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BONAIRE The REPORTER

Feb. 14- Feb. 28, 2024 Year 31, Issue 4



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Ooh La La Aztec Goddess
Photo by Julie Morgan

49th Karnaval Bonaire brings smiles

King Momo was burned to ashes last night signifying the end of Bonaire's 2024 Karnaval season and signaling the beginning of Lent. For the last month Bonaireans have sang, danced, partied, and elected queens and panchos to head up their yearly celebration.

The colorful event came early this year and arrived before we even knew it, but Fundashon Union Ta Hasi Forsa (UNTAHF) organized the event in record time with impressive results that pleased the crowds of locals and guests.

Karnaval royalty was named on January 20 in a ceremony at Jong Bonaire. Participants vied for Karnaval Queen, Pancho and Princes in both children and adult categories. Contestants were judged on best costume and carnivalesque speak. Elected to preside over the Karnaval were Queen Shairoline Valerius and runner up Carolina Winklaar. Elected to carry the key to officially open Karnaval were Prince Arnold Wilsoe and Pancho Jeaniro Dorothea. Queen Eurllyenne Domacasse was named youth queen and for the teens, Qsheantely Martines was named queen, G-sean Celestijn, prince and Kaelen Winklaar, pancho.

Four different Tumbas, Jump-ups and Jump-ins were held to select the best Karnaval song. Anyone attending these big parties not only heard the competing musicians but were treated to some great local music from JC Friends, DJ

Marv, DJ Jewelz, Jeon and Luis Moka.

The first of the seven parades was the Children's Parade in historic Rincon on Feb 3, where Karnaval first began many years ago. Next up was the Children Parade in Kralendijk on Feb 4. Karnaval weekend began with the Elderly Parade

and Teener Parade on Friday, followed by the Grand Rincon Parade on Saturday and Grand Kralendijk Parade on Sunday. Karnaval wrapped for the children with a final evening parade on Monday and burning of a mini-MoMo. Fat Tuesday saw the evening grand parade

giving spectators their final opportunity to see the nine Karnaval groups' colorful costumes as they paraded through the streets to the burning of King MoMo.

In the parades each group dances in sync to their own music, stopping only to pose for a photo or grab something

to drink. The Ban Gosa group with Miss Bonaire Ruby Pouchet staged an Egyptian Fantasy. Hype Dancing Group were dressed in Indian costumes and Ooh la la group wore Aztec Sun Goddess costumes over bronze colored body suits. Unity Majorette group was attired in majorette costumes and were led by a majorette with a baton. Celebrating their 10th year, The Precious Diamond's theme was Diamonds Imperium. The Dominican (Republic) Music group, were led by a girl in traditional country dress. Deseo di Pueblo carried signs and wore black and yellow t-shirts promoting going out safely and safe sex. Some group members dressed in doctor smocks and carried signs about political issues of the last year. I love Bonaire Loko Loko wore colorful afro wigs and bright yellow t-shirts proclaiming *I love Bonaire*. And finally the Crazy sexy cool – carnival angels were dressed all in white with feathered headdresses.

Bonaire Karnaval 2024 was sponsored by: FWNB (Fundashon Wega Di Number Bonaire), OLB, MCB, Kooyman, Karels Beach Bar, Curoil, Cartish, Bonaire logistics and Wholesaler, Landsloterij, Coral Casino Bonaire, Telbo, Digicel, TipTopLeanez, Obersi Group, BWM Infrastructure, MAC Enterprises, C3 and Don Andres.

To see what you missed, visit *The Bonaire Reporter* Facebook page.

Julie Morgan story / photos



Rincon Children's Parade Photo Julie Morgan

Bonaire to have richest political parties in the kingdom

Under recently passed legislation, every time the OLB spends a dollar the political parties will bank almost a penny. Apparently not all the island councilors knew what was in the regulation. They thought they were voting for a much lower, although still generous, amount. Now they know the final text of the regulation had been changed from the version they approved earlier.

Municipalities in the Netherlands can elect to pay their political factions a fixed amount per year to cover such costs as "administrative and secretarial support, external communication and expert advice." Putten, with approximately 25,000 inhabitants, contributes 8,850 euros a year in faction support. Haarlemmermeer, 155,000 inhabitants, contributes 200,000 euros.

Under the earlier draft of Bonaire's legislation, the OLB would have paid a fixed sum of \$315,000 in faction support for 2024. Under the legislation that the Island Council ended up passing, however, the factions will receive an estimated \$795,600. And that will not be a fixed sum but a legislated 0.9% of the current budget. The amount will increase every year as the island economy grows.

The Island Council first discussed the concept in a MVR (opinion-forming meeting) on September 15 last year. MVRs are intended to allow for public debate on proposals before a vote is taken on a final version. In this case no discussion occurred, and the legislation in its final form was approved at a BAR (decision-making meeting) on October 3. No record can be found of approved amendments that would account for the significant differences between the MVR version and the BAR version. Nor was the island council informed that the MVR version had been changed before the BAR vote.

Interim Island Registrar Arjen de Wolff had custody of the proposed legislation between the MVR and BAR meetings. He also had a duty

to alert the Island Council to any changes. The opposition accuses de Wolff of changing the draft legislation himself. The opposition, and the public at large, is also curious to find out why he changed it (if he did). Did someone tell him to? If so, who?

Deputy Clark Abraham, leader of the PDB and head of the ruling coalition, defended the increase in fierce terms. PDB coalition partners, including Daisy Coffee's M21, say they still support the increase. The PDB faction's compensation (\$265,200) will be deposited to the account of the "Foundation Support Island Council Faction Partido Demokrat," registered at the Chamber of Commerce Bonaire in 2019. That was the year Abraham's party easily won the election but failed to form a coalition.

Hennyson Thielman and Humphrey Wout, of the opposition party MPB, said the faction support decision should be withdrawn. At press time, UPB's Cyrill Vrolijk had not yet expressed a position.

State Secretary for Kingdom Relations Alexandra van Huffelen said the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is conducting an investigation. She also wants the decision reversed. She mentioned that the entire Island Council and the Executive Council will fly to the Netherlands at the end of this month to renegotiate of WolBES and FinBES, the post 10-10-10 laws that committed the OLB to adopt better governance practices and more financial responsibility. The delegation hopes to convince The Hague that it has made big improvements in both and should be rewarded with more money and less government intervention. Van Huffelen said she has added the faction support issue to the conference agenda. She also pointed out that the Island Council still has "three weeks to prevent possible intervention by The Hague."

DMR

Bonaire has no shortage of flies and mosquitos

The OLB blames the mosquito plague on the recent rains. Too much stagnant water is lying around where female mosquitos can deposit their eggs. The OLB doesn't know why we have so many flies.

The Public Health Department says doctors are reporting cases of dengue on the island. How many are occurring is not known, because dengue symptoms are usually mild and go away after a week or two. People should avoid getting bitten by mosquitos, the Department says. Or by the dengue mosquitos, at least.

The OLB says don't worry about the flies. Just don't leave food uncovered. DMR

Drone ban likely to be lifted

Currently the BES aviation law prohibits the use of drones in the Caribbean Netherlands. The House of Representatives is considering an amendment that would lift the ban. Social, professional and especially recreational use of drones is expected to increase, but not to onerous or dangerous levels. DMR

Now we know what the Executive Council did in 2023

The Island Secretary's Office has been clearing backlogs by publishing the various decisions of the previous and current Executive Councils. As regulations require, the public decrees, BC decisions and the Proclamation Sheets have been fully updated through week 46. DMR

Big \$ coming for poverty reduction

The increase in the statutory minimum wage in the Caribbean Netherlands will cost the central government more than 50 million euros annually, according to Minister Carola Schouten of Poverty Policy, Participation and Pensions and State Secretary Alexandra van Huffelen of Kingdom Relations. They have also announced concrete steps to reduce poverty on the islands. Debt assistance will be improved. Islanders will be eligible for unemployment benefits. And the government will make 700,000 euros available for developing a subsidized form of public transport in the islands too. DMR

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How to Find Us

Read us online:
<https://bonairereporter.com>
<https://www.facebook.com/TheBonaireReporter/>
Available in 70 locations
Printed every two weeks
Next edition: February 28, 2024
Contributor's Deadline: February 23, 2024

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Distribution: Divi-Divi Airline, Printed by: DeStad Drukkerij, Curaçao
Founders: George and Laura DeSalvo
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The REPORTER
HAS A NEW NUMBER
+599-786-4055



The floating swimming pool at Parke Tului is closed for renovations from February 10. It will reopen for the Open Bonairean Championships on February 24 (see page 20). After these championships, the swimming pool will be open for the public's general use again. Photo Julie Morgan

Hooked by Sunsets



Brandon Zabbia and Roxanne Resad Photo Julie Morgan

sunset while enjoying a bottle of wine on the steps of what would become “Hooked by Sunsets.” The couple owned a restaurant in Curaçao and were scouting several islands for a new restaurant site.

After some investigation of ownership, introductions were made, and the deal was done. They gutted the entire building and reconstructed the entire place.

Roxanne, a marketing specialist good with numbers, is originally from Trinidad. She explained they were supposed to open in May last year, but things went sideways with the contractor and the opening was delayed until October.

Brandon, originally from South Africa, is a former professional hockey player turned chef, changing careers due to a playing accident. Brandon’s specialty

is creating new flavors in sauces and bringing out the unique taste of different foods. At their Curaçao restaurant he concocted his own Lemoncella through food mixology.

Roxanne said, “Brandon always loved cooking. He went to school at a hotel restaurant school and six months later became a sous chef at a hi-end restaurant running the kitchen. Some people just love to cook...”

With Roxanne’s marketing skills they have developed a different type of concept for ‘Hooked’. She explained the style of eating has changed worldwide. Some people still want big plates of food, but smaller plates and

Hooked by Sunsets go to page 6



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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.

Emergency protocols needed for water accidents

Several weeks ago I assisted in an accident on the water in front of Bonaire. It is not my intention to go into details about the accident. Instead I came away with ideas that can make such incidents better organized concerning a coordinated evacuation from a boat.

Bonaire is seeing a continued increase in tourism with a total of 436,914 tourists by plane in 2023 and 470,000 on cruise ships. In January 2023 alone, the island experienced 70,256 cruise ship passengers.

Bonaire has long been a mecca for water sports—primarily diving but water sport companies continue to expand with cruise ship tourism. Consequently more and more people are using the waters around Bonaire. It is imperative to have safety procedures in place, not if, but when an accident occurs. Below are several proposals that can help improve recovery, transportation and speed medical assistance to the patient. This will help tour operators, dive shops, boat captains and crew responding to water accidents. It is inevitable that accidents will happen again and therefore it is important that a set of emergency protocols be followed.

• Designated Docks

Boat captains and crew should be familiar with the nearest primary docks available to transfer the patient to an ambulance as quickly as possible.

a. For water accidents North of Something Special and the north side of Klein Bonaire, Harbor Village Marina could be a designated point to meet an ambulance. If the docking space is unavailable, Yellow Submarine

or Nautica Pier could be an alternative location. (For small boats Den Leman/Sand Dollar dock could also be used.)

b. For water sport accidents to the south of Kralendijk and Klein Bonaire, North Pier would be a good choice. If unavailable, South Pier could be used but an additional dock on the side of the pier would need to be constructed along with a risk assessment.

• Maps

First Aid and Oxygen Kits could contain waterproof maps of the locations so captains and crew can quickly and easily access them as reference.

• Communications

A designated meeting place will make it easier for first responders and ambulance drivers. Maps and familiarization with the locations should be implemented with all drivers. Communication between STINPA and Police to aid and assist in the transfer of the patient from the boat to the ambulance is of vital importance. Coast Guard and Brandweer should be notified of the situation.

To implement such a plan is not that complicated if all water front operators come together with an understanding that this is for the benefit of all involved. Often accidents involving water sports require a rapid response to those in peril. It is of increasing importance that Dive Resorts, Water Sport Operators, Medical and Safety Personal establish protocols for Bonaire and for those locally employed working in, on, or around Bonaire waters.

On a side note, emergency plans should also be in place in the event of a catastrophic accident on water.

Michael LaFortune

Water Management

I have a good chuckle each time I see Water Energy Bonaire's electronic and print advertisement to conserve water. I have been conserving water since the 1970's.

I don't run the water while I brush my teeth. I put the toothpaste on the brush and turn the water on low when it is time to rinse. I don't run the water when I wash my hands. I wet my hands, rub on the soap and swirl it on my hands before turning on the tap to rinse. I don't run the water when I shower. I wet my body and turn off the flow then apply the soap covering my body then turn on the water to rinse. I think some Americans will recognize this as a military bath. I wash my hair during the shower without using separate water for this task. I have a few potted plants that I water using a pail.

The point of this letter: Look around at the numbers of swimming pools on such a tiny island. I can't say every home has a pool because that is not true. But every B & B, every resort, a lot of private homes. The thousands of gallons of water to maintain the pools are astronomical. I'm sure WEB is straining to keep its facilities meeting the amount of fresh water used by this island. I applaud WEB for forewarning the population of what may lie ahead but their advertising efforts may be in vain. People learn by experiencing. Dry wells, equipment breakdowns and drought may be their best teacher.

Masha Danki, Earline Wasser

Hassled by Police

I walk the kanti awa (the waterfront) nearly every day and have for the past 15 years. A couple of days ago I was heading north just past the Doune office when I had to walk in the street next to the curb since a car parked on the sidewalk, blocking my way. Soon I heard a repeated horn beeping and turned to see a police car directly behind me. As the patrol car pulled up next to me the policeman at the wheel told me to get off the street. I pointed to the car parked on the sidewalk as the reason I had to walk where I did, but he just repeated his command, "Get off the street." There were two people on the other side of the police car walking in the middle of the road in the same direction and I responded, "What about them?" Ignoring my questions, the cop again said, "The street is for cars, not people. Get off the street."

As soon as I got past the car parked on the sidewalk, I did just that. But I question why the policeman made such an issue about this when it was obvious why I had to walk in the street as did the two other people. Obviously, this was an opportunity for him to flex his power. I find it disturbing that a member of Bonaire's police force would resort to such rudeness. That officer needs to be reminded that he is there to serve the people of Bonaire, not to hassle them.

R.S.

Ask Bob

Bonaire real estate advice



Hi Bob –

I've never gotten a property tax bill, do I need to do something, or do I just wait until they send me a bill?

Hi Barbara, that's a great question. The tax office recently issued a rule that if you don't get a property tax bill it is your responsibility to notify the tax office that you didn't receive a tax bill.

When do you have to report?

The property tax reporting obligation has been introduced for three situations:

1. for those who at any time (from 1 January 2024) obtain the enjoyment of an immovable property by virtue of ownership, possession or another limited right. Example: you purchased a home or business premises from January 1, 2024. You must make this notification within four months after acquiring enjoyment of the immovable property.

2. for those who at any time have the enjoyment of an immovable property by virtue of ownership, possession or any other real right and in respect of which changes have occurred (as of January 1, 2024) to that immovable property through construction, renovation, improvement, demolition or destruction. For example, you have had a renovation done or a swimming pool built (increase in value). Or the building has been partly demolished (depreciation). You must make this notification within four months after a change to the immovable property has occurred.

3. for those who (from 1 January 2024) have the enjoyment by virtue of ownership, possession or limited right at the start of a calendar year and have not received a real estate tax assessment within one year after the end of that calendar year. You must make this notification within four months after the end of the calendar year in which you had to receive a property tax assessment.

Here are the links to the form you have to fill out to report yourself to the tax office:

The form if you purchased property

<https://www.belastingdienst-cn.nl/onderwerpen/vastgoedbelasting/melden-vastgoedmutatie/aankoop-vastgoed>

The form if you made changes to the property

<https://www.belastingdienst-cn.nl/onderwerpen/vastgoedbelasting/melden-vastgoedmutatie/wijziging-aan-uw-vastgoed>

The form if you never received a property tax invoice

<https://www.belastingdienst-cn.nl/onderwerpen/vastgoedbelasting/melden-vastgoedmutatie/geen-aanslag-vastgoedbelasting-ontvangen>

Regards, Bob

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.

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Did you pay your

All conservation projects, research, education and work we do are made possible by the nature fee you purchase.

We are incredibly grateful for your dedication to preserving our nature. Thank you for purchasing your nature fee. Available online at STINAPAbonaire.org



Nature Fee?

POLICE REPORT

Property crime

Feb. 6. A Kymco Agility scooter with license plate MF-152 was stolen between 1:30 and 6:30 p.m. It was parked under a roof at the back of a house on Kaya Aruaco.

Feb. 6. A beach bag was stolen from a beach at Bulevar E.E.G. between 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. The bag contained, among other things, a Pinkday & Kyss handbag, two American drivers' licenses, two towels from Celebrity Cruise, a credit card, an Epi-pen and cash.

Feb. 5. Two backpacks were stolen from the beach of the diving spot 'Alice in Wonderland' located on Bulevar E.E.G. between 1 and 2:30 p.m. The bags contained, among other things, sunglasses, clothing and shoes.

Feb. 4. Two scooters were stolen between 10:30 p.m. and 2:45 a.m. when they were parked outside a catering facility on Kaminda Lac: a black Kymco Agility scooter with license plate number MF-607 and a gray Kymco Agility scooter with license plate number MF-93.

Arrests

Feb. 3. A man, 37, was arrested on Kaya Neerlandia for assault. The man had hit a woman in the face with a clenched fist.

Driving under the influence

Feb. 8. A man, 57, was arrested on Kaya Shastan for driving under the influence of alcohol. He was involved

in a collision between two cars. No one was injured.

Feb. 5. At approximately 2:35 a.m. a woman, 27, was arrested for reckless driving and for failure to comply with a demand from an official in office.

Feb. 4. At approximately 3:30 a.m. a man, 33, was arrested on Kaya J.N.E. Craane for driving under the influence of alcohol. His car crashed into the back of a parked car.

Feb. 2. A man, 42, was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol. The suspect's car was spotted as it swerved across the road on Kaya Nikiboko North. The driver was unable to take the breath test after five attempts and was arrested.

Traffic accidents

Feb. 6. At around 2 p.m. a scooter ran into the back of a car on Bulevar Gobernador Nicolaas Debrot. The driver of the scooter stated that she did not see the car stop. Ambulance personnel treated the driver of the scooter on the spot.

Feb. 3. Two cars collided on Kaminda Djabou around 2 p.m. Car 1 was driving north on Kaminda Djabou when suddenly car 2 drove onto Kaminda Djabou from Kaya Tintorero without giving way, causing car 1 to collide with car 2. Car 2 ended up on its side due to the impact. The driver of car 2 was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Traffic checks

Feb. 2. A traffic stop was held at Kaya Nikiboko Suit from 6:45 p.m. Of the 15 motor vehicles stopped for inspection four drivers received a fine. The fines were for driving without: 2x a valid driver's license; 2x valid proof of insurance; and 1x a license plate.

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

Public order

Feb. 3-4. Children's carnival passed off peacefully. Last weekend the children's parades took place in Rincon and Playa. On Saturday everything went smoothly in Rincon. On Sunday in Playa, some drivers were approached because they parked behind the barricades. Four drivers of scooters were also asked to get off the scooters because they were riding on public roads in a closed area during carnival. A bicycle was taken into custody because the rider got back on his bicycle after he was spoken to. All roads were open to traffic again around 9 p.m.

Feb. 11. In Kralendijk the police carried out alcohol checks on drivers of the carnival parade. Drivers who had drunk too much were removed from the procession. The parade was slightly delayed starting.

Roffa Reefs sees more changes

Roffa Reefs, a project that began as an experiment in the Oceanium in Rotterdam's Blijdorp Zoo to help save the coral through fish farming, is expanding. Almost two years ago founder of Roffa Reefs, Sander van Lopik, brought the project to Bonaire. It seemed a much better idea to base the project in Bonaire's natural environment than in the controlled environment of an aquarium. With the help of Bonaire's local fishing cooperative Piskabon, STINAPA, Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) and WWF-NL the project has seen considerable results.



L-R: Tim van Wagensveld Program manager - Caribbean Hub of Diergaarde Blijdorp, Sander van Lopik, founder of RoffaReefs) and Erik Zevenbergen, director Diergaarde Blijdorp. Photo Nancy Louth



Checking out the unit are L-R: Enchomar of STINAPA, Sander van Lopik, Randolph Streng of Rotterdam Zoo, Edgar of STINAPA and Eddy of Dive Friends.

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The Roffa Reefs unit has undergone a few design changes since the beginning as its creators learned through experimentation what works best. The unit has been stationed in front of Sand Dollar since October 2022. The first design was attached to a small boat and the latest design to a mooring anchoring system. Unfortunately, last week Bonaire's huge waves caused the RoffaReef fish breeding system to detach from its anchors.

The large waves smashed it against the wall at Sand Dollar and float down Bari reef. Luckily, Sand Dollar resident Becky Pruitt witnessed the event and contacted STINAPA.

Van Lopik said, "With help, we were able to secure the system on the beach. It will remain there until the weather calms down. The beaching of the system gives the opportunity for repairs and updates. The system only seems to have minor damage showing that the latest designs have proven to be more robust."

Van Lopik was on island working on the project along with Blijdorp director Erik Zevenbergen and Tim van Wagensveld. Beginning in June Wagensveld will be stationed full time on Bonaire as program manager to monitor work on the Roffa Reefs project.

Julie Morgan

What do these stories have in common?



lands. He also promised to immediately begin construction of a factory hall in Hato where Bonairean workers would make prefab houses for the remainder of the project. So far only 30 houses have been erected. None are ready for occupancy. Construction of the prefab home factory is still just a promise.

2. A kilometer from the Hato factory site, BUY NOW signs are plastered on a bare lot squeezed between Chocogo Beach Resort and Eden Beach. No units are actually available because construction has not yet begun. The project was blocked during one of the building permits scandals that preceded the resignation of governor Edison Rina. The original design violated so many building codes and planning restrictions that it's hard to see how Starreveld could ever get it approved. But after a recent meeting with OLB officials, he announced good progress had been made toward resolving the issue.

3. Starreveld is also director and now principle owner of Resort Bonaire in Belnem. (In January EuroParcs Group decided Bonaire is no longer a promising place to do business and went back to Europe.) It transferred its interest in Resort Bonaire, and thereby its interest in Sunset Beach Resort as well, to Starreveld, its erstwhile partner. Resort Bonaire has troubles of its own. According to NRC, wealthy Dutch people bought apartments there "with the aim of achieving significant returns from rental." According to NCR, buying-in didn't cost much. But the new owners were saddled with \$7,000 in management fees every year. A third of the more than a hundred apartments are not even producing income, NRC reports. They cannot be rented because of defective air conditioning and overdue maintenance.

So the name Peter Starreveld is not the only thing these three projects have in common. *DMR*

Appointments



Judy Diaz has rejoined the Orco Bank NV as its new Country Manager for the Bonaire branch.



Maritsa Silberie is the new head of the department of Education Culture and Science (OCW) at Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. One of her responsibilities will be to help protect the unique culture and nature of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, both above and below water.

Hooked by Sunsets from page 3



shared dining has become a real thing and the concept for the restaurant.

"We think women don't want a main course. They usually have two starters and share. Start with one and see if you want more," said Roxanne. "The other thing is budgeting for diners. You can get a plate and a glass of wine for under \$20 making it more affordable. Our strategy is a bit different."

Most people will visit fine dining restaurants once a year for special occasions. But at "Hooked", diners can come in every week and have one dish each time. Seating is available outside on the patios to view the sunset or in the comfortable lounge inside. One of the coolest things is the live tree, growing through the roof.

The RestroBAR menu is priced from \$5 to \$35. Diners will find a fusion style selection of flavorful meat, seafood and veggie dishes to share or keep all to themselves. The Fish Tacos are amazing with a wonton taco shell and the Mushroom Ravioli is perfect. And it's not all 'shared' plates, there are a few entrees for people with big appetites. Brandon has conjured

up a Kabritu Stew for a Bonaire local flavor, a Kip Satay and a Ribeye Steak. Dessert lovers will find a Cheese Platter, Deconstructed Cheesecake which you have to taste to believe and a Chocolate Sunset.

And for that special drink to enjoy the sunset, a full bar is stocked with wine by the glass, beer and cocktails. Roxanne and Brandon are seasoned rum connoisseurs and can guide you to your favorite rum with a Rum Flight made up of the best rums from Haiti, Colombia, Cuba, Guyana and Trinidad. For the beer drinkers, "Hooked" has that covered too. A Beer Flight is available with a variety of kegged beers that is rotated weekly. This includes Vandrestreet, a beer from a small Utrecht brewery the couple introduced to the Caribbean.

Hooked by Sunsets is open 3 to 11:30 p.m. and closed on Tuesdays. Happy Hour is held daily from 5- 7 p.m. Reservations can be booked by WhatsApp +599-700-7738 or online <https://hookedbysunsets.com>. Walk-ins are welcomed. Food and beer are available for takeaway. Hooked by Sunsets is located on the waterfront across from Karel's Beach Bar.

Photos/story Julie Morgan



Let Biodiversity be your Valentine, Earth's Resilient Guardian, weaving a tapestry of life. In the intricate web of ecosystems, each species plays a vital role, creating a symphony of diversity that harmonizes with our planet's heartbeat.

This Valentine's Day, let's celebrate the connections that bind us to the web of life. May we be stewards of this precious heritage, nurturing and protecting the Biodiversity that sustains and enriches our world.

Happy Valentine's Day to the true Guardian of our Earth, Biodiversity!

Foundation Save Plantation Bolivia

Plants & Herbs of Mother Earth is now available



Contributors to the book were healers and herbalists: Ernest de Lanoy, Petra Cecilia, author Denise de Jongh-Rekuest, Diana Sint Jago, Philomena Beauont-Janga, Raimunda Martis, George Cultura Thode, Leticia Thielman Beaumont, Rafael Damascus and (not pictured) healer Mavis Abrahams. Photo Julie Morgan

Bonaire's traditional healers and herbalists have collaborated to publish *Plants & Herbs of Mother Earth*, a book that records several hundred years of cultural practices and knowledge.

In the preface, Jan van der Ploeg, former director of STINAPA Bonaire says, "Many Bonaireans have turned their backs on the mondi, as the wilderness is called. The kunukus; small plots where people use to cultivate their food, have been abandoned. And the knowledge of plants that once healed the people of Bonaire is slowly disappearing."



Author Denise de Jongh Rekuest takes the mic. Photo Julie Morgan

With this book some of that lost knowledge is revived and can be reinjected into the population. The authors encourage islanders to use the book not only as a guide to healing, but also as a means of inspiring themselves to protect, care and restore the landscape of Bonaire. In other words, to claim back Bonaire's nature.

Denise de Jongh-Rekuest worked with STINAPA's Diana Sint Jago to interview eight healers and herbalists for their traditional knowledge regarding 27 herbs and plants. The book explains where the herbs and plants can be found, when they are available, how they are prepared and what they can heal. Many of the medicinal plants can be found right in your own backyard while others require an adventure trip to the mundi.

Prayer and faith play a big role in the success of herb and plant treatments as both treatment and belief are essential to all healing.

de Jongh-Rekuest says, "The gift of healing people is a gift that healers and herbalists received from God. Those who are sick must also believe and have faith... The spiritual aspect is extremely important."

One healer in the book is Head Ranger for Washington Slagbaai National Park (WSNP) George "Kultura" Thode. Much of his knowledge was passed down from his grandmother and other local healers. If you are a regular at Mangazina di Rei's monthly Nos Zjilea event, you might recognize Leticia "Letty" Thielman-Beaumont. She regularly attends to sell her herbal and plant remedies. She will willingly give advice on particular ailments and treatments.

The names of herbs and plants are listed in Papiamentu and Latin. The photos are clear, colorful and concise and will make identification easy, even for a non-local who wants to give herbal medicine a try. But for safety, if you are thinking of heading out to the mundi on your own for herbs and plants for a specific ailment, contact a healer or herbalist first.

Besides recipes the book contains do's and don'ts regarding herbal and plant medicine. Most of the plants



and herbs are first boiled even if they are not for tea. Some can only be administered for a recommended number of days. Herbs should never be combined with other medication prescribed by your medical doctor. And don't add sugar as they will not be effective. And if you are visiting WSNP, be sure to ask "Kultura" what he is chewing on... it's in the book too.

de Jongh-Rekuest is the author of some 20 books, some for children and some for adults. Many are only in Papiamentu, but this one is also in English.

The book is currently available at the main STINAPA office. For more information about Denise de Jongh-Rekuest visit her Facebook page.

