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The amazing view from the highest point on the new Oliba Trail
Photo by Julie Morgan

Beautiful Park project yields results

For years, travel brochures and articles have praised the amazing diving and coral reefs of Bonaire but described the island itself as a desert landscape. But in time, that description may have to be changed to reflect the ever-growing reforestation reverting the landscape to its historical geography of a dry forest. Efforts to reforest Bonaire are evident everywhere. The most recent visible changes are to Washington Slagbaai National Park (WSNP)

In a ceremony on Earth Day, April 22, STINAPA celebrated the work of Proyecto Parke Bunita (Project Beautiful Park) in naming a newly reforested portion of WSNP near Slagbaai, for the late conservationist Paul Hoetjes. The man's unending dedication to environmental preservation shaped nature protection throughout the Dutch Caribbean resulting in achievements too many to list. Hoetjes is even responsible for the funding for realization of Proyecto Parke Bunita.

The Paul Hoetjes Reforestation Area and new Oliba Trail were officially opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony at Slagbaai and speakers including STINAPA board president Pierre Perigault Monte, Roxanne Francisca Sr. Conservation manager and Paulo Bertuol leader of Proyecto Parke Bunita and invasive species manager.

Bertuol said, "Many centuries ago, goats that helped us in our way of life were introduced to Bonaire and the Slagbaai plantation, but this changed much of the vegetation and nature... We noticed that the forest became more dominated by thorny bushes because goats did not

like them. Many of the trees became large and died, but we did not have a generation of new trees, as goats ate them all. The Parke Bunita project is dedicated to bringing back our native trees and bushes by removing the goats."

A new plan was set in place by dividing Slagbaai in seven areas, high quality fences were built and an experienced group of goat herders were hired now known as 'the goat team'. After several years, the team has removed 548 goats

from three areas: areas one and two are equivalent to 512 football fields and area three is equal to 353 fields.

"For the first time in 55 years of the park, we begin to see the growth of native trees and bushes again," said Bertuol.

This major project was not a solo operation but involved project workers, stakeholders and contractors.

The first of many new trails in the Paul Hoetjes Reforestation Area and the park is the new 1.3 km (.78mi) Oliba Trail. The trail was the idea of Jason Francisca, STINAPA ranger and goat team member. Francisca suggested his idea of a trail to former STINAPA director Jan van der Pleug and after Pleug walked the trail, he decided it was a good idea. Over the last three years the trail has been cleared, stones were set along the path and trail markers were set to lead the way.

In the future Francisca hopes to include information on the markers about the trees and plants. The steep rocky climb to the highest point of the Oliba Trail opens up to an amazing view of Slagbaai and the salina full of flamingos and other water birds. From there, the downhill trail is an easygoing path winding around to come out at Slagbaai or take a short path to jump off the famous cliff into the Slagbaai waters and swim to shore. All along the path cactus and new trees are popping up and many are the Oliba, hence the name of the trail. Walkers should begin the trail no later than 1 p.m. The trail takes approximately 35-40 minutes to walk and really enjoy it.

Bertuol said, "Together we have done one of the first restoration projects that involve and take into account the community and its cultural aspect. Bonaire has an important tradition of coral conservation; now, together, we show that we will also continue the tradition of conserving our dry forest for future generations...Change takes time but it has begun..."Today's bush is tomorrow's forest."



STINAPA's 'Goat Team' and a recent capture. The team has removed 548 goats in areas one and two of the park in the Proyecto Parke Bunita project for reforestation.
L-R: Maiky, Sherwin, Roangelo, Nyota, Jason and Paulo. Photo Julie Morgan

Julie Morgan

Dispute brewing between OLB and EZK over construction of fuel tanks

According to *Dossier Koninkrijksrelaties*, Bonaire and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate (EZK) are heading for a serious clash over the construction of more fuel storage tanks. The immediate issue is EZK's intention, on the one hand, to build more fuel storage tanks at the airport; and on the other hand, the OLB's quaint notion that, as the local authority and owner of the land, it should have some say in the matter.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate has not trod lightly since it arrived on Bonaire in 2021 with a million dollars of government money and a mandate to secure the continuity of Bonaire's fossil fuel supply. It invested the money by creating its own corporation, Bonaire Fuel Terminals (BFT) which it recently rebranded as Bonaire Bon Transition (BBT). BBT shouldered its way into the island's ongