in some way and this fundraising initiative helps them contribute to the fight against the dreaded disease.

On race day participants gathered at Stadium Bonaire at 6:30 a.m. for an opening ceremony led by foundation president Jursi Marshall. Cancer Fund Bonaire's Sahira Antonia and main sponsor Orco Bank's Judy Diaz thanked everyone for being a part of this important fundraising event. Yoga instructor Lolymar Sanchez woke up the crowd with a short warmup prior to the 9 or 7 k walk at 7 a.m., 21 or 14 k bike at 7:15 a.m. and 700 m swim at 9 a.m.

As always, the Red Cross traveled the roads and volunteers manned water stations to keep walkers and bikers hydrated. But this year, instead of single use plastic water bottles, to help reduce plastic waste, participants received

a Roses water bottle to be filled by the volunteers.

Whether walking, biking or swimming, at the end of the course each participant received a traditional Ride for the Roses rose.

Underlining the importance of this fundraiser, Ride for the Roses treasurer Anne Marie Mercera re-

cently presented a symbolic check of \$37,000 from 2023 fundraising efforts to the Cancer Funds Foundation Bonaire.

Roses treasurer Mercera said, "We firmly believe that the Cancer Fund's awareness campaigns, among other projects will significantly contribute to the fight against cancer on Bonaire. Yet, we aspire

to do more because, when the disease strikes it impacts not only the patient but also their family and everyone in their circle."

In December Ride for the Roses Bonaire Foundation donated a check for approximately \$8000. to Kas Flamboyen Hospice Foundation. The check was earmarked for four anti-decubitus mattresses

which reduce pressure on a patient's body. About 75% of the terminal patients at Flamboyen Hospice have some form of cancer.

Antonia said, "We've observed a growing number of people affected by the disease on the island. We aim to offer additional support and hope that the community of Bonaire will demonstrate solidarity with cancer patients, their loved ones and relatives by actively participating in events organized by Ride for the Roses Bonaire."

Sponsors for the event: ORCO Bank, Best Brands Bonaire, Warehouse Bonaire, BIA, OMC, Ox & Wolf, Bonaire Logistics and Wholesaler, Extreme Bonaire, RentoFun, Caribe Watersport, Massive Pro, Van den Tweel, FWNB, Between 2 Buns, PCC, Delta Security, Indebon, Hitecs, MTech and Mac Enterprise,

For more information about Ride for the Roses Foundation visit <https://ridefortheroses.org> or on Facebook.

Julie Morgan story / photos

(Additional photos of Ride for the Roses will be available on The Reporter Facebook page)



Victorious swimmers get their rose Photo Julie Morgan

Potential BOPEC purchasers waiting for political decisions



Photo Julie Morgan

In his tenth bankruptcy report, Stan van Liere, the Bankruptcy Trustee for BOPEC, has announced that various parties have contacted him about the possibility of acquiring BOPEC. Van Liere says the petroleum transshipment facility is ready to be put on the market as a ready-to-go business operation. But the OLB must first make political decisions that would relieve some uncertainties in the minds of potential buyers.

Three major doubts especially need to be put to rest, according to Van Liere. The existing leasehold rights granted to BOPEC will expire only ten years from now 2034. And because of soil contamination from the past, a new leaseholder would potentially be exposed to a cleanup claim lodged by the site owner, the OLB itself. Van Liere's report also refers to an undisclosed but apparently troublesome "preferential right" granted to the OLB in the lease.

BOPEC's potential for resuming its role in the world petroleum market has already been demonstrated. Under the trustee's direction, a substantial part of the infrastructure has been repaired and Jetty 1 is now in working order. In March 2022 and again in May 2023, tankers left the terminal loaded with oil from storage tank #1933. The loadings were closely monitored and were completed in full accordance with the international conditions set by the ILT (the permit from BES) and the RWS (Rijkswaterstaat).

The BOPEC restoration has become a self-funding operation financed by the Trustee's disposal of company assets, including the court authorized sale of the two shiploads of oil. The company was broke when the Trustee took over. He requested a \$250,000 startup loan from the OLB, collected only half of it, and has since repaid that.

The Trustee says he "continues to draw the attention of the OLB to the fact that both parties have an interest in a quick (political) decision-making process and a speedy settlement of the bankruptcy of BOPEC." The OLB has not responded, he says, so he doesn't know how the new coalition views the BOPEC issue, but he "will continue the dialogue." *DMR*

Bonaire told Statia and Saba what to do but they didn't



The members of the Island and Executive Councils of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba gathered for a BES Summit on St. Maarten during January 16th to 18th. Their intention was to establish a consensus response to the upcoming renegotiations with the Hague of the WolBES and FinBES agreements. The summit ended with Statia and Saba agreeing with each other that they didn't agree with anything Bonaire had proposed.

The BES Islands (with Statia hanging back) committed to the initial WolBES and FinBES agreements when they joined the Netherlands as municipalities. Curaçao, Aruba, and St. Maarten, strapped for cash during the covid crisis, agreed reluctantly and clause-by-clause to similar agreements in exchange for financial support from The Hague.

The WolBES and FinBES agreements committed the governments of each island to implement practices of good governance and fiscal responsibility. Some among the political hierarchy on most islands opposed the agreements from the beginning, claiming that WolBES and FinBES violated their "autonomy." They had a vested interest in perpetuating bad government and fiscal irresponsibility.

In the meantime, Bonaire and Saba accepted the intentions of the WolBES and FinBES promises and, with dedication and hard work, began building a true political sovereignty for their islands based on honesty and competence. The goal of the upcoming WolBES and FinBES renegotiations will be to create a new, more independent relationship with The Hague that recognizes the progress the islands have made. A few politicians, however, apparently see the new negotiations as an opportunity to claw back some of their old prerogatives.

Daisy Coffie (M21) led the delegation sent by Bonaire's PDB coalition. The evening before the meetings began the two other delegations received a proposed draft of the agreement Bonaire apparently expected the conference to approve. The representatives of Statia and Saba brought their own visions to the Summit however. At the end of the conference Bonaire's proposals were marked up with so many red deletions and changes that the attendees had nothing meaningful to vote on. The other delegations reportedly were irritated by the Bonaire's bossy ways. Bonaire's post-summit press release lauded the progress made, though it did acknowledge difficult negotiations.

DMR / Photo press release

The REPORTER

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UNITY Dance Team Performance at Sand Dollar

Sporting bright red and silver uniforms and keeping in step to the drum beat of a marching band, the UNITY Majorette Dance Team marched onto the grounds of Sand Dollar Condominium Resort on Friday evening, January 19 to perform a fund-raising show that was hosted by Sand Dollar owners and guests.

The UNITY dance team is sponsored by the SGB School. It is composed of 38 children, ranging in age from 7-18 years old. It was formed on October 12, 2022. Cynthia Sno, a Dutch and Spanish teacher at the SCB School, is the founder and choreographer of the group. Cynthia explains that the purpose of UNITY is to bring joy and children together by teaching

respect, structure and discipline. It also intended to give children, especially young girls, something to do and keep them away from street influence.

The team practices every Wednesday for two hours where Cynthia teaches the children figures, dance and singing. The first part of the practice involves fitness training and then the majorette skills.

During the children's training, Cynthia explains to the children that "Patience and perseverance are the key to victory in life."

During the course of their performance, UNITY members would take spectators from the audience and make them a



part of their show. When the show was over UNITY members thanked everyone for their support and generosity.

Cynthia likes to give special credit to Francis Pieter, the Director of UNITY. The team considers Pieter to be the god-father of the program for all the support he has given to them.

Denice Boelen, who was known for her work on a school backpack program, was approached by the school asking if she could reach out to the resorts on the island to help raise money for UNITY. She immediately contacted her friends, Sand Dollar owners Howard and Kim Harrison, who arranged for the dance team to perform at Sand Dollar.

When asked how she became involved with UNITY Cynthia quickly explains, "The Lord has given me many talents and I have to use them."

The performance raised \$4000 to help UNITY purchase two more sets of uniforms and cover travel expenses so that the team could represent Bonaire in places like Curacao and Aruba. If you would like to support UNITY you can email Denice Boelen at clemensendenice@hotmail.com



Alan Zale spent 25 years shooting for The New York Times as both a freelance and temporary staff photographer. He is a contributing photographer to Catholic New York, the official paper for the Archdiocese of New York and The Scarsdale (NY) Inquirer. Alan is also the photographer for the Hartsdale (NY) Fire Department.

FOR SALE! Kaya Scorpio 8 Spacious Home with Apartment



- Location: Belnem, close to the ocean
- Lot size: 858 m2 / 9235 sq. ft.
- 4 bedrooms / 2 bathrooms / laundry room

- 1 bedroom / 1 bathroom apartment
- Tropical garden, large green house

Virtual 3D tour



Asking price \$579,000 US Dollar

Kaya Grandi 24-A Bonaire, Dutch Caribbean Tel. +599-717-7362
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f <http://www.facebook.com/REMAXBonaire>



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.

Government harassment

Date: Thurs, Jan 18, 2024 at 11:22 AM

OBJECTION to Errant Billing for a previously declared Non Monument building

To All It concerns:

I am in receipt today of a bill signed by Christopher Frans, the Island Secretary who is also (likely illegally and subject to a prior complaint for impropriety) a Criminal Justice alleging that I am owing \$14,000 for a monument building that has previously been noted as not being a monument by the T&H which is the letter head of this bill.

Be advised that I hereby object to the billing but I report that this is pure harassment on the part of Mr. Frans and the OLB for registering the impropriety of his maintaining both roles of Island Secretary and Judge.

I have previously forwarded responses to the Ombudsman and T&H regarding T&H's own admission that the building is not a monument. The Ombudsman and the Attorney General has been advised of the complaint regarding Mr. Frans maintaining both jobs simultaneously.

Please be advised that this is blatant harassment and in a just world, I should receive treble the amount being sought in damages (\$42,000.00). Instead, I ask that Mr. Frans be removed from all government functions, not just one role, as he clearly is not suitable to serve in a proper and just manner.

Sincerely, Charles M. Baltayan

Date: Fri, Jan 19, 2024 at 11:10 AM

Supplemental Objection:

1. NO permit is required to replace a roof and I have requested guidance prior from T&H to that effect and none has been forthcoming notwithstanding the demands for obtaining a permit. The house was originally built in the 1850's and then added on three different times and with each new addition, the roof was modified and was never properly made. I asked about prior permits for the additions, but no response again. Clearly no permits or records of them exist. The original floors are wood and the concrete slabs that you deem are floors are a necessary part of the ring which secures the roof. The inner thick coral walls of the original house could have supported a ring and have supports now for the new roof but the outer walls, if adapted to properly support the roof, would have changed the nature of the house and that was unacceptable to me. The roof is solid and secure and the house looks better than it did and more like a monument should, even though

having met with the monument commission it was determined because of the errant additions, it was not deemed a monument. None of the lists supplied list my house as a monument, because it is not one!

There are no rules/requirements for taking a permit out when replacing a roof and not changing the footprint of the house. Again, clear harassment and nothing else.

Counter Claim:

Perspective: OLB is corrupt. This is evidenced by: Sunset Beach; the Kaya Amsterdam roundabout; Chocogo and Ocean Oasis beach issues and my personal experiences not including the noted above harassment.

Counterclaim 1:

Approximately 10 years ago I applied for a strip of land directly behind my house which I wished to landscape to alleviate the potential for flooding. Looking at a plot plan, any sane, thinking person would agree that the land should attach to mine. However the greedy landowners (16B) next door paid off a no longer employed OLB worker and received rights to the land. They proceeded, over my objections to be allowed to raise the grade of the land to cause damaging flooding that I was seeking to prevent.

Counterclaim 2:

Approximately two years ago, the greedy landowners next door took possession of a strip of land that cut off my only and longstanding access to my rear yard, without me ever being consulted about the land transfer. The landowners lied to the police and claimed I was consulted, I filed a complaint but nothing was properly settled. Again, any sane thinking person, especially one savvy in land use would 1: consulted the adjacent landowner; 2. Would see that access should never have been denied; 3. see that the land properly goes with my property.

Damages sought: The two strips of land need to revert to my property to alleviate the flooding and to allow proper access and the parties responsible for the deceit and unlawful transfer need to be punished.

Resolutely, Charles M. Baltayan

Hospital mismanagement

Hospitals are notorious for mismanagement of their facilities and their daily operation. Maybe it is time to replace some management personnel and some serving on the Board of Directors.

Masha Danki, Earline Wasser



LVV is encouraging Bonaireans to grow pitaya, known as Dragon Fruit in English. LVV has started 800 plants.

Pitaya is a popular but expensive fruit that thrives in dry climates.



Fruit photo via melissa.com

Ask Bob

Bonaire real estate advice



When I look at real estate listings the listing shows the listing price and then say "Buyers Cost" or "Kost de Koper" or "k.k." What does this mean?

Pam in Tampa

That's a good question. All of the above mean that the buyer pays all of the costs associated with transferring the deed into the buyer's name. These costs usually add up to about 7% of the purchase price. If you purchase a house for \$300,000 you will pay \$300,000 for the house, plus about \$21,000 in buyer's costs. Although the exact amounts differ, buyer's costs consist of the following items:

- **Government transfer tax** – this is 5% of the purchase price of the house minus the value of any furniture that you purchased
- **Notaris Fees** – This is the cost of the legal fees charged by the Notaris office. These services include checking the title, removing any old liens or mortgages
- **Kedaster Fees** – This is the fee charged by the Kedaster office to register the deed
- **Property tax** – When you buy a property, the cost of the property taxes and lease land fee (if any) is pro-rated between the buyer and seller based on the purchase date.
- **Mortgage deed** – If you get a mortgage to purchase your property there is normally an additional fee from the Notaris to make the mortgage deed.

So when you are making your budget to purchase a property, don't forget about the buyer's costs.

Bob Bartikoski, Re/Max Bonaire Broker/Owner

If you are looking to buy or sell a home on Bonaire, or if you have a real estate question for Bob, email him at info@bonairehomes.com.

Bonaire: +599-717-7362.

Toll free from US: 1-866-611-7362

Dengue has shown up



The Public Health department reports that six confirmed cases of dengue have been diagnosed on Bonaire since the beginning of this year.

There is no outbreak yet, but people should take measures to prevent the infection's spread. Any area or containers where stagnant water collects should be cleaned up. People should avoid mosquito bites by wearing protective clothing and a repellent that contains DEET, especially in the evening and at night. *DMR*

The Bonaire Reporter Jan 31 - Feb 14, 2024

POLICE REPORT

Property crime

Jan. 26/27. Between 2 p.m. Friday and 7:40 a.m. Saturday, unknown persons cut the wires and took two tail-lights from a rented Nissan Frontier pick-up, parked on Kaya Dialma.

Arrests

Jan. 27. Around 5:30 p.m. the central control room received a report of an assault with a weapon at the Kaya Pos di Amor. A man stated that he had a conflict with his neighbors that had escalated and he was beaten by two men. The man had significant abrasions on his back from an object and was checked by ambulance staff on the spot. The other party stated that the victim punched him in the face with the flat of his hand, then the fight broke out. After officers heard the story from both parties, everyone involved was arrested. A little later on the same day, around 6:30 p.m. a woman came to the counter at the police station and stated that she was also involved in the fight. She was arrested for assault, assault with a weapon and public violence.

Jan. 27. Around 1:50 a.m. a man, 55, was arrested for threats of death and destruction at a kunuku in the Paradise area. The suspect had threatened a woman with death and destroyed the mirror of a car.

Jan. 26. Around 11 a.m. a man, 34, was arrested in Santa Clara for assault. After an altercation on the south pier the suspect slapped a man in the face.

Jan. 25. Around 9:45 a.m., a man, 42, was arrested for threats and public violence connected with a fight between two women that took place on January 21, near a bar on Kaya Korona. The suspect allegedly assaulted and threatened one of the women.

Jan. 22. Around 3:50 p.m. the central control room received a report of a fight between a group of boys at a park on Kaminda Lagun. Upon the arrival of the patrol, a group of people were observed under a tree on Kaya Rebecca. At first no one wanted to explain anything about the fight to the police. After some investigation, the officers saw a man covered in blood who had a T-shirt tied to his left hand to temporarily stop the bleeding. The victim and a witness told police what had happened. The patrols then started looking for two suspects and found them in the yard of a house on Kaya Papa Cornes. A man, 23, was arrested for vandalism and assault with a weapon and a man, 28, was arrested for assault with a weapon.

Jan. 22. An underage girl, 15, was arrested at Kaya Frater Odulfinus for violating the BES Opium Act. She was caught with suspected narcotics that were seized. In connection with this case, a search took place at Kamin-da Nieuw Amsterdam on Jan. 23. Nothing special was found. Investigation into this case is ongoing.

Jan. 17. A home on Kaya Avelino J. (Abechi) Cecilia in Nikiboko was searched in the context of a theft case. During the search, a man, 52, was arrested for theft. Nothing unusual was found and investigation is ongoing.

Driving under the influence

Jan. 29. Around 2:15 a.m. the central control room received a report of a collision in the center area where a fight was taking place between a group of people. When the patrol arrived, they saw a car and three motorcycles standing on the roadside, a man with a bloody face and a group of men arguing. The man with a bloody face smelled of alcohol. He stated that he caused the accident but that he was then taken from his vehicle and beaten. Because the driver, aged 30, was injured and had to be taken to hospital by ambulance, he was later arrested at Kaya Soeur Bartola at around 3:50 a.m. for driving under the influence of alcohol and his driver's license has also been confiscated. After an investigation, a man, 38, was arrested in the center area for assault and open violence. He had a bag in which a knife was found that was confiscated.

Jan. 22. A man, 68, was arrested for driving under the

influence of alcohol. He was involved in a two car collision on Kaya Rofina. His driver's license was confiscated.

Traffic accidents

Jan. 23. Around 11:50 a.m. two vehicles collided on Kaminda Gurubu. Car 1 collided with car 2, which was driving in front of it. The fire brigade was initially called in because it was thought that an occupant was trapped, but that turned out not to be the case. The driver and passenger of car 2 were injured and taken by ambulance to hospital. The road was temporarily closed by the police so that the services could carry out their work.

Jan. 21. Around 7:20 p.m. a scooter collided with a car. The driver of the car stated that she was turning from Kaya Irene onto Gobernador N. Debroet Boulevard towards Kaya Grandi when she saw a light in the distance coming from Kaya Grandi. Suddenly she heard a loud bang on the left side of her vehicle. The driver of the scooter was injured and taken by ambulance to hospital. The victim's situation is stable. A breath test was taken from the driver of the car and the result was negative. The road was temporarily closed by the police. Because oil had spilled onto the road, R&O management was notified to come to the scene to throw sand over it.

Jan. 18. Around 6:10 p.m. the driver of a motorbike without a helmet was spotted on Kaya Kamari. He increased his speed when the police signaled to stop with lights and a siren. The motorbike driver overtook two vehicles at the same time on the left side of the road, while oncoming traffic was approaching. He then stopped at Kaya Monseigneur Nieuwindt. He was fined for being unable to produce a valid driver's license and valid insurance. The motorbike was seized and taken to the police station.

Jan. 17. Around 12 noon, a pick-up and a cyclist collided on Kaya Nikiboko South. As the driver of the pick-up passed two cyclists, he saw in the mirror that the cyclist fell to the ground. The cyclist stated that when the pickup hit the handlebars of her bicycle, she fell to the ground and suffered minor injuries. The cyclist was treated on the spot by ambulance personnel.

Traffic checks

Jan. 22. In the morning a planned traffic control was held on Kaya Nikiboko North. Police checked 11 vehicles and 4 drivers were fined for driving without: 1x a seat belt on; 2x valid insurance; 1x a valid driver's license.

Between Jan. 15 and 29 tickets were issued during routine traffic checks for driving/riding without: 7x a valid driver's license; 8x a helmet; 7x valid insurance; 7x a seat belt on; 2x a license plate. Tickets were also issued for 6x for holding a phone while driving; 3x for driving in a prohibited direction; 1x for driving with defective front and rear lights.

The fines for the above violations varies between \$30 and \$225.

Public order

Jan. 29. Around 12 noon, the central control room received a report about a snorkeler who had gotten into trouble at the Aquarius diving site, located on the Bulvar E.E.G. The ambulance staff immediately started resuscitation, but in vain; the man died on the spot. The cruise ship tourist with initials J.M.B. was born on February 25, 1952, in the United States.

Jan. 27. Around 10 p.m. on Kaya International the driver of a 'raptor' he drove past a patrol during a 'wheelie.' The patrol chased after the driver and commanded him to stop. The driver turned off the lights of the 'raptor', and overtook several vehicles while the patrol continued to follow the driver at a distance. The patrol lost sight of the 'raptor' but after a search, it was found behind a house on Kaya Karanjito. The driver was no longer present. The 'raptor' was seized and taken to the police station.

Jan. 23. Around 6:30 p.m. two motorcycle riders were spotted on Miguel A. Pourier Boulevard. The first driver's face was completely covered with a T-shirt and only his eyes were visible. The second driver was recognized by the patrol. A little later, the patrol spotted the second driver at a home on Miguel A. Pourier Boulevard. When the driver was approached by an officer, he started to drive away. When stopped, he was unable to show a valid driver's license, valid insurance and identification. As another patrol arrived, he threw his backpack on the porch of the house and stood further away, running away when the officers found an air pistol in his bag. The patrol went after him but without result. The backpack containing the firearm and the motorcycle were seized.

Jan. 23. A man was bitten by a dog while riding his scooter on Kaya Sabana. Another resident in the same area reported that the same dog that entered his yard and bit his dog. The dog was put to sleep by a veterinarian for the safety of local residents.

Jan. 22. Around 9 p.m. police were asked to send a patrol to Kaya Caiquetio to assist ambulance personnel who were resuscitating a victim lying in a public road. A little later, the ambulance personnel stopped performing CPR and the body was taken to the mortuary. The medical examiner determined the death was natural death. The man, 62, with initials A.A.A. born on February 9, 1961 on Bonaire.

Jan. 21. Around 5:15 p.m. a strong smell of gas in a restaurant on Kaya Sonmontuno was reported to the police. When the patrol arrived, everyone was sent outside. The fire brigade found a leak in the main pipe. The line and kitchen were closed until the pipe has been repaired, and checked by the fire brigade. The restaurant was allowed to continue selling drinks.

Jan. 16. In the afternoon police received a report about a group of young people who were probably using drugs in a car behind the Executive Council building. The patrol spotted the car with five occupants on Kaya C.E.B Hellmund. As the patrol drove behind the car, the officers could detect a strong odor of suspected narcotics. The driver increased his speed when commanded to stop by flashing lights and a siren. The patrol managed to stop the car on Kaya Sabana. When officers checked the occupants under the BES Opium Act, nothing unusual was found. As the driver did not want to cooperate with the check, officers were forced to use appropriate force to take his black belt bag. During a search of the driver's waist bag, two drug processing items (grinder), clear plastic bags, a can, all containing suspected narcotics, and a scale were found and confiscated. The driver, an adult man, was fined for violating the BES Opium Act. The occupants, four 14-year-old boys who were probably under the influence of drugs, were taken to the police station. The minors were sternly questioned by the police in the presence of their parents about their behavior and the consequences.

Fire

Jan. 25. Around 2:20 a.m. service car of the Dutch Caribbean Police Force was reported on fire on Kaya Mandolin. The fire brigade extinguished the fire. No one was injured.

Jan. 21. Around 8:30 p.m. a house fire was reported in the Kibrahacha district. When the patrol arrived, they saw a cloud of smoke coming from the house. The residents were all outside the home and the neighbors were evacuated. The fire brigade arrived on site and did their work and extinguished the fire. The fire was caused by a fan in one of the rooms. The residents of the house were checked on site by ambulance personnel. No one was injured, but there was material damage to the home. The Fire Department has provided temporary shelter for the residents.

Any heavyweights want to be governor?

After an assiduous ten month search for a replacement for Edison Rijna as governor, the island council recently nominated two candidates. Both have since withdrawn their applications, so the recruitment process has to start over from scratch.

Neither candidate announced their reasons for resigning, but the public perception is that the governorship lost its appeal when the executive council headed by PDB leader Clark Abraham took over in October. Ac-

cording to one source, Abraham's "ambitious agenda" is predicted to create disruptive confrontations with politicians in The Hague.

The Island Council will now draw up a new profile, publish the vacancy, and start interviewing new applicants. According to State Secretary Van Huffelen, a "heavyweight" is being sought for the job. In the meantime, acting governor Nolly Oleana will reluctantly continue to fill the position. *DMR*



The public park between Chogogo and Den Laman will be called 'Isidel Beach Park Bonaire.' The name commemorates the loss of the ship *Isidel*, which disappeared with seven people on board in July 1978 during a regular voyage from Curaçao to Bonaire. The search continued for weeks, but the ship and its passengers were never found.

Diving open and coral to be treated

All dive sites, except for Washington Slagbaai Park, are now open for diving. Disinfection of dive and snorkel gear remains mandatory.

STINAPA is preparing to launch a coral treatment program using antibiotics and volunteer divers. Those who want to volunteer can contact STINAPA. Those who have already volunteered can expect an email in the next two weeks with details from the new coordinator. *DMR*

too rapidly, plus the port engine did not respond well when the engines were reversed to slow the vessel. A harbor pilot was on board. *DMR*

Papiamentu granted international protection

Papiamentu, the traditional language of Bonaire, has long been threatened with extinction by the widespread use of Dutch, Spanish, and English on the island. When all parties signed 'The Administrative Agreement Papiamentu on Bonaire in March 2021, they expressed their intention to recognize Papiamentu under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. That has now been accomplished. All levels of government are now committed to protect and promote the use of Papiamentu.

The Charter is a Convention of the Council of Europe for the protection and promotion of minority languages traditionally spoken in the territory of a state. Previously, the Charter was applicable only to the European Netherlands. On Monday the 22nd of January 2024, recognition of Papiamentu under the Charter was extended to the Caribbean Netherlands and to Bonaire.

Papiamentu on Bonaire is now recognized under Part III of the Convention. That means it must be protected and promoted in specific domains such as education, culture, media, administrative traffic, administration of justice, socio-economic life, and international cooperation. *DMR*

Still takes a long time to get a building permit

Bonaireans still have to wait four to six months to get an application approved for a building permit. And those wanting to construct a small outbuilding wait as long as those wanting to build a large resort. The issue was raised at a press conference with deputies Anjelica Cicilia and Clark Abraham last week. Both acknowledged the problem and said solutions are being pondered.

According to Cicilia, the first task is to "what throughput speed is feasible." Abraham pointed out that slow permit approvals is "a long standing problem that has arisen and built up over several years" and is partially caused by under staffing. He asked "for patience to improve the service to citizens."

DMR (Bonaire.nu)

Pier wreck at airport fueling dock

A Curol oil tanker collided with a pier pole near Donkey Beach while approaching the airport fueling facilities. Both the barge and the pier were seriously damaged, but no fuel was discharged into the sea and the jet fuel could still be pumped into the storage tanks. Preliminary investigations suggest that the barge was approaching the pier



OIB graduation

A graduation ceremony for OIB (Opleidingsinstituut Bonaire BV) students was held January 26 at Eddy's Bar & Restaurant. The 80 students completed curriculum in a variety of courses during 2023.

Gerty Koffijberg, OIB owner, education advisor and training coordinator led the ceremony and awarded the

certificates to the deserving graduates.

The Institute offers a wide range of training at MBO and HBO levels. OIB's twin objectives: to meet the demand of individual participants and the labor market. At OIB, local people with diverse backgrounds, competencies, ages, objectives and interests study and work.

MBO level courses include courses such as administrative assistant, accounting, calculation and middle management. HBO level courses include courses in project management, HR management, care giving, applied psychology. Language courses in Dutch are also offered.

Photo Julie Morgan

Celebrate World Wetlands Day Feb 2nd in Wilhelminaplein



A flamingo strolls through Bonaire's only freshwater wetland. The freshwater wetland is located at LVV and its adjacent surrounding areas of the wastewater treatment plant, south of Kaminda Lagun. Photo Susan Davis, 2020

The vibrant community of Bonaire is invited to join in the festivities as we celebrate World Wetlands Day on February 2nd. The event will take place in Wilhelminaplein from 6 to 9 p.m., bringing together local nature organizations to showcase their valuable work in preserving our precious wetlands.

This year's theme, "Wetlands and People," emphasizes the essential connection

between these unique ecosystems and the communities that rely on them. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with dedicated local organizations actively contributing to the conservation and sustainable management of Bonaire's wetlands.

Local nature organizations will share their knowledge, experiences, and initiatives dedicated to the protection of wet-

lands. In addition to the festivities, there will also be live music from Hofi Kultural and Luis Moka & Palu Grandi.

This celebration aims to raise awareness about wetlands and their significant role in maintaining biodiversity, supporting local livelihoods, and providing essential ecosystem services.

The event promises a mix of informative displays, interactive activities, and opportunities for community members to connect with like-minded individuals passionate about environmental conservation. Whether you're a nature enthusiast, a student, or a concerned citizen, there's something for everyone at this World Wetlands Day celebration. *Mangrove Maniacs*

Nos Zjilea highlights Bonaire etiquette



Denise de Jongh-Rekwest with her first etiquette book for children and Nos Zjilea's Izain Mercera with her business etiquette book for adults. Denise's books are available locally at Bruna and Del Mar. Photo Julie Morgan

Although Nos Zjilea's January program was altered a bit because several guests canceled, attendees were still able to 'See, Feel and Taste' the culture of Bonaire.

Bonaire's talented musical group, Kulturalando, opened the day at Rincon's Mangazina di Rei and cultural dancers Monique and Donnie Winklaar danced along to the group's own brand of local music.

Denise de Jongh-Rekwest, author of 20 books, discussed local norms and ethical values. In her book *Etiket e porta pa eksito (Etiquette a door to success)* in Papiamentu and Dutch, she includes information regarding manners, ethics, protocol and proper dress for church, funerals and weddings.

De Jongh-Rekwest emphasized the importance of showing respect through your dress for an event and its location. On the island customary dress for funerals is dark clothing for both men and women. For some events, an invi-

tation may suggest festive clothing; this means no black or white. Women should not show a lot of skin, dresses to knee length, not too tight, no cleavage and not transparent. Men can wear a suit, slacks with a button-down shirt, a polo or African Dashiki. Hats are okay for women but not for men.

Terramar's Maya Nakvaes and Fatima Domacasse took the stage to reach out to the community regarding the project "Making Bonaire Heritage" (see The Reporter, issue 2). They are asking Bonaireans for their ideas of what they think the project should be. Please contact Terramar by email info@terrarmuseum.com or call +599-701-4700 with your ideas. The coordinators are looking for input from the elderly, students, local museums and cultural sectors.

For more information about Nos Zjilea and Mangazina di Rei, visit Mangazina di Rei on Facebook or <https://www.mangazinadirei.org>.

For Bonaire's young photographers - a chance to exhibit at the Rijksmuseum

The Rijksmuseum organizes a photo competition every year for young people, from secondary education and MBO. The 2024 online invitation reads:

"Submit your photo series and have a chance to participate in master classes, meet other young people and experts, but most importantly: your own exhibition in the Rijksmuseum, next to top photographer Eddo Hartmann."

Competitors are asked to send a maximum of five photos with a short descrip-

tion on the theme "What is your festival?" before Monday, May 13, 2024.

A festival is a place where people come together to celebrate life. The Rijksmuseum challenges contestants to capture their own festival feeling. "Consider, for example, (Caribbean) carnival, a weekend with friends, the annual fair or a wedding. But (Chinese) New Year, King's Day or a sporting event can also be a festival. It's about your experience. What does your festival look like?"

THE TIMELINE

FEBRUARY – MAY: Get started with photography and submit your photo series before May 13.

MAY: The makers of the ten best series (5 secondary education / 5 intermediate vocational education) are selected by a professional jury and by the public via a voting page.

The 10 nominees are invited to two master classes under the guidance of photographer Eddo Hartmann and experts from the Rijksmuseum. The result is our own exhibition in the Rijksmuseum!

JUNE: The 10 finalists will be announced in early June. They may participate in two Masterclasses in the Rijksmuseum.

SEPTEMBER: The two winners will be announced at the opening on September 27. The exhibition will run from September 27, 2024 to January 12, 2025.

For more information, visit: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/onderwijs/fotos-pelen>

ST. EUSTATIUS - The St. Eustatius Health Care Foundation will be bidding farewell to Mr. Frank Rothweiler who will be serving our organization as Interim Board of Director till the end of March 2024. Under his guidance the new vision and mission towards improved Health Care by SEHCF took form. We appreciate the dedication and professionalism with which Mr. Rothweiler has steered SEHCF in this new direction.

At the same time, we are pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Philip (Flip) van Woerkom as its new Board of Director as of April 1, 2024. Having worked in Tanzania, the Netherlands, and Suriname, Mr. van Woerkom brings with him years of experience in healthcare, fast-moving consumer goods, and the publishing sector. He is passionate about creating positive social and environmental impact through his work.

Currently, Mr. van Woerkom is responsible for the General Management and day-to-day operations in a hospital in the rural South of Tanzania. In this role, he has successfully implemented strategies to enhance quality



Mr. Philip (Flip) van Woerkom

patient care, access to healthcare, employee engagement, and overall financial stability. His ability to navigate challenging cultural and political environments has demonstrated his excellent social skills and management abilities.

Mr. van Woerkom looks forward to continuing the implementation of the new vision and mission that SEHCF has formulated under guidance of Mr. Rothweiler towards improving health care of St. Eustatius.

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Mr. van Woerkom. With his leadership and expertise, we are confident in our collective ability to further enhance the St. Eustatius Health Care Foundation and continue to faithfully serve our community.

Supervisory board SEHCF



Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire's (STCB) first fishing line cleanup of 2024 on January 21 was a huge success. According to STCB's Floor van Schalkwijk, a huge bin of fishing line and another like sized bin of glass, cans, plastic and other trash was collected. A total of five snorkelers and 42 local and visiting divers from Augustana College in Illinois participated in the cleanup. Photo: Local divers Robert Lange and Hugh van Soest remove massive tangles of fishing line on the new annex of the pier. Photo by Julie Morgan



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Augustana College returns to study Bonaire's geology



A group of 19 students and four professors from Augustana College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in Rock Island, Illinois recently visited Bonaire to study the island's geology. This is the second visit to Bonaire and second stay at Bruce Bowker's Carib Inn and there is no doubt they will be back.

Dr. Jenny Arkle said, "We did a scouting trip to Bonaire in 2020... We went to all the big resorts and then met Bruce (the late Bruce Bowker) and fell in love with the Carib Inn. He interacted with the students every evening in his straightforward way just talking to them out by the patio and they loved it. He told them about the environment and conservation and the best practices. Bruce was very active in Bonaire, and he was actually a moving force in conservation and taking care of

the environment. The staff at Carib Inn are phenomenal, the geology is phenomenal. The students get to experience geology in a different way."

The students, ages 18-22, were certified last fall in a class organized by the college. For many this was their first trip to the ocean.

"The Midwest is all old tropical environments in the rock. For them to see a modern and active reef and make a comparison was absolutely priceless," said Arkle.

Floor van Schalkwijk, of Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) met with the students at the hotel and spoke about STCB and the important work they are doing. The students joined the fishing line cleanup with

STCB, took a coral conservation class at Dive Flamingo and toured the mangroves. The group spent several days exploring Washington Slagbaai National Park to study the ancient geologic history of Bonaire and climbed Brandaris. They crawled through some caves and visited Seru Largu. These firsthand visits allowed the students to see the old reef system, how the waves had cut notches into the terrace and determine the rise and fall of the tectonic plates.

Arkle said, "Why does this matter to society? The only way to look at the future is by what happened in the past. How fast species can adapt to the changes, the tectonic movement and seismic hazards. Underwater volcanoes built the island 100 billion years ago. Our focus is the island construction and destruc-

tion; the biology and ecology blended and then the humans."

Augustana geology students are afforded the opportunity for full course immersion study field trips to areas of geological interest in a 'J' or January semester and year-round.

"We've had trips to the Grand Canyon, Death Valley, Trinidad and Bonaire. Many different types of landscapes so we can read the history preserved in a rock," said Arkle.

Instructors on the trip were: Dr. Jenny Arkle, Dr. Kelsey Arkle, Dr Mike Wolf and Susan Wolf.

Story / photo Julie Morgan

BKCN reports fewer fires in 2023



Photo Alan Zale

In 2023, Caribbean Netherlands Fire Department (BKCN) responded to 189 incidents, fewer than in 2022 when the fire department was called out 203 times. On Bonaire the department responded to 133 calls, on Saba 11, and on St. Eustatius 45. Most of the incidents involved outdoor fires.

In 2023 there were - besides the regular work - many developments, including: a new fire station and a breathing air workshop developed on Saba, new vehicles, new exercise objects, and much more. There were also sad moments, like the loss of a number of former fire-fighting colleagues. But also beautiful moments, including, for example, the strength with which the force handled the sad moments. The BKCN is there for others, but also for each other.

In 2024, the BKCN is again committed to ensuring the safety of the residents of the Caribbean Netherlands. The work never stops. The fire department fights fires, saves lives, and provides assistance during accidents. Preferably, the force is one step ahead of any problems. Therefore, they are also committed to prevention. On rijksdienstcn.com, for example, you will find tips on how to prevent risky situations at home.

Saying goodbye to our retiring turtle friend Funchi



This small island is half the size of Klein Bonaire and is the place where I learned most about the nesting behavior of sea turtles. They have a very big sea turtle population with 700 adults a year. It is a strict nature reserve so it was very special that we were able to go there and do research.

But from the work I did on Bonaire, I always enjoyed placing the satellite transmitters. Those were very special moments and it was amazing to be able to follow the turtle and see where they would go and what they would do. Part of why it was so amazing is because we knew we had placed that satellite transmitter on that specific turtle. These are the moments that come close to the heart. I also loved to do the capture-mark-recapture research, because during this research we would be actively working with the sea turtles. I was always looking forward to the in-water surveys.

It is really hard to say what was the most important or special that I did during my time at STCB, because every little bit of research is important for the sea turtles of Bonaire. I have put a lot of effort in the protection of the sea turtles. And now I can enjoy all of this effort for the rest of my life!”

What are your plans for retirement?

“I have always had many plans even when I was still working. Now I will have plenty of time to work on all the plans I have not been able to fulfill yet. I enjoy building, fishing and capturing lobsters during the lobster season. So, I would love to get back into that and enjoy my hobbies.”

Where do you think the future of STCB will go to?

“I think STCB will be around for a very long time. And hopefully all of you will get a chance to retire one day just like me. I think STCB will have a great and long future.”

And the sea turtles?

“For the sea turtles the problem is that the world and the nature is slowly breaking down and when we break down a species, we break down everything, because everything is connected with biodiversity. Something has to be turned back around, and if that does not happen, the nature as we know it will disappear. The future of the nature will be in trouble if we keep doing what we are doing, and that is something that I worry about. I think it is important to keep protecting the sea turtles on Bonaire. I will not forget STCB quickly, it will always be right here.”, he says as he puts his hands on his heart.

We hope Funchi will enjoy his retirement and hope to see him join us every once in a while, as expert volunteer!

STCB story and photos

At this point, Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) is a well-established organization that aims to protect and conserve the sea turtles that swim around Bonaire. Anybody who has volunteered, visited or worked for STCB, has met Gielmon ‘Funchi’ and his big smile. Funchi his work at STCB in 2003 and has recently retired. We asked him a few questions about his time at STCB.

know a lot of people and through the work I did for STCB I also met a lot of people. Before starting with STCB I worked in the diving industry as dive master and also here I met a lot of people and that is what I loved about my job with STCB as well. I am still in contact with many of the people I met over the years and I enjoyed keeping in touch with all of these people. Besides this, the work itself was very varied: we did in-water surveys, nesting season and clean ups, so it was never boring!”

Was there anything that you disliked about your job?

“Of course, there is always bumps and clashes amongst staff every once in a while. But it is important to work together and be a team. I was lucky with the great management STCB has had over all these years. Even when there would be clashes, I would always try to be happy at work and loved to joke around to the point where all staff told me that they already knew all of the jokes I was telling them. But I always had a lot of fun in my job and always received a lot of positive feedback from interns.”

What would you say was the most special during your 20 years at STCB?

“That is a very hard question, I did so many things. The moments I enjoyed a lot were the moments I was able to go to other islands, like Mona (Puerto Rica archipelago).



Why did you start working for STCB?

“I started working for STCB in 2003 after I received a warning from STINAPA about capturing sea turtles. I was invited to a meeting from turtle expert and turtle ambassador Robert van Dam. He gave a presentation about sea turtles and invited me to join him for an in-water survey. Robert was looking for places to find sea turtles, so I told him the south would be a good place. He thought it was very interesting and decided that it was a good place to do in-water surveys. After this fieldwork, he was very happy about our work together and invited me to come and work for STCB as first employee.”

Funchi began working for STCB part time but quickly moved to a full-time position. After years of full-time work, Funchi returned to part-time so he could also work with STINAPA protecting seagrass, queen conch and mangroves.

What did you like the most about your job at STCB?

“I am a real people person. I might live alone, but I always enjoyed when people stayed with me for periods of time and when I raised some of my foster children. I



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Arts & Crafts Market in Wilhelmina Plaza. NEW open Friday nights as well as for the cruise ships (schedule can be found at: https://www.facebook.com/BonaireArtsandCraftsCruiseMarket/)	
Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei in Rincon: Tues.-Thurs. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat. 8-noon	
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	
Marshe di Playa Local market Sat. 9-1. Kaya Industria, by Warehouse Supermarket.	
Pakus di Pruga (Animal Shelter flea market.): Pakus is closed until we build.	
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. After hours: +599 777 8444.	
Washington Slagbaai Park: Open Tues. - Sun.. 8-5 (entry to 2:30 p.m.) \$40 (Free with Nature tag)	
Open now to July 2024	Terramar Slavery Exhibition: WE ARE Mon. - Sat. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Wednesday, January 31	Open Bonaire Bridge Championship 2024. Karnaval Jump Up Marcelo Anthony, Rincon, 8 p.m. to midnight
Friday, February 2	World Wetlands Day. 6-9 p.m. Wilhelminaplein. See page 7.
KARNAVAL https://www.facebook.com/KarnavalBoneiru	
Saturday, February 3	Children's Parade. 3-6 p.m. Rincon
Sunday, February 4	Children's Parade. 3-6 p.m. Kralendijk
Friday, February 9	Teener Parade. 8 p.m. - midnight
Saturday, February 10	Grand Karnaval Parade. 2-7 p.m. Rincon
Sunday, February 11	Grand Karnaval Parade. 1-7 p.m. Kralendijk
Monday, February 12	Children's Farewell Parade. 6-8 p.m. Kralendijk
Tuesday, February 13	Adult's Farewell Parade 7 p.m. - King Momo burned at midnight
Saturday, February 17	Stand up comedy at Sonrisa 6:30 p.m. https://www.facebook.com/groups/1140183747114199



2024 Cruise Ship Schedule

DATE:	CRUISE SHIP	TIME	PIER	CAPACITY
Wed. January 31	ROTTERDAM	0730-2100	South	2668
Thurs. February 1	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	0730-1800	North	2440
Fri. February 2	NORWEGIAN SKY	0600-1300	North	2480
	CELEBRITY EQUINOX	0800-1700	South	2852
Sat. February 3	AIDAMAR	0730-2100	North	2686
Mon. February 5	AIDAPERLA	0830-1800	South	3286
Tues. February 6	CELEBRITY BEYOND	0730-1700	South	3260
Wed. February 7	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	0800-1800	North	2417
	CELEBRITY REFLECTION	0800-2000	South	3046
Sat. February 10	SEVEN SEAS SPLENDOR	0600-1400	North	754
	ZAANDAM	0730-2100	South	1883
Sun. February 11	MARELLA DISCOVERY	0830-2000	North	2074
Mon. February 12	STAR PRIDE	0730-2100	North	312
Tues. February 13	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	0800-1800	North	2417
Wed. February 14	CARNIVAL MAGIC	0830-2200	South	3646

Events, Meetings, Sports

12 steps 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	
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.	
Art Gallery Sobremesa Bonaire View or buy art from Bonaire's local artists. Opening hours are Tue-Fri 2 - 5 p.m. and Sat 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Abraham Boulevard 10.	
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.	
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 . https://www.facebook.com/bridgeclubbonaire	
Cyclovía 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	
Diver Safety. Presentations with Jason Buttenshaw held the third Sunday of the month 6:30 p.m. at Sugar Thief, 8 Kaya Inglaterra.	
Noodling in the sea. Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 9-10 a. m. across from Parke Tului on the water-front. See Facebook Bonaire Free Noodlers	
Pickleball. Wednesdays & Fridays 6 – 8 p.m. at Jong Bonaire. Come join the fun. A sport for all ages.	
Racing / Fevering. The Onima fever platform is available every Tues. Thurs. Sat. and Sun. 4 - 7 p.m.	
Tennis Lessons for kids age 6 - 12. Free. Every Saturday. Courts at Eddy's. Email info@bonairetennisassociation.com . Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Bonairetennis/ Paul Ruijs +599 782 4569.	
	Echo Conservation Tours - Weekdays at 8 a.m. or 5 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. To reserve email at info@echobonaire.org
	Manta Monday - Nicole Pelletier of the Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation.Presentations at 7:30 p.m.: Feb. 5. Divi Resort; Feb. 12. VIP Diving; Feb. 19. Divi Resort; Feb. 26. Toucan Diving at Plaza Resort; Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation Program facebook. Email: 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
	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.

You can help keep Bonaire clean

Saturdays	One Hour Clean up Power. Weekly coastal clean up every Saturday, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Location given on FB: https://www.facebook.com/OneHourCleanUpPower/
Sunday, Feb. 11	Clean Coast Bonaire. 4-6 p.m. Piedra Pretu. Donate your time. Work as a citizen scientist to collect marine litter & data. https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=clean%20coast%20bonaire

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World Wetlands Day
2 February 2024

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Diamonds celebrate 10 years

Spectators love Bonaire's fabulous Carnival parades. Groups dance through the streets in colorful, sexy, skintight, sequined and feathered costumes with extravagant shoulder pieces and head-

resses. Each group is costumed with a different theme and entertains the crowd with boundless energy, sometimes singing, but always dancing to the pounding Carnival music.



The first Diamond costume, Karnaval 2014



The founders in 2015 (L-R) Francis da Costa Gomez, Licetha Saragoza, and Angelo Emerenciana

The crowd can expect to be entertained by about nine groups every year along the parade route. Some are sponsored by organizations and others are private. One private group that has shown staying power over the years and never disappoints is The Precious Diamonds. This February will mark the 'Diamonds' 10th anniversary as a Carnival group and they are sure to sparkle once again.

The Precious Diamonds was founded on January 4, 2014 by Licetha Saragoza, Angelo Emerenciana and Francis da Costa Gomez. They began with 15 participants and have grown to 25 over the years. Licetha and Angelo are still very active but Francis has retired.

Back in 2014, the first costume was adorned with three colossal diamonds. This year there will be 10 different diamond hues in celebration of their 10th anniversary. The costumes are designed by Angelo and Jo-Ann Thielman who makes

the striking headpieces from scratch. A dedicated team adds all the final touches to create the Carnival magic. Participants have some input to create their own style without deviating from the overall design. Each costume costs from \$500 to \$800 or even more.

The Precious Diamonds will debut their 10th Anniversary 'Diamonds Imperium' themed costumes in the Rincon parade on February 10, followed by the Grand Parade in Kralendijk February 11 and the Farewell night parade on February 13

Congratulations to The Precious Diamonds for 10 years of Bonaire Carnival.

Julie Morgan

(See the Bonaire's Karnaval event schedule on page 12.)

Art and Craft Market to open on Fridays

For several years, local art and craft vendors have been limited to exhibiting their work on 'Cruise Ship Days' at Wilhelminaplein. But all that is changed with the announcement of the Friday Arts and Craft Market beginning February 9. Bonaire artisans will display their work on Fridays giving locals and island guests the opportunity to view, purchase and enjoy the arts and crafts of Bonaire. The market will be open from 9 a.m. to - 4 p.m. (During the first month of the Friday market, half day cruise ships may be scheduled)

Artisans scheduled are:

Phish Phactory; Artfully crafted specializing in recycled accessories, thoughtfully designed and made on Bonaire.

Tropical Nature; Handmade local brand specializing in Natural Skincare and Cosmetics, taking care of the environment using only natural ingredients.

SiriusArtjewel; Exclusive handmade macrame & gemstone jewelry, highlighting elegance and originality

Animal Shelter; Animal Shelter t-shirts, animal paintings, and driftwood signs

Caribbean Creations by Mira; Handmade gemstone and pearl Boho-style jewelry

Mama Anneke Keuken; Local food and BBQ RED CHICKEN

Marleen; Sculptures and jewelry handmade on Bonaire by Marleen a Murano glass artist

Henna Studio Bonaire; All natural henna & jagua tattoos, and handpainted Henna Souvenirs.

Dani Express; Jewelry handmade from vegetable ivory, cow horn & recycled bicycle tubes

Recycled Glass Art; Locally made Recycled Glass resin Art

GAM; local handmade driftwood souvenirs and more

Must Sea; Paintings on canvas and wood: own designs, handmade for your personalized gifts

Elements; Handmade on Bonaire Dichroic, stainless steel Jewelry & Gifts

Bonaire Sea Salt; Handmade bath, scrubs, gourmet salts, and body creams



TCB promotes 24 activities for 2024

Restaurant 15. • Number Ten 15. • Blue Lagun Cafe Bonaire
17. • Maçaroca Madeira Bar Restaurant Bonaire and Carlitos
18 • John's Ice Cream and Artisan Bakery

Reimagined Retreats

19. • Delfins Beach Resort and Senang Restaurant • 20.
Divi Flamingo Beach Resort & Casino, The Bellafonte, Cap-
tain Don's Habitat, • 21. Sorobon Luxury Beach Resort

To Complete Your Trip

• 22. BonWaire, TulumSwimwear, Palma Jewelry Bonaire
• 23. Kralendijk Ink Tattoo Shop Bonaire • 24. Club Rush
Bonaire,



Lady Bellais



Payam Elhami of Artisan Bakery

Catch Flights and Feelings for Bonaire

These 24 experiences are just snapshots of what awaits travelers on Bonaire. The island is all the more accessible with newly added flights out of the United States and Canada.

- WestJet now offers its first-ever non-stop flight from Toronto to Bonaire. This new route will operate once weekly, every Tuesday, until mid-April 2024.

- United Airlines will offer extra flights between January and April out of Newark on Sundays and Wednesdays.

- Through April 6, 2024, Delta Airlines is now adding to their usual Saturday flight by offering four new flights per week from Atlanta on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

- American Airlines also introduces an additional flight day in June and July of 2024, supplementing the existing Wednesday and Saturday flights with a new Friday service out of Miami. *TCB Communications / Photos Julie Morgan*



For 2024 TCB has selected 24 attractions to promote to visitors who are foodies, nature lovers and/or adventure-seekers.

It's in Our Nature

1. Nature Cooking School • 2. Packraft Trip Bonaire • 3. Epic Tours partnering with Buddy Dive. Plus Lady Bella's, a charming wooden Brazilian schooner • 4. Hilma Hooker Diving

More Ways to Get Around

5. Hopp Bonaire • 6. Golf Cart Rental Bonaire • 7. Epic Tours Bonaire Water Taxi new departure from Courtyard by Marriott • 8. Nikol Luxury, a Navigator 53 classic yacht

Bon Bites

9. 2 Fools and a Bull • 10. Zara's Bonaire • 11. The Bucket • 12. Hooked by Sunsets • 13. Casa Bizarro • 14. Biña

A Garden? Just Do It! by Angliet, Nature Lover Candlestick

A few months ago a friend asked me to take a look at his garden. He was so proud to show me all his vegetables, herbs and fruit trees. And I was indeed astonished with all the healthy and delicious green in his yard. He told me he was inspired by my column "A garden.. just do it" in *The Reporter* and this was the result after 2 years. There was no place left without green. Amazing!



It gave me a good feeling that writing about gardening works. One of the plants in his garden that touched me most was the Candlestick. Because of all the rain it was such a beautiful shrub. Almost every "stick" was topped with an amazing yellow flower. It was not only the great beauty of the plant that touched me but the memory it brought up from my childhood in Surinam.

I remember so well the empty yard opposite our house. Most of the time it was covered with rainwater and a lot of mosquitos, but the plot was full of Candlestick plants. It is a kind of bush but very tall measuring about three to four metres (10-13 feet) with a lot of stems and flowers. One could not easily walk through that yard, but I did because there were fruit trees growing wild in the back. Armed with shears and bags I would go for the fruit. Big toads were there as well, sometimes a snake and for sure rats, iguanas, birds, wild chickens, bugs and little fishes in the swamp, all hunting for each other or for the fruits. It was a kind of an ecosystem struggling for life and survival of the fittest. And the thing is, the more the owner was pulling out and cutting the plants, the faster and more they grew back. One could not beat it in that perfect habitat.

So seeing this Candlestick shrub right here on Bonaire made me go back to my youth.

In Surinam we call it Slabriki Wiri. You always find them by the side of road, where swamps are and in wild areas in tropical humid regions. It likes wet feet, so wetter is better for more candles. Other names are Candle Bush, Candela-bra, Empress Candle and on Bonaire, Candela. So all around the world its name is "candle" because of the fluorescence of the flower part of the plant. The "candles" flower for a long time and if the plant has a lot of stems it also has a lot of "candles." Bees love these attractive flowers, so they are always around this plant in your garden.

The plant bears seedpods with about 50 seeds each. With the little membranous wings on them the seeds fly around everywhere. One can also get plants by propagation. Make a

cut above the node, where the leaf emerges, leave two leaves at the top and remove the other ones. Cuttings will root after a while. Candela needs light and full sun, but some partial shade will be very pleasant for it. The more pruning you do the better results for an attractive bush with more flowers. When you prune, cut back as much as one third of the plants height.

Slabriki Wiri are also cultivated for its medicinal value. It's a medicinal herb of the Leguminosae family, so look for it if you are interested. One of its names is "Ringworm" plant as the plant contains strong antifungal properties and it's good against ringworm and other fungal infections. It's used in treatment of typhoid, diabetes, malaria, asthma, tinea infections, scabies, blotch, herpes and eczema. I know from the elders in Surinam that they use it to make homemade treatments for skin problems. But be careful with the seeds because they are toxic if ingested in large amounts. And I guess that is why goats don't eat it. How do they know? Nature is incredibly smart.

And of course you can plant it in your Bonaire garden because funnily enough, it grows perfectly here, even when the climate is very dry and less humid. My friend has his Candela planted near the drip of the airco, so it has all it needs for wet feet and sunlight. So if you like "natural candles" in your garden, go for it. You will enjoy it forever.



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.

Make Bonaire Accessible

by Ria Evers-Dokter

Gratitude journal

Somewhere I read that keeping a gratitude journal would be very good for the soul and overall wellbeing.

I had heard about this before, but never took action. Then it dawned on me that I could use it for my crusade for accessibility because I know that rewarding good behavior always has good results. I do not only want to hack on things that are wrong, so I set off.....

Day 1. Went shopping with Zorg & Welzijn. This is a wonderful service they offer to those that have no transportation and nobody to help them go shopping. When I got home, I noticed that the TV was work-

ing properly again, after weeks of stripes, blocks, no voice, black screen, etc. I decided to send Telbo a note on Facebook to thank them for the good service they delivered and that I was very happy to be able to watch TV again. I could watch my favorite show: “de slimste mens.”

Day 2. While browsing on the computer I found the most beautiful ideas for my crafting plans (fundraising for MiVaBo). Later that day I received some wonderful fruit and vegetables delivered by the church. Mmmmm, so good and so thoughtful. A lady came by to pick up a huge stack of magazines. She was very happy, because buying them is very expensive, especially when you live on a small income.

Day 3. Crafting group at Hofi Kultural. A great place to gather for elderly. I attend this crafting sessions and take lessons to play the mouth-harmonica and have so much fun. Later that day I attended an exhibition with my buddy: ‘If stones could talk’ a project set

up to commemorate the freedom after slavery.

Day 4. Spent the morning reading on my porch. A few friends came by for small talk. They’ve been coming to Bonaire for 10 years now to dive and they love it. They had cooked green pea soup and brought me some.

Day 5. Lazy day: watching TV, reading and snoozing on the porch.

Day 6. My favorite person came to help me do the washing, make my bed and water the flowers and yard. She is a special athlete and was one of the first athletes who participated at the World Summer Games in Connecticut. A wonderful person with a big heart.

Day 7. Shopping with Z & W again. I was able to help a friend get a new rollator. Hers broke and she fell on the floor. RoRo and Bonaire Mobility Services came to the rescue and she is very happy with her new one.

Day 8. Carnaval-crafting: decorating

t-shirts to wear at the next Jump In. My neighbor came by and gave me a box full of groceries she cannot use, because she is going away for a few weeks.

So, you see... so many good things happening. Talk about only negative things is bad. Good things happening and telling about is even better. I can recommend you to do the same.

It will change your world.



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

Choose your battles

I always have in mind and use it quite frequently with my clients and patients, this simple but powerful prayer used in the 12-step program: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” A winning triad: serenity, courage and wisdom were created by Reinhold Niebuhr, an American Theologist. He also said, “The victorious man in the day of crisis is the man who has the serenity to accept what he cannot help and the courage to change what must be altered.”

So, prior to serenity or courage, it is necessary to have clarity and wisdom to figure out what can be changed and what cannot. So, first wisdom and then acceptance or courage.

A clue to figure out what we can actually change lies in the idea of the circle of influence and the circle of preoccupation. For this we can make a simple exercise by first writing a list of all our concerns, all those things that we consider should be changed and all our preoccupations. This can include things like my own health, the health of my children, financial situation, global warming, etc. Then we draw two concentric circles, and we classify the things we can actually do something about in the inner circle. This is my circle of influence. In the outer circle put the things we cannot directly influence, or the circle of preoccupation. Let’s say I have some concerns regarding my health so I can write in the inner circle that I can take care of my health by improving my diet or moving more. I might also be concerned about global warming, but as long as I only feel concerned and complain it should stay in the outer circle until I can identify an action that I can perform to help in that sense. Let’s say I decide to use less plastic, or less gasoline by using public transportation (not yet here on Bonaire... hopefully coming soon) or biking (not very safe here on Bonaire, but hoping for biking lanes eventually). Reading myself I smile and think... what is it that we need

to do to get these two things happening? Suggestions are welcome. Anyway, this is the difference between making yourself miserable, by complaining all day about something and feeling proactive by figuring out what to do. Maybe writing about it is a step in the right direction.

But there is something else to add to this triad of qualities: serenity, courage and wisdom. That would be managing our resources and setting priorities. Sometimes we discover we can do a lot and become involved in dozens of actions and we are exhausted. This is the moment when prioritizing comes to the front line. We must choose the battles we want to fight. There is a lot to be done to improve our lives and the world around us, but we cannot do them all. Choosing the ones to act on, even though we might be able to be involved in many more, requires acceptance to gracefully let go of those battles we are not going to get involved in. For every time we choose something we are automatically letting go of the other options and that is one of the deepest existential anguishes, freedom of choice or free will. I am going to write about this in a future issue, as it happens to be that the needle points in the direction that there is no such thing as free will, or it might need to be redefined.

In summary, we cannot fight all the battles, we cannot get involved in all the causes, it is good to listen to our hearts, understand what brings more happiness around us and also have in mind our personal resources and talents.



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

Buckley’s Books

by George Buckley



It has been said that Mark Kurlansky is a writer and researcher who creates ‘multilayered masterpieces, filled with fascinating details’ while blending science, politics, history, culture, economic and culinary aspects of his subjects, whatever they may be.

That is just what he has done with the following books, still available new and used.

In “**COD-the biography of the fish that changed world,**” Kurlansky weaves a story of a hugely important fish that fed millions of people and employed tens of thousands in the wide spread fishery. It even led to the infamous “Cod Wars” between Iceland and Great Britain. A golden Cod even graces the dome of the Massachusetts State House and Cape Cod is named after the once abundant fish. He also details the decline of the great fish that was once so populous that it was said that you walk on them in the ocean! He completes the circle, documenting the uncontrolled overfishing and pollution that led to the demise of beloved Gadus and present efforts to protect the Cod.

“**The Big Oyster, history on the half shell**” finds a similar story as that of the COD but in this case a huge dose of ‘environmental services’ are added to the immense value of oysters in history, community culture, politics and economically, as food. Additionally, oysters also serve as major flood control and abatement re-

sources as well as providing very significant water filtering and cleaning capacity of particulates down to virus size. The ‘oyster reefs’ of yore protected communities, coastlines and habitats up and down the US East coast providing extremely high levels of ‘environmental services.’ Communities and shellfishers were ‘shell-shocked’ when overfishing and pollution caused massive population declines in native oysters. The story doesn’t end there as efforts today are actively underway to rebuild oyster reefs, create natural filtration beds and restock populations using aquaculture techniques.

“**SALT-a world history**” is another Kurlansky favorite of mine. The book is his story of the value of salt over millennia in all its forms, uses and harvest techniques. Salt was, and in many cases still is, a critically important trade, commercial, preservative and culinary product.



George Buckley has been coming to Bonaire since 1976, working with Captain Don (who called him CLAM for his work with mollusks), Hendrik Wuyts and others on environmental projects and films. He has led over 100 study groups to Bonaire. Semiretired from decades of teaching Environmental Management and leading an active graduate program in Sustainability, he now works as an environmental consultant.

Reef Glimpses

by Dee Scarr

More About Fishing Line or How a Threat to One Critter Is Another Critter's Lifeline

Fishing line... great for fishing, not so great for everything else -- with one exception: fishing line is perfect for tying sponges onto pilings.



Two parallel tubes of this purple tube sponge were tied onto its piling about a year ago. Six new tubes, plus a few bumps that are probably new tubes, can be seen in this photo. Photo Dee Scarr

Back in 1989 when I began tying sponges back onto North (then Old) Pier pilings, my only experiences with fishing line had been removing it from the reef or disentangling critters from it. The last thing I wanted to do was put more fishing line into the sea! It was suggested by many people, but I couldn't imagine using it.

I wanted something biodegradable, by golly, and I found it in a 100% cotton medicinal gauze at the Botika. It was not only biodegradable, it was sterile. No worries about hurting the environment with sterile cotton gauze!

Yep, the gauze was perfect except for one not-so-minor detail: it rotted and tore long before the sponges had

a chance to attach.

So, I was stuck using fishing line, which we all know doesn't rot underwater for years. Fifty-pound test turned out to be perfect for me, because it was thick enough not to cut my fingers when I pulled it tight. Fishing line had another advantage that I hadn't considered, an advantage that neither gauze nor anything else had: it stretches. That enabled us to knot the line around a piling, stick the sponges under the line (thanks to the stretch), and then spiral the line to keep the sponges in place against the piling, with a final knot. Believe it or not, the most difficult part about using fishing line was learning to make knots that didn't slip, but once knots are mastered everything else is easy.

The line lies close to the piling, so it's not a danger to turtles or other critters. In fact, before we could remove the lines at the Old Pier, sponges and other encrusting creatures had overgrown many of them.

Granted, there are not a lot of people for whom this information is relevant.

But it became relevant to me again, in 2022, when construction began on the new pier at Karel's Beach Bar. Karel the person was interested in my ideas for a sponge garden. The Marine Park was interested in my ideas for a sponge garden, as long as the sponges I used were orphans -- already detached from everything else -- and were never taken out of the water. That made sense, and that's what I requested in the permit application.

In the first year we tied more than 60 sponges onto 11 pilings. (We'd have done more, but it's not so easy to find orphan sponges on Bonaire!) We then waited to see how they would do, especially as building continued and the sponges received less sunlight. Turns out that all the sponges that were firmly attached to their pilings are doing very well.

One challenge Karel's presented that didn't exist under the Old Pier was water movement. The depth of the Old Pier pilings is between 15 and 30 feet (4 to 10 meters), and they're almost at the dropoff, so there's not a lot of water movement there other than currents and engine wash from ships. The depth of the Sponge Garden's pilings is no more than 15 feet (4m) and very close to shore, where the current is less but the wave action is greater with any kind of wind shift.

Perhaps as a result of more wave action, the new growth of the tied-up sponges attached them to their pilings. Only now, more than a year later, are new tubes beginning to emerge outward from some of the sponges.

Another difference between Karel's sponges and those we tied onto the Old Pier is how the sponge communities deal with the fishing line holding them onto



This tube sponge was tied about a year ago, and more than a dozen new tubes are beginning. Photo Dee Scarr

the pilings. Under the Old Pier, the sponges allowed the fishing line to pass through their tubes like a hot wire through butter; it really looked as if I had sewn the line through the sponges (an extremely unlikely possibility).

The Sponge Garden sponges are also allowing the fishing line to pass through them -- but in addition, they are reinforcing the area through which the line passed. This is likely to be another result of wave action.

Under Karel's Beach Bar Pier last week, we found a tiny queen angelfish fluttering around one tied sponge, and saw a cowrie snail sheltering between another sponge and its piling. We also saw -- nope, no more spoilers. You'll have to find out yourself.

As a courtesy to its underwater residents, Karel's doesn't allow fishing from their pier. The only fishing line you're likely to see there is not lost or harmful, it's doing a valuable job.



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*; in *Dive Training Magazine* from 1990 to 2000, with "Coral Glimpses" in *The Bonaire Reporter*; and now with "Reef Glimpses." through touchthesea.com.

Harmful invasive species turns up on Bonaire

The New Guinean land flatworm, listed among the top 100 of the world's worst invasive alien species, has been found on Bonaire. That's bad news, because it is an effective predator that likely would wipe out the native snails. If handled by humans, the flatworm can also transmit a parasite that causes encephalitis or meningitis. If you see one, stomp on it.

STINAPA and the Naturalis Biodiversity Center conducted a major study of invertebrates on Bonaire last year. Sylvia van Leeuwen, a snail expert from Naturalis, found the flatworm at two garden centers. The parasite is spread primarily through the international potted plant trade. The garden plants on Bonaire are mainly imported from Florida and Dominica.

The terrestrial flatworms follow the slime trail of snails, slide over the shell and body and enter through the breathing opening. Then they feast on the internal organs. In the 1960s the New Guinean land flatworm was introduced on a number of islands in the Pacific Ocean to control the African giant snail. Those islands now have few snails of any kind.

DMR Photo Shinji Sugiura



Parrots and People

A Shift in Local Parrot Protection

by Mel McCombie

Recently, Echo Foundation issued a press release noting that it was no longer part of the World Parrot Trust. I sat down with its executive director, Julianka Clarendra, executive director of Echo since 2018, to talk about the organization. Echo has been protecting parrots and habitat on Bonaire since 2010. The exact reasons for the split with the World Parrot Trust, effective fall of 2023, remain confidential.

Clarendra’s vision for Echo is strictly local. “Our goal is to connect local people with parrots so they learn to love the Lora and not see it as a pest,” she stated. To this end, she envisions a public relations campaign with the Papiamentu slogan “Nos Lora, Nos Orguyo” (our Lora, our pride). She also yearns to see the Lora declared the national bird of Bonaire and points out that Loras are native only to the limited range of the southern Caribbean, whereas the flamingo, so often seen on signs and in advertising, is not. Clarendra also would like to see curriculum in schools include a special section on the Lora. When children learn and become passionate about conservation, she points out, they pass that on to their parents.

Her point is that Loras are emblems of local identity. They don’t migrate, they are part of Bonaire, and she hopes that Bonaireans will grow to cherish them.

This local focus comes with some practical changes. By severing ties with the World Parrot Trust, Echo has lost WPT’s funding and its U.S. charitable designation. This means that any American who donates to Echo will not be able to take the donation as a tax deduction. Nor will Echo be able to apply for funding from grantors like Disney, who have funded it in the past. Clarendra told me that the local government is now supporting Echo, and that there may be

future funding from the E.U. in the wings. Clarendra and her husband Benito Koffie remain the only two salaried employees.

She also told me that reforestation remains part of Echo’s mission, and she hoped to see government funding for a new staff member to care for the ambassador parrots at Echo’s site at Dos Pos.

The World Parrot Trust, a large international organization with deep scientific expertise, remains active on Bonaire. Jack Haines, the neotropical regional manager for their programs in this area, frequents Bonaire with his spouse Megan Haines, WPT’s digital outreach coordinator. In previous years, Haines has been instrumental in nest monitoring (the scary stuff suspended off cliffs). Their latest projects in this area include work with Tera Barra nature garden in Bonaire, and technical advice as wild Loras are reintroduced to Aruba after 75 years of absence. WPT remains a 501(c)3 organization, so donations to them are tax-deductible for U.S. citizens.