Reach 1000s of customers. Advertise in *The Bonaire Reporter*
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Mini-Lenny bashes Bonaire

We should have seen it coming. The forecast kept predicting a “wind reversal,” usually a mild and short-lived event that worries only the cruisers hanging on moorings in the anchorage. But a wind that blows that steadily for days from the same direction, with that force, will inevitably build up large seas. What we experienced last week was not a reversal. It was an El Norte blowing strong and cold from the U.S. The counter-clockwise flow from a large low pressure area off the Carolinas pushed across the frozen plains of the Midwest then down into the Caribbean, driving heavy waves onto lee shores all the way to the Spanish Main. Those winds are still blowing, powered by the ruminants of that same low off the U.S. east coast. But now our seasonal trade winds, unusually strong, have established themselves from the east and are cutting off El Norte before it can get this far south. The trade wind waves will expend their energy harmlessly against the east coast.

The effects on shore were reminiscent of those caused by rogue Hurricane Lenny in November, 1999, although not nearly as severe. Dive operators are reporting random, mostly nuisance damage and losses. Roffa Reefs, the experimental fish breeding farm in front of Sand Dollar, came unmoored and had to be towed back, as did an elderly dive boat at Habitat that was cracked and put out of service. Wet suits and other dive gear were washed into the ocean at scattered locations, including 80 dive tanks reportedly overboard at Habitat. Afterwards divers from the resorts recovered some equipment, especially tanks.

Reporting on its coral restoration projects, Reef Renewal says the coral nurseries and gene banks are safe, but the out-planting sites south of and around Klein Bonaire took some significant damage. While boulder corals were not visibly damaged, but out-planted branching corals were. The debris is being cleaned up in the impacted areas, damage assessment continues, and what can be saved is being saved. STINAPA issued a jellyfish warning after the seas started to settle. Many sightings were reported, including the dangerous Portuguese man o’ war.

Saba closed its Harbor Office on Thursday, the 8th. Sint Maarten closed all its schools. The Meteorological Service issued a yellow warning as rough seas and high waves pounded Curaçao. A 15-minute video posted on YouTube shows a couple of dozen people watching waves role onto a beach on Aruba. They’re all holding up their phones and saying, “Wow, look at that one!” DMR



Waves at Habitat. Photo Louise Marquering



Hitting the retaining wall at Sand Dollar. Photo Alan Zale



The waves at Sand Dollar broke off this elkhorn coral. Photo Becky Pruitt



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Wetlands and human wellbeing

Bonaire celebrated World Wetlands Day at Wilhelminaplein on February 2. This day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar. The island of Bonaire is home to four RAMSAR sites: Washington Slagbaai National Park, Klein Bonaire, Lac and Pekelmeer makes this a day of particular significance.

The theme this year was Wetlands and human wellbeing. As in past years, Bonaire's Mangrove Maniacs organized the event. Founder Sabine Engel explained that the 2024 theme prompted them to include societal groups that benefit from the wetlands as well as nature groups.

Some 13 organizations set up tables to explain their work to the crowd. A large screen featured videos illustrating the environmental work done on the island to protect not only our wetlands and nature, but also to promote human wellbeing.

Commissioner Clark Abraham spoke to the environmentalist crowd of his grandfathers

who once hunted for ducks in the salina near the Marriott resort.

The politician said, "Across from Harbour Village the salina and wetlands need to be protected. The government needs to reinvent the wetlands, but we need to encourage the government. We need everyone to help and support these causes."

The Hofi Kultural band performed along with Farley's Entertainment providing a festive atmosphere. SV Vitesses managed a bar to generate funding for their club.

Organizations taking part in the event were: Mangrove Maniacs, Greenpeace, STI-NAPA, Tera Barra, Bonberde, Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation, Fuhikubo, Nature Cooking School, Piskabon, Saskia Vermeer author of Wind, Water, Waves of Bonaire, Fuhikubo with the Making Bonaire Heritage Together project, Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire, Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire and World Wildlife Foundation represented by Carolyn Caporusso of Clean Coast Bonaire.

Story / Photos Julie Morgan



Querijn Coolin of BonBèrdè demonstrates how rainwater reacts when flowing through a salina where the water flow is managed, as opposed to when it flows through a salina that is unmanaged.

To learn more about wetlands and Bonaire's involvement view the slide show presentation:
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/48l5trq72prg1ixmcjoh/Wetland-WD-2024-video-clip.mov?rlkey=debs411ruqot3ujim7tppafs&dl=0>

New firefighters promoted to rank A

Victor Santos, Gershon Herrera and Ricky Santos of the Caribbean Netherlands Fire Department (BKCEN) - Sint Eustatius fire department - have been promoted to the rank of enlisted man A. The intensive course of crew A prepares firefighters for the real work. They learn everything they need to know in the field of firefighting, technical assistance and flammable substances. They also learn how to act in critical situations and work in a team.

Acting Fire Chief Marvin Dollison and Shift Chief and commander Wayne Maharaj proudly pinned their stripes and presented their diplomas. Family and fire brigade colleagues were also present at this festive ceremony. BKCEN congratulates Victor, Gershon and Ricky on their promotion.



In remembrance of Paul Humann, Author/Photographer/Publisher Eric Riesch, New World Publications Inc.

Paul Humann passed away February 5, 2024 at age 86, peacefully in his home in Davie, FL with friends and family by his side. He was the co-founder of both New World Publications (www.fishid.com) and Reef Environmental Education Foundation (www.reef.org).

Paul learned to dive and took his first underwater photographs in the early 1960s, while still in law school. His hobby became a way of life in 1971 when he left his successful law practice to become captain/owner of the *M/V Cayman Diver*, the Caribbean's first live-aboard dive cruiser.

In 1988 Paul joined forces with Ned DeLoach, founder of New World Publications, as co-Editor of *Ocean Realm* magazine. Finding that they worked well together, the pair established a long-standing partnership and subsequently self-published a series of marine life/diving related books (www.fishid.com), beginning with the popular, user friendly, reference trilogy, *Reef Fish Identification*, *Reef Creature Identification* and *Reef Coral Identification - Florida, Caribbean, Bahamas*. Together the pair authored, photographed, and published 14 marine-related books for underwater naturalists.

Paul's groundwork for the field guides ultimately established visual identification criteria for innumerable marine species, making it practical for naturalists as well as ma-

rine scientists to make valid non-impact biodiversity assessments of reef ecosystems for the first time.

Paul and Ned's concern for the welfare of the marine environment led to their founding of REEF Reef Environmental Education Foundation in 1990, based in Key Largo, Florida (www.REEF.org). REEF's mission to protect biodiversity and ocean life by actively engaging and inspiring the public through citizen science, education, and partnership with the scientific community, continues to guide the organization into its fourth decade.

In recognition of their authoritative guidebooks and the founding of REEF, the publishing partners received the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force's Outstanding Public Awareness and Education Award in 2006. Paul's other notable tributes and honors include being named a 2006 recipient of The Diving Equipment and Marketing Association's Reaching Out Award, induction in 2007 into the International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame, and in 2010 was the recipient of the NOGI award from the Academy of Underwater Arts and Sciences, for his efforts to preserve the underwater world.

In lieu of flowers, memorials in Paul's honor may be directed to REEF Reef Environmental Education Foundation (www.reef.org). A celebration of life will be scheduled in the near future.



Paul Humann 1937 - 2024

Remembering Paul Humann Mel McCombie and Harris Friedberg

We first met Paul on board a liveaboard boat going from Key West to the Dry Tortugas in June 1994, where he helped teach our first ever REEF fish identification course. On that trip, Paul and his longtime friend and colleague Ned DeLoach were working hard on the second edition of the Caribbean fish identification book. Taking that course and learning about fish changed our lives. Paul and Ned's pioneering work in training sport divers to identify and count fish was profoundly important advance in citizen science.

About fifteen years later, we got to know Paul better when we joined the Board of Trustees of REEF. In addition to his passion for fish, Paul was an ardent gardener and landscaper. His house in Davie, Florida (near Fort Lauderdale), known as Mango Manor for its trees, was exquisitely planted with over a hundred varieties of palms, orchids, bromeliads, and landscaped beautifully. Paul was also a superb host, and always ready for a sociable get-together.

Paul and Ned not only founded REEF, but Paul was in touch with fish scientists all over the world. He helped change the course of science, and now lives in immortality with a species of flasher wrasse from Indonesia named for him. I think of Paul every time I open up one of the identification books after a dive, where one sees creature after creature photographed in Bonaire.



Paul's favorite photo of himself underwater with a young Goliath Grouper (Photo Paul Humann archive)

Fried pineapple in caramel sauce with coconut ice cream by Chef Corjan Hoogerheide, Lekker Thuis

400 gm (1 ¾ C) cubes of fresh pineapple • 20 gm (1.5 T) butter • 50 gm (1/2 C) sugar • Dash of Malibu rum • 50 gm (1/4 C) cream • 50 gm (1/4 C) coconut milk • 10 gm (1 T) Grated coconut
4 scoops of coconut ice cream • 4 Crispy cookies
• 4 sprigs of mint

Melt the butter in a frying pan and let it brown slightly. Fry the pineapple cubes on all sides and add the sugar and let it caramelize. Add the Malibu rum, coconut milk and cream and let it reduce by half to create a caramel sauce. Add the grated coconut at the end.

Divide among 4 plates and place a scoop of coconut ice cream on top and garnish with a cookie, sprig and some grated coconut.

Each month Chef Corjan Hoogerheide of Lekker Thuis share the recipe for one of his personal dishes created from Bonaire's fresh ingredients.



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What's Happening

Animal Shelter: Mon-Fri 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sat. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. phone/whatsapp: 701 4989 or 717 4989. Email: animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com

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/terramarmuseumbonaire/>

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.
Saturday, February 17	Stand up comedy at Sonrisa 6:30 p.m. \$25 limited seating https://www.facebook.com/groups/1140183747114199
Saturday, February 24	Open Bonairean Swimming Championships Floating Pool at Parke Tului. Open to all 9 years and older. See page Nos Zjilea Cultural Event 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei, Rincon. Enjoy the music, dancing, crafts, amazing food and drink.
Sunday, March 10	Walk-A-Thon for Special Olympics of Bonaire. Walk from White Slave Huts to Rincon. Start 5 a.m. Tickets \$20.
Thursday & Friday March 15-16	BON DOET Annual volunteer event on Bonaire. See the jobs that need doing and sign up at https://www.bondoet.com/nl/all-jobs
Sunday & Monday March 31 - April 1	Easter Sunday & Monday. Public holiday. Government offices and many business are closed.

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. 18	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

2024 Cruise Ship Schedule

DATE:	CRUISE SHIP	TIME	PIER	CAPACITY
Fri. February 16	NORWEGIAN SKY	0600-1430	North	2480
Mon. February 19	AIDAPERLA	0830-1800	South	3286
Tues. February 20	SEVEN SEAS SPLENDOR	0600-1400	North	754
	CARNIVAL HORIZON	0900-2300	South	4683
Wed. February 21	AIDADIVA	0630-1800	South	2500
	EMERALD AZZURRA	0800-1800	South	100
Thurs. February 22	STAR PRIDE	1330-2200	North	312
Fri. February 23	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	0600-1400	North	2417
Sun. February 25	COSTA FORTUNA	0800-2000	North	3470
Tues. February 27	BRITANNIA	0700-1800	South	3674
Wed. February 28	CARNIVAL MAGIC	0800-1600	South	3646
Fri. March 1	NORWEGIAN SKY	0600-1400	North	2480
	CELEBRITY EQUINOX	0700-1700	South	2852
Sun. March 3	AIDAMAR	0800-1800	North	2686
Mon. March 4	AIDAPERLA	0830-1800	South	3286
Tues. March 5	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	0830-2000	South	3840
Wed. March 6	CELEBRITY REFLECTION	0800-2000	South	3046
	EVRIMA	0800-2300	South	298
Thurs. March 7	WORLD VOYAGER	0830-1800	North	172
Sun. March 10	STAR PRIDE	0800-1800	North	312
Mon. March 11	EVRIMA	0800-2200	South	298
Tues. March 12	SILVER DAWN	0800-2300	North	623
Wed. March 13	BRITANNIA	0700-1800	South	3674
Thurs. March 14	SEVEN SEAS SPLENDOR	1200-2300	North	754

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.

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. 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@reefrenwalbonaire.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.

Are You Interested in Bonaire's Geology?

Everyone who loves Bonaire has questions about the island's geology...How was the island formed and when? What is the actual composition of the island's topographical structures? Is Bonaire a volcanic island?

All your questions will be answered in a three-part fun class on the geology of Bonaire by the well known André Nahr.

The class will be held on Tuesday 27, Thursday 29 February & Saturday 2 March 2024 at Opleidingsinstituut Bonaire (OIB), Kaya Amsterdam 25, next to Home Style & OMNI.

Session 1 & 2 are scheduled from 7-9 p.m. and session 3 brings everything together in a fun field trip on Saturday from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. The field trip will include visits to several interesting spots on the island to learn and see first hand examples of Bonaire's geology. Comfortable shoes are suggested, but no heavy hiking is involved. The class is taught in English.

Cost is \$120.00 p.p. payable **in cash** at the first session.

Sign up at geology.andrenahr@gmail.com

but don't wait too long, only 15 spots are available!

Don't miss the opportunity to learn about Bonaire's fascinating geology!



Reef Glimpses

by Dee Scarr

The Mystery of the Missing Yellowtails

When did you last see a yellowtail snapper?

I haven't seen one since I began doing REEF fish surveys again, and certainly not in 2024.

Not one. Yellowtail damselfish, yes. Yellowtail hamlets, yes. Snappers with yellow tails, yes, but they were schoolmaster snappers.

But I have not seen a single yellowtail snapper in more than a dozen dives between Regatta House and the North Pier.

Granted, there were plenty of other fish I didn't see. No manta rays. No toadfish.

Okay, mantas and toadfish aren't exactly common around here and they never have been. But when I first dived Bonaire, in 1980, we had yellowtails. Oh boy, did we ever have yellowtail snappers!

In diving history, the 1980's was when the joys of fish feeding were discovered. Back then guests at the hotel restaurant were encouraged to take their leftovers to feed the fish. They'd wrap bacon, sausages, eggs, toast, or whatever in a paper napkin or a baggie and stick it into their BC pocket. At the dive site, they'd hover and scatter the food around. The first takers were usually the wrasses, then maybe a tang or coney or even a trunkfish.

Eventually, however, scatter-feeding got the attention of yellowtail snappers, after which it was darn near impossible for any other creature to get any of the food because the yellowtails got it all.

The dominance of the yellowtails wasn't solely on Bonaire. When feeding the stingrays at Stingray City began, feeders were taught to hold a chunk of fish on their flat hand so a stingray could come up and suck it down. The rays, with their eyes on their top sides and their mouths on their undersides, took a moment to orient on the hand with food. That moment was all a yellowtail snapper needed to zoom in and steal the food; the yellowtails ended up with a lot more food than the rays did!

Of course, Bonairean yellowtails were just as efficient – if not more so -- than Caymanian yellowtails were, at stealing handouts.

Without handouts, yellowtail snappers find food in the blue water as well as on the reef bottom, including small fishes and invertebrates such as crabs and shrimp.



Wayne Hasson at Stingray City; his dive computer was the Edge. I can find two stingrays in the photo and more than 25 yellowtails. Photo Dee Scarr

They eat a wide variety of food, and their body design enables them to get food in a variety of ways: some they chase down, some they swoop down or up on, some they simply pluck out of the water. In contrast, bonefish and goatfish mouths face down, specializing them for feeding along the bottom. Scorpionfish and frogfish mouths face up, and their bodies are not designed for swift or continuous swimming; they're designed to ambush fish above them. Versatile yellowtails can gobble just about any prey.

And, because yellowtails can gobble just about any prey, they keep an eye or two out for any prey, anywhere. For example, when a possible food item appeared, the yellowtails who saw it would zoom over to taste (test?) it, followed by the others just in case they could benefit. The quickest yellowtail would suck the item down. If it wasn't food, fish number one would spit it out, and maybe try it once or twice again before leaving. Number two would then move in for taste test(s), and so forth. This would go on for several yellowtails, or until another promising item appeared.

The behavior of yellowtail snappers when fed clarified any questions about the negative effects of feeding

the fish; the uncontrolled fish feeding that had continued on Bonaire for years was discontinued. Happily, we no longer have yellowtails snapping at the trailing fingers of divers, or crowding into the frame of every photo.

Unhappily, we no longer see many yellowtails at all, although a few still follow lionfishers around hoping for a handout.

Maybe they've become slackers, giving up hunting and foraging, and instead using their abilities to find food-scattering divers elsewhere.

Still, I miss them.



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.



This octopus is hiding its prey from the yellowtails, but they know it's there!. Photo Dee Scarr

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People should start training for boatmaster license

On the first day of January, 2025, anyone who owns or operates a commercial vessel must be able to show the Coast Guard a boatmaster license 3, or stay ashore. They must also have a nature permit to sail in Bonaire National Marine Park (BNMP).

Courses can be taken on Bonaire that prepare people to pass the boatmaster test. DRTC Curaçao is already offering them, and Forma will begin soon. For costs and more information, email cura@drtc.nl.

In February, the Harbour Office will organize an information session to explain more about this new rule and the boatmaster license 3. The exact location and date of this session will be announced later.

The new requirement is part of the Regulations on the Safety of Seagoing Vessels, also known as Appendix 6 Ships. It is intended make boating in Bonaire waters safer for passengers, captains, and crew.

Concerns are being expressed on the islands regarding the licensing test. Many young dive operation employees are capable boat handlers and could learn to be qualified boatmasters. But they might not have the language skills to pass the test.

DMR



Photo by Mark of the Eye Sea, glass bottom boat who just happened to be there.

Sand Dollar condo owners Pam Field and Tom MacFarland were out for their regular morning standup paddleboard workout (SUP) around 6:15 a.m. on February 5. It was a beautiful day with flat calm seas. Tom was out in front leading the way when two pods of 10 bottlenose dolphins approached and joined the workout. The dolphins encountered Pam first. They swam around her for about 10 minutes and one actually placed his head upon her board. The dolphins then moved on to Tom who had made his way past Harbour Village.

Tom said, "They swam up very close, playing and swimming back and forth under my board."

This was not Tom's first dolphin encounter. Years ago, he was snorkeling under the Samur (previously moored at Sand Dollar) and a pod came by. Another time several dolphins were playing around a brain coral in front of the resort. Condo owner and artist Dominique Serafina captured the encounter on canvas and it hangs on Tom's wall today.

Tom has been visiting Bonaire since 1991 and Pam for six years. The couple is from Buena Vista, Colorado.

A Garden? Just Do It!

by Angliet, Nature Lover

Foot Baths

By the time this article reaches you fiesta carnival will be over and you may be experiencing some very tired, swollen, wounded, painful feet or ankles. If you're wondering what to do to get back to normal again, I have some information about foot baths and other uses for the ingredients. Through my sources on the internet and people with some experience in this matter I've come up with some remedies.

Foot baths are an ancient Chinese tradition of soaking your feet in hot water and herbs before bed each night. Foot baths are good to stimulate circulation, ease muscle cramps, overworked legs and feet, help relieve stiffness in joints and aid with arthritis. There are two major components: salt and herbs.

Herbs for a foot bath are lemon, ginger, black currant, rose leaves, lavender, rosemary, red clover and birch leaf. One herb we have right here on Bonaire, and maybe in your garden, is ginger.