Clarendra was understandably long on enthusiasm and local focus, but short on specifics. She did note that the new board of Echo, all local women, meet monthly and are very supportive. Anyone who loves the local parrots and who cares about Bonaire can only wish success to the reconfigured Echo. And with this change, Bonaire now boasts the support of two parrot-focused conservation organizations, Echo and the World Parrot Trust.

Lauren Schmaltz, former director of Echo and an administrator at WPT, may be reached at lschmaltz@parrots.org should readers have questions.



Julianka Clarendra Photo Julie Morgan



Mel McCombie is a retired professor, and conservation activist, and has lived part-time in Bonaire for 30 years.

Piss and Vinegar

by Gijs Borsten

WEB’s revenge

As a consequence of my latest column, in which I expressed my doubt on the sheer existence of a learning curve in WEB’s management circles, their response has been merciless. Only weeks after the January 9 blackout, large chunks of Bonaire were deprived of electric power once again. Twice again: On January 23 and 25 koriente a bai, without any information on what caused the outage. The information campaign by WEB hasn’t - as far as I know - resulted in a statement in the Bonairean press.

Is the power grid overstretched by the new construction projects popping up all over the island? Is it because the design of the network is amateurish, or do they use junk materials because they’re cheaper than the real stuff? We’ll never know.

We’ve seen, in recent (three) months, six outages in a row, three in November, and three more in January. That means that we’re on track for 18 outages this year, a new record.

What’s going on? We’re not interested in research or investigations. We simply need electric power. To do our jobs, to keep our stores and offices open, to make money. Which is, with a blackout or two a week, rather difficult. So, please?

‘Negro Dutch’

Recently, I discovered that there was a constellation of islands in the Caribbean, that was called the ‘Danish Antilles’ (R. Brongers, Volkskrant, 19-1-2024). The language the inhabitants of those islands spoke was ‘Negerhollands’, ‘Negro-Dutch.’ I never in my entire life had heard of a language like that before.

Now, I knew Denmark had an island of its own somewhere up in the North-West Atlantic (the one Donald Trump, in one of his delirious moods, confusing the concepts ‘Great’ and ‘Big,’ wanted to buy). But since that is located slightly too high up North, and is (or rather was, I’m not fully familiar with the current situation concerning the Greenlandic population)

mainly inhabited by polar bears, the notion crossed my mind, that the writer of the article meant something different. Other islands. In the Caribbean. And, apparently, they spoke Dutch, or at least a derivate thereof, proving that the Dutch had been, once again, there.

After some intense research (Wikipedia), I found out, that the Danish Antilles, or the Danish West Indies, consisted of the islands St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix, the former two annexed by Denmark in 1672 and 1718 respectively, the latter purchased from France in 1733. They were briefly occupied by the Brits during the Napoleonic Wars in the early 19th century, and sold, by the Danes, in bulk, to the US in 1917. At this moment, the islands constitute, among a large number of smaller islets, the US Virgin Islands.

Oddly enough, to return to my initial thesis: The language that was spoken on the islands before the Yanks stuck their unholy noses in didn’t have anything to do with Danish. It was Dutch, probably caused by the large number of plantation owners from Motherland, intrinsically possessing the habit of spreading like cockroaches to wherever there’s a dime to make.

As a result of the immigration practices of the Europeans, the predominant language on St. Croix was English, while Dutch dominated the other two islands.

Because of the label ‘Negro-Dutch’, I suspected the language to be somehow connected to Papiamentu, which is a ‘Creole Language’, a hybrid language, with its origins in Portuguese, Dutch and a number of African languages. Papiamentu, because of those origins, belongs to the Roman language group. ‘Negro Dutch’ was, although it developed from a similar basis (slave traders hauling enslaved Africans to the Caribbean), completely different.

Looking more closely, it appeared that neither the plantation owners, nor their enslaved staff, fitted in the stereotype of their respective Leeward counterparts, on Curaçao and Bonaire.

The Dutch plantation owners who came to the Danish West Indies didn’t originate from the ABC-Islands, but were mainly refugees from Statia, leaving the island after the English raided it in 1666. They originated from Zeeland rather than from Holland, slightly affecting their dialect.

The enslaved population imported their tongue to the Danish islands, where it, boosted by an English population (and only 6% Danes) made it into a basic Creole, very different from Papiamentu.

The result is remarkable: ‘Negerhollands’, a Germanic language, was quite generally spoken on the Danish islands, especially among enslaved plantation workers, even developed, under the influence of Moravian missionaries, into an ecclesiastical ‘Hoch Kreol’, that diverged considerably from the original.

The language is clearly related to Dutch, looks a bit like South-African, and is, for a native speaker of Dutch, more or less understandable:

“Die hab well twee drie onder die swart Volk die sender a leer voor verstaan beetje van die hollandisch Taal, as sender woon in die Stadt, en hoor die ider Dag van die Blanko, maar die Plantey-Volk no kan verstaan die soo”. – Johann Auerbach, 1774

(“There are some among the black people who have learned to understand a bit of the Hollander Language, as they live in town, and hear it every day from the whites, but the plantation folk cannot understand it.”)

The language gradually lost its appeal on the islands, and, with the arrival of the Americans in 1917, introducing their slang, disappeared entirely during the 20th century. The last native speaker of ‘Negerhollands’ died in 1987.

In case you missed it: Papiamentu is still here.



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. Currently retired.

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Shelter News

Doggie Dates!

Would you like to “date” one of our lovely Shelter dogs? Then how about making a doggie walking date?

Cita and Chrisje were lucky to go for a walk last weekend and they had a great time! They would love to go for a nice walk more often, just like many of the other dogs at the Shelter.

Would you like to walk with our dogs? Then come visit us or send us a message at animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com to plan a walking date. Reminder: our new Shelter opening hours are Monday-Friday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m.-2 p.m.



Pet of the Week



This little boy is Izaak.

He was found in a garden together with his two sisters. They were about 10 weeks old and very social. There was no sight of mama cat so the three little ones were brought to the Shelter.

Izaak is the bravest of the three and you can find him in the Cat Palace. He is probably the first to greet you when you enter the Palace.

Izaak is now 6 months old, has lovely soft fur and is as sweet as can be. He loves to be held and cuddled. Izaak will follow you around the house and the moment you sit down he will jump on your lap.

Izaak is tested NEG on FIV/L, has had all his vaccinations, is castrated and will be chipped the moment you decide to bring him home with you.

Now tell me, don't you think this little boy is adorable? *Monique Degenaar*

If you would like to meet our cats and dogs, please come to Animal Shelter Bonaire, Kaminda Lagun 26A. Open Monday - Friday 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday 11 a.m.-2 p.m. You can also call 701-4989 or 717-4989 to make an appointment, via whatsapp, facebook messenger, or email animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com



On Sunday, January 28 a meeting for all volunteers and staff members of Animal Shelter Bonaire took place at Sorobon Beach Resort. The board members thank everybody for their care of the cats and dogs at the shelter, their help at Pakhus di Pruga, their help at the booth at the cruise market and their help behind the scenes. Without the help of all those people, the Shelter could not exist the way it does now! Special thank you to Sorobon Beach Resort for their great hospitality.

Monique Degenaar



We are in this together Nochi coaches SGB students

January's TCB workshop at Parke Tului asked SGB (high school) students to express through their art Bonaire's commitment to protecting their Island's environment. Students were reminded of Bonaire's tagline, “It's in Our Nature,” which carries a dual meaning. It symbolizes the inherent beauty of Bonaire and reflects the islanders' traditional way of life, since living sustainably was ingrained in their identity.

Cristely Cranston, the TCB coordinator who initiated the workshop, highlighted the importance of relaxing, reflecting, and reconnecting with nature. The young artists were given driftwood for their art project, as it is a natural resource abundant on the island's shores. Artist Norwin (Nochi) Coffie, taught the teens some creative methods, enabling them to translate their vision onto the driftwood. *TCB photo*



Mi Kas Lagun for first time owners

plots are reserved and under contract. Eight lots are still available of which six are for semidetached homes. The plots range in size from 220m² to 504m².

Idea for Mi Kas Lagun (My House Lagun) originated with Rob Schokker and wife Diana of B4U Development several years ago. Schokker explained he wanted to give young professionals aged 25-35 the opportunity to own their own home at a reasonable price.

Schokker went to Orco as their company banker and found former branch manager John Soliano excited about the project idea for young professionals.

Soliano was sold on the idea saying, "That is exactly what we want

for Orco."

Schokker explained, so many young people don't have the money for a new home and this will be their first home.

In regard to purchasing a home at Mi Kas Lagun, one client told Schokker, "If I didn't have this opportunity, I was thinking of leaving Bonaire."

Orco Bank is providing favorable financing for young professionals purchasing Mi Kas Lagun homes. The starting price begins at \$210,000 including ABB. The first homes are scheduled for completion in June.

For more information visit: <https://mikaslagunbonaire.com>.

Julie Morgan



(L-R) Judy Diaz, Country Manager Orco Bank Bonaire; Frank Schokker, Director Mi Kas Lagun BV; Abigail Paula, Former interim country manager Orco Bank Bonaire; Gerson Castanera, Account manager Orco Bank (former Bonaire employee partner in starting the Mi Kas Lagun initiative); Diana Schokker Francken, Director B4U Development BV; Rob Schokker, Director B4U Development BV & Director Mi Kas Lagun BV. Photo Julie Morgan

Official launch ceremony of Mi Kas Lagun, a 39-home development built and priced with the young professional in mind was held January 29 at the site. Partners B4U Development, Bonned Contractors, Orco Bank, new

homeowners and prospective buyers attended the 'ground breaking' to see firsthand the progress of the new development. Construction on four homes began last November and five more are in the pre-building phase.

Mi Kas Lagun offers four different building plans on varied sized plots. The plans include detached houses and semidetached houses with two to three bedrooms. Of the 39 available home plots, 23 have been sold and another eight



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