Ginger: Five slices of ginger is enough for one bath. Boil the ginger to make it more potent. Do this for 2-3 weeks before going to bed. Ginger is good for the circulation, for cold feet, and hands, eczema and pain and arthritis. It also helps fight the flu, eases menstruation, stimulates sexual appetite, is good for insomnia, athletes food, a cold, and skin allergies.

Pepper is also good in a foot bath and it's easy to grow on Bonaire. It's also good against smelly, itchy feet. Boiling the peppers first creates a stronger reaction. Peppers can be used for belly pain, diarrhea and corrects kidney energy when using three times a week for four weeks.



Aloe

Aloe can be found growing wild all over Bonaire. And is very good to heal wounds, itchy eczema, a treatment against foot fungus, other fungal infections and dry skin. Adding some lavender to aloe creates a soothing bath for the body that soothes tired cramped feet and eases the body after a stressful day.

Salt bath works well whether it comes from the sea or from land. From the sea there is: Celtic salt, Dead Sea salt and sea salt used in the kitchen from evaporated seawater. There is also Himalayan salt from the Himalayas. And then Epsom salt, a compound of magnesium and sulfate originating from Epsom, England.

Epsom salt is used to exfoliate dead skin from your feet and it's a good remedy for smelly feet because it

prevents the growth of bacteria. It relieves pain, reduces fatigue, alleviates constipation and improves sleep. Himalayan Salt relieves pain in the foot and the tired sensation. Celtic salt is the best for a foot bath. It eases pain, soothes the feet, feeds the skin and is good for the heart and stimulates the blood circulation.

Do it yourself foot bath:

Start the detox by drinking a cup of water. Add some coconut oil and essential oils to warm water less 50°C (122°F) or 40°C (104°F) for children. The bath water should be just a bit above the ankles. Take the foot bath an hour after a meal for 15 - 20 minutes. Don't go to sleep immediately after a foot bath.

Long term benefits: Strengthen muscles and bones; calm the mind and you motive sleep quality; improve skin condition and beauty; lower blood pressure and increase blood circulation and reduce fatigue.

NOT good for : A pregnant woman; people with metastatic cancer; active infection; recent surgery, open wound or a disease that could be made worse by increasing the circulation.

I hope this info will help to heal all the foot sorrows after the Carnival. Bonaire offers us all the goodies needed for the perfect foot bath: sea salt and sea, aloe, coconut oil, ginger, lemon many more ingredients.



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.

Bonaire Visit Inspires Author

by Alan Zale

For anybody who has ever visited Bonaire, it is very easy to understand how inspirational the island can be. Best-selling author Nicholas Harvey was so inspired by the four months he and his wife, Cheryl, spent on the island last year that he decided to set his latest novel, *Lighthouse Point*, on Bonaire.



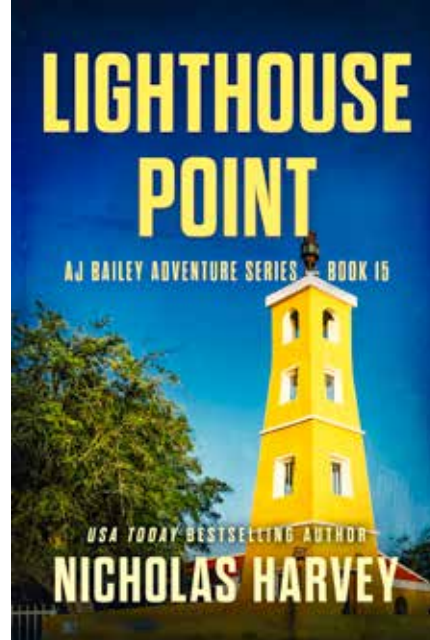
Author, Nicholas Harvey
Photo Alan Zale

Lighthouse Point is Book 15 in the AJ Bailey Adventure Series and is only the second book in the series to take place away from the Cayman Islands where AJ runs a dive shop. Harvey explains that he had thought about bringing AJ to Bonaire but after arriving on the island and spending four months here it cemented the idea in his head.

“The location matched with what I was trying to do in the story. Being immersed in Bonaire allowed me to see the characters and locations both above and below the water. It really helped me when I returned to the states and started writing the book,” Harvey said in a recent interview.

To help keep the characters fresh and the plot less predictable, Harvey writes in a dual time line style which keeps the readers intrigued as to what is going to happen next. *Lighthouse Point* opens with the robbery of a Belgium diamond dealer in 1968. It then jumps to present day Bonaire when AJ and her good friend Reg Moore arrive on Bonaire where they were hired by a mysterious client for deep salvage operation.

The book then returns to Jarama, Spain in 1970, two years after the diamond robbery, and starts to follow a Formula One racing team. For the remainder of the book, the story jumps back and forth between AJ and Reg’s



salvage operation and the Ashford Motor Racing Team on the Grand Prix circuit, until their car is stolen.

Readers will find it very intriguing to see how Harvey ties together a diamond dealer robbery, the adventures of a racing team and AJ and Reg’s deep sea salvage operation. Another aspect readers will enjoy are all the Bonaire references throughout the book. Harvey commented, “The location and things that we experienced were really noteworthy and represented authentic life on Bonaire.”

Those familiar with Bonaire will recognize many of the local references throughout the

book. The Cactus Blue food truck, Yhanni’s Arepas and hanging out at Breeze & Bites after a day of diving. Harvey says that the ostracods dive had been on his bucket list.

Lighthouse Point also reflects the author’s life. Before becoming a full-time writer in 2020, Harvey spent 43 years in the auto racing industry. He started racing at age 11 and hung up his helmet at age 32. He continued in the industry where he managed teams, coached drivers and helped set up chassis.

While on Bonaire Harvey worked with Technical Diving Services of Bonaire (TDS) to get his tech diving certification which helped with the deep salvage operation part of the book. Harvey chose the dive site Lighthouse Point as the title because he felt it was an eye catcher.

Lighthouse Point was released on January 23rd and quickly rose to #1 in its genre on Amazon, where it is now available.

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*.



Make Bonaire Accessible

by Ria Evers-Dokter

A special child

About a week ago a mother of a “special child” posted a great text on Facebook. It was about how thoughtless and clueless people can react when they meet a child with special needs. After all... we all have a beating heart; not everyone is the same and we all have the same right to be treated respectful and loving.

I really think people have no clue about what it means to give birth or have a sister/brother with special needs. And especially now, with carnival ... Standing along the carnival-route people often block the view of persons in a wheelchair or with a walker. And with carnival there are also quite a few people who love to imitate someone with mental retardation by talking or singing in a “funny way.” Unfortunately, they really think they are acting awesomely.

I remember it like yesterday...my mom was about to have a baby. I was four years old, and I was told to put a sugar cube in the window-sill every night. This would make the stork come by and bring us the new baby. I faithfully performed the ritual and peeked to see if maybe I would be able to see the stork fly in.

Then the day came that Granny came to get me in the middle of the afternoon and we walked to the village. We had supper, I spent the night and the next morning we walked back home again. To my surprise there was a strange box in the living room. In it was a very, very tiny baby crying softly. I was told that this was my new baby brother. I was so very disappointed. I

hadn’t seen the stork and there was no crib. So, what was I to believe. I was not supposed to touch the baby because he was too small. (he was a premature baby). The box he was lying in was a homemade incubator. He could not suck on a teat or breast, so mom’s milk was pumped and every hour the baby would get a teaspoon of milk. The baby grew and got bigger but could not do very much. After a few years of testing, he appeared to have cerebral palsy, but he had “normal” intelligence. As a matter of fact, he was very intelligent. But because he was not like everybody else, he was treated like somebody with mental retardation.

This has always hurt him very much, as well as hurting my Mom. And Mom was the one to teach me that everyone is the same, has the same rights, even if they act differently sometimes.

There are so many persons with retardation, physical problems and disabilities who deserve to be treated just like everyone else. This is why I always wonder why are they not included in the carnival groups?

Open your hearts, open your minds and see what happens. You might make special friends for life! “One love, one heart, let’s get together and feel all right. Hope your carnival was happy, everyone.



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.

2024’s bridge champions



(L-R) Jeroen Seegers presents the prize to winners Carla van den Broek and Leo Heus.

The Open Bonairean Bridge Championship took place on Wednesday, January 31, 2024 when 13 couples competed for the coveted title and challenge cup.

The top three of 2024:

1. Leo Heus / Carla van den Broek [NED] 66.3%
2. Pieter Smit / Paul Rothweiler [BON] 61.3%
3. Peter Englebert / Ruth Smith [NED] 57.1%

The championship was played over thirteen rounds of two games. The battle for the title was exciting: the Bonaire pair Pieter Smit and Paul Rothweiler did their utmost to keep the challenge cup on Bonaire, but at the end of the evening the Dutch pair Leo Heus and Carla van den Broek won. The winners received their prize from Jeroen Seegers, who has been coordinator of Bridge Club Bonaire for many years.

This year, bridge players came from Bonaire, the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom. Players from Curaçao

were missing although the island achieved nice podium places in 2021 and 2022. Last year’s winners, Ankie and Rob Hillen, did not defend their title.

This was Bridge Club Bonaire’s third annual open championship organized for the last Wednesday in January, so a new championship will be played on Wednesday, January 29, 2025. Leo Heus and Carla van den Broek have already announced that they will defend their title.

The championship was played at Hillside Resort. The regular bridge evenings of the Bridge Club Bonaire also take place here every Wednesday evening. New members are welcome. The club also organizes beginners’ courses for people who want to become acquainted with this mind sport. Interested parties can contact the bridge club via bridgeclubbonaire@gmail.com.

Celebrating a Platinum Award Winner

A special presentation took place on January 29 at Captain Don's Habitat. Helen Mercera-Thode of Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB) honored Rosemary Kurtti of New York City, celebrating her 41st year (and 57th trip!) visiting Bonaire.

Rosemary and her late husband Jim began their Bonaire connection in 1983, building relationships at Habitat under the hospitality of Capt. Don Stewart, Janet Thibault and Carib Inn with Bruce Bowker. They returned yearly often bringing groups of a dozen or more divers who were friends and members of their home diving clubs, introducing them to Bonaire's beautiful reefs and building strong and enduring friendships with Don and Janet, Bruce, Dee Scarr and countless others around the island.



Helen Mercera-Thode of TCB (R) presented Rosemary Kurtti of New York City with a Platinum Award to mark her 41st year and 57th trip visiting Bonaire. Photo Nancy Louth

Rosemary and Jim's passion extended beyond their love of diving to not only educating recreational divers about the value of protecting the underwater environment, but also celebrating scientists, artists and divers through the organization Beneath the Sea (BTS). Rosemary, a passionate former teacher, served as VP of Youth Development and founded BTS's Marine Careers program to inspire high school students and fund scholarships for their studies. When first offered this position, BTS funded three annual scholarships, but Rosemary's efforts through the years increased that number to 18. She worked in close collaboration with Dr. George Buckley (another great friend of Bonaire) in that role until her retirement. Rosemary and Jim have also been generous supporters of local organizations such as STI-NAPA that work to educate and protect the marine environment for future generations to enjoy.

At 82, Rosemary is still an active diver logging more than 2500 dives in 67 countries, about half of them here in Bonaire. This is quite an amazing feat, considering she nearly drowned at age 11 and didn't feel confident to try swimming again until she was 37 and living in the Philippines where she took an interest in snorkeling. Thanks to her patient teacher, she quickly built both skill and confidence and soon became a certified diver. She has been unstoppable since then. On the morning of receiving her award, she had already enjoyed two dives with the 20 visitors from the NY dive group joining her on this Bonaire adventure.

Rosemary has been a true-blue environmental Ambassador and friend to Bonaire. Congratulations, Rosemary and best wishes for many more pleasant island journeys - and dives - ahead!

Story / photos Nancy Louth



Creating Optimal Health by Irene da Cunda Costa Philosophy

Philosophy is the discipline that uses rational inquiry in the pursuit of answering fundamental questions about human existence and meaning. It is as important as mathematics, language or any other science, since it is at the base of all production of knowledge. Philosophy is present in our daily lives. It deals with problems such as good, evil, truth, moral obligation, free will, etc., but it also focuses on very practical aspects such as how to determine whether or not a thread of statements leads to a valid conclusion.

Because reality, nature and the mind are among its objects of study, philosophy was also at the origin of several other sciences, such as biology and psychology.

Philosophy is divided into four main branches namely **logic**, **metaphysics**, **ethics** and **epistemology**. There are many other branches such as aesthetics, philosophy of language, political philosophy, philosophy of economics, philosophy of science, etc.

Logic determines the rules of inductive and deductive reasoning allowing us to determine if an argument is correct or not. Therefore it is at the base of all sciences, fundamentally in the field of research.

Ethics goes deep into the study of moral dilemmas. Morality

determines the values of a social group or an individual. Ethics acts as a fundamental guide in several disciplines, namely biology, anthropology, politics, economics, history, sociology and theology.

Epistemology studies the production of knowledge, the perception of so-called reality, as well as the historical and sociocultural context in which it is produced. Different schools talk about different ways of acquiring knowledge and different ways of relating to and defining reality. Epistemology is fundamental for education and will determine the teaching model that is applied.

Metaphysics is dedicated to the study of existence, matter, energy, entities, cosmology, asking questions about life meaning and purpose, where we come from and where we are heading to.

There are many different philosophical schools. Many of today's best-selling self-help books are based on the principles described by these philosophers hundreds or thousands of years ago. There is not much new in the bookstores. Albert Ellis, creator of Rational Emotive Therapy, was a great expert on Stoic philosophy and declared that the ultimate goal of his therapy was to promote a change in the philosophy of life of his patients. This change aimed to promote happiness and well-being in people.

Many people think that philosophy is something totally abstract and that its study can be a waste of time. Nothing could be further from reality; philosophy deals with many

practical and everyday aspects. Although some philosophers like to use many words and sometimes their speeches are somewhat far-fetched and obscure, in their study you can find a lot of wisdom and answers to key dilemmas of existence.

Philosophy is often confused with religion, since several ancient philosophical referents were also preachers and gave rise to religious movements, such as Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism and others.

The Western philosophical schools originated mostly in Greece, such as the Stoics, the Epicureans, the Skeptics and others. Later they emerged as existentialism, humanism, pragmatism and others. In Asia we can find the origins of Islamism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. All schools have something to teach us. Studying them will bring clarity to our lives allowing us to discover that many of our daily decisions are based on some of their precepts and it will also be easier for us to detect thinking biases and irrational beliefs. Whether we acknowledge it or not, philosophy is intrinsic to life.



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

Parrots and People

Potty-Mouthed Parrots

by Mel McCombie

A friend recently sent me an article about parrots at the Lincolnshire Wildlife Park in Friskney in the north of England.* These African Gray parrots, Billy, Elsie, Jade, Eric, and Tyson, came to the park surrendered from their human owners, who could not care for them. They also arrived with salty, indeed, obscene vocabularies, artfully employed! And to make matters worse, these five taught other parrots at the park to swear. Now the park has eight parrots with explicit language warnings posted next to their enclosures. The signs warn that visitors can expect to hear “every common swear word,” and that the parrots are not suitable for children. These foul-mouthed fowls are NSFW.

Since antiquity, African Gray parrots have been lauded for their ability to not only use parrot language but to speak human languages. Harvard parrot researcher Irene Pepperberg spent much of her career studying Alex and has published extensively on his use of English during his 31 years. Alex could identify objects, color, and number—including the concept of zero—and he used English appropriately and creatively. For example, Pepperberg asked him what he wanted; Alex wanted an almond, which he described to her as a “cork nut.” His description matches the appearance of a whole almond in its shell perfectly. Today, Pepperberg’s lab continues working on parrot cognition. You can read about The Alex Foundation’s work on its website, <https://alexfoundation.org/>.

And it’s not just African Grays. Perhaps it is a sign of the times that if you search the internet for cursing parrots, you get a lot of video hits! I won’t offer links here—that’s on you—but some of the funniest involve cockatoos outraged about having to go to the veterinarian. Max the Moluccan

* <https://www.npr.org/2024/01/25/1226911707/parrots-swear-profanities-british-zoo>



and Baby the umbrella cockatoo have their own YouTube channels! What really interested me is how situationally correct these cursing parrots are. They use language that they clearly learned from their humans, but they use it at times when they are genuinely angry. Imagine a two-year-old, only with the vocabulary of a longshoreman. I also know of a Lora in Bonaire who mimicked a neighbor who called her dog with a few choice Italian expletives.

It is funny to read about these salty parrots, but I think we humans need to learn something about ourselves. Parrots who live with humans are like bellwethers: you really find out how you express yourself when you have a savvy parrot around who will repeat your words back to you. Maybe we need to work on how we express our frustrations or outrage. Cursing parrots remind us that there are many ways to deal with feelings besides a potty mouth. I’m just as guilty as anyone, but I’m determined to not be a human who should have an explicit language warning posted next to me!

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



Echo reports preliminary results from January’s 2024 roost count

Thanks to the dedication of 39 volunteers Echo was able to gather valuable data during its annual Roost Count on January 27th about the Yellow-shouldered Amazon Parrot population on Bonaire.

Some key findings from the count:

- Total Roost Sites: 19 of the 41 known viewpoints
- Roost Sites in National Park: 4 of 9 known viewpoints
- Total Parrots Counted in National Park: 161
- Total Parrots Counted Outside National Park: 638
- Largest Roost: Hato with 212 Parrots
- Roosts with No Birds Detected: 4

In addition to counting 799 parrots across all roosts, volunteers noted hearing significantly more parrots, particularly in the park where access to closer viewpoints was limited due to infrastructure constraints.

Echo has also initiated monthly roost counts at five key locations to observe parrot behavior. Notably, the numbers at Hato roost have fluctuated significantly over the past few months, highlighting the importance of ongoing monitoring. (October: 288, November: 68, December: 185, January: 212). *Echo team.*



Piss and Vinegar

by Gijs Borsten

Tourist Guide to Bonaire

This time of year, tourism is booming on Bonaire.

They seem to be everywhere, sometimes causing considerable mayhem among local bystanders. I suppose they can’t help it. The Dutch, along with their American counterparts, are loudest. Especially the younger ones, below, say, fifty. They don’t understand Bonaire’s gentleness.

They’re, for example, walking roadsides like they’re suicidal, with a staunch determination to save twenty bucks on a taxi. They haunt supermarkets like they’re browsing the Louvre or Disney World, and dress and behave like the island is a funny farm, where conventional social and moral rules don’t apply, and where, basically, everything is allowed or possible.

So, let’s help them (and us) a bit, let’s clarify how Bonaire is wired, and give a few tips on a number of basic peculiarities that makes the island the way it is.

Traffic

Walking on roadsides is new to Bonaire, something that arose in the 2010’s, together with budget tourism. It’s dangerous. It can kill you, and damage our cars. Bonaire traffic is ridiculously dangerous. Bonairean drivers, including myself, suck. They’re mostly drunk, on their phone, their car windows pitch black (which makes you completely invisible as a pedestrian), their steering wheels are on the wrong side, and most cars are wrecks. A lot of drivers don’t have a proper license.

If you come to Bonaire, rent a car. It’s cheap (less than \$35 a day), and it gives you the opportunity to travel the island in a safe way. There are about 60 car rental companies on the island, big and small, with their numbers still rising, probably because it’s such a fine scheme for money laundering.

Don’t transport your passengers in the truck bed unless you

hate them. They will be launched at the first possible pothole and get killed. Besides, it’s forbidden. The chance of being pulled over and fined is minimal, but don’t say I didn’t warn you.

If you drive a pick-up truck, be aware of the fact that your car doesn’t end by the rear window: there’s still ten feet of bed sticking out behind you. If you hit something while backing up because you forgot (it happens dozens of times per week), be so kind to leave a message.

Snowflakes – GenZ’s, curling kids, whatever they’re called – are everywhere and think they can’t die. So, if you encounter them riding a scooter or fat bike, beware. They’re completely enveloped in their own little cocoons. The world is here for them to be utilized, everything else is effectively non-existent. Their behavior can be extremely erratic, so sometimes it can be hard to avoid them (Boom. Splat. Puppy-Botox flying everywhere...).

Getting gas

Filling up your rental typically takes over an hour, of which about two minutes are devoted to the actual fueling. As follows: choose your favorite line. After about half an hour, when it’s your turn, go to the cashier, and try to attract her attention. Since her phone is far more interesting than you, you won’t succeed. Do not knock on the window! That’s a very Makamba thing to do!

Attracting the cashier’s attention, speaking softly in a friendly tone of voice, generally takes ten to fifteen minutes. In the meantime, try to decide what you want: a full tank, or a pre-determined amount. The first option means that you have to go back to the window once more to pay, the second option means that you take the risk of ordering too much, and (a) have to accept the loss of your overpayment, or (b) go back to the window to collect your change.

Paying by card means that you probably will be victimized by ‘Nos Banku Amigu’, owner of the usually defective card readers. In general, paying by card takes another half hour of your time. Bring cash.

Shopping and groceries

Bonaire is ridiculously expensive. Don’t believe what the papers say on Bonaire pricing, mentioning percentages of 15-30% over what you’re used to pay. Virtually everything is twice as expensive as in Motherland, some products (beer!) sometimes even as much as four times.

If you go to a supermarket, limit your company. Don’t bring your kids (they’re nasty) or your in-laws (they’re loud). No-one is interested whether you’re running out of peanut butter or sanitary napkins, so keep your voice down a bit. Oh, and try to dress more or less decently.

Don’t be intimidated by the long lines in the checkout area. They’re always there, because a considerable percentage of the products cannot be scanned (they’re not in the computer), and because at least one of the tourists in your line forgot to switch their debit cards from ‘Europe’ to ‘World’. Oh, and snowflakes: Please, park your scooters where they don’t block the store’s entrance. The rest of us are all half blind cripples, and we might trip over them.

If you leave the supermarket parking, try not to ghost-ride.

Getting dressed

Bonaire is a more or less traditional society. The supreme being is still very much present, among the original Bonaireans, but also among groups of immigrants. So, dress appropriate on every occasion. Don’t walk the streets in your Speedo or your bathing suit. A good indicator to use when you’re in doubt: When your age, or your BMI, is over 18, put your clothes on. When either reaches 50, think about getting yourself a burka.

More on the subject later...

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

ARE YOU A CAT PERSON?

In the last year we have expanded our “cat capability” for new arrivals and also upgraded and expanded our cat boarding facility.

As a result we are not only in need of a a paid cat care position (see ad) but we also are in great need of volunteers to help with the cats. We are in particular need of extra volunteers on Wednesday, Friday or Sunday mornings from 8 - 10 a.m.

If you love cats and have a couple hours to spare one of these mornings, we could really use your help and you won't be working alone. If another day is more convenient for you, we can arrange that as well. Please contact the Shelter at animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com if you can help.

COMING FEBRUARY 24

Nos Zjilea-Let's speak Papiamentu



Carol-Ann Soliano will be demonstrating scarf tying again at this month's Nos Zjilea. In this photo she creates a dramatic head scarf during February's 2023 Nos Zjilea.

At the beginning of 2024, our beautiful language, Papiamentu, was recognized in Europe as one of the “Languages in Minority” deserving protection and promotion. The government of Bonaire and the Papiamentu Academy have worked hard for this great achievement. Papiamentu is unique, beautiful, and precious. It belongs to us, with its various melodious tones. Let's work together to strengthen this wonderful language.

This Saturday, February 24th, “Let's Speak Papiamentu” is the theme of the cultural event ‘Nos Zjilea’ at Mangazina di Rei, Rincon. The day kicks off at 10 a.m. with the podcast ‘Lag'e brota’, an initiative of the youngsters and leaders of the educational program of Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei, Talento Kultural. We'll explain what you can learn and do in the Talento Kultural program and talk with guests about different cultural heritage topics. The guests are Senaida Janga - Mercera and Jonathan de Windt, who will discuss the importance of our sweet Papiamentu language and share how the “Arte di Palabra” organization has developed to where it is now. The podcast will be broadcast via Facebook, YouTube, Radio Voz di Boneiru 94.7 FM, and on MiTV Telbo Channel 74 VdB TV.

Elsmarie Beukenboom from “Papiamento Academy” will explain how the official recognition of Papiamentu came about and how we can continue to promote and protect our the language.

The book titled “Papiamentu Pika” released by the Papiamento Academy has received a lot of attention as it contains what we classify as ‘bad words’. Informal, vulgar, or indecent words that nevertheless are part of our language. Enjoy our spicy language as this is the month of the mother language. The book will be sold at a special price.

Janiro Dorothea will perform. He was an “Arte di Palabra,” participant in the Papiamentu poetry, storytelling, rap, and haiku categories of competition. He won in the poetry category with his poem titled “Bonaire.” Let's appreciate the efforts our young people are making to keep our sweet Papiamentu alive.

Today you don't see many women with a headscarf on the street. The headscarf is a beautiful part of the African Heritage. Carol-Ann Soliano will give a demonstration of tying a headscarf and you can tie one yourself. Let's revive this beautiful tradition.

Live performances of local bands “Grupo Villa” and “Glenn and the Gang” will entertain throughout the day.

Guests will find fresh local products including natural juices, herbal teas, as well as local crafts and art. The kitchen opens at 10 a.m. with a wide variety of soups, local Creole dishes and a delicious grill.

Experience ‘Nos Zjilea’, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. It doesn't get more local than this. AND IT'S FREE. For more information, visit Mangazina di Rei's Facebook fan page, www.facebook.com/mangazinadirei.



ARE YOU A CAT PERSON? JOIN OUR TEAM!

Get paid to help save lives!

Animal Shelter Bonaire has an opening for CAT CARE GIVER
15 hours per week/3 days per week (8 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Requirements:

- Love of cats
- Physically able
- Good people skills
- Basic computer skills
- **Resident of Bonaire** with valid sedula
- Able to read basic English
- Willing to learn about animal care

Responsibilities include:

- Cleaning kennels and cages, watering and feeding the cats
- Checking and reporting health and condition of the cats
- Administering necessary medication and any special care
- Computer entry of information on the cats
- Bathing and grooming when needed
- Helping keep property and kennels neat and clean

Salary based on qualifications, minimum \$9.06 per hour

If you are interested please email animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com with your C.V. for an interview appointment. DO NOT RESPOND VIA FACEBOOK OR MESSENGER.

Pet of the Week



This beautiful cat is named Sophia. She is almost three years old and has been with us at the shelter for more than two and a half years now.

Sophia is a modest girl, she will not be the first to greet you when you enter the Cat Palace but she really loves your company. When she feels familiar with you Sophia will come and sit next to you and ask to be petted. She just needs a bit of time and after a while you will have the best buddy you could ever wish for.

Go to <https://bonairereporter.com> to look at the colour of her eyes. Aren't they gorgeous?.

Sophia has a short tail. We don't know if she

was born that way or if she had a little accident when she was young.

Sophia is tested NEG for FIV and leukemia, had all her vaccinations, is sterilized and will be chipped the moment you decide to give this beauty a home.

Monique Degenaar

If you would like to meet our cats and dogs, please come to Animal Shelter Bonaire, Kaminda Lagun 26A. Open Mon - Fri 11-3. Sat 11-2. Call 701-4989 or 717-4989 to make an appointment, via whatsapp, facebook messenger, or email animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com

All swimmers welcome.

Sign up for Bonaire's open championships

The Aquatics Federation Bonaire has organized the first Open Bonairean Swimming Championships to take place on Saturday, February 24, 2024.

The swimming tournament is for everyone 9 years and older who loves swimming: residents of Bonaire and tourists, young and old(er), for recreational swim-

You can register via: <https://forms.office.com/e/mnRzrnJN98>.

For more information, please contact info@aquaticsfederationbonaire.com

mers and members of swimming clubs, for swimmers with and without a disability.

The all inclusive swimming tournament takes place in the Floating Pool at Parke Tului. The 25m pool is equipped with swimming lines, starting blocks and turning points.



We need a Papiamentu name
for this new arrival



The White-eyed Vireo is a new bird to Bonaire. It is a small, vocal songbird which is usually found in the Eastern US, Mexico, Northern Caribbean and Northern parts of Central America. It was discovered and photographed by local bird monitor and STINAPA board member Steve Schnoll through the Washington Park Bird Monitoring Program. It was verified by experts with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Since this is a new species for Bonaire as well as the ABC and BES islands, there isn't

a name for it in Papiamentu yet. This gives us the opportunity to name it! Help us pick a name by going to STINAPA's facebook page.

The adult is easily recognized by its unique combination of bold yellow "spectacles" and pearly white eyes. The upperparts are mostly olive, with contrasting gray on the head and neck, an olive mask and forecrown, and two white or yellowish wingbars. The underparts are whitish with a yellow wash on the sides.

(<https://birdfinding.info/white-eyed-vireo/>)

STINAPA release / photo Steve Schnoll



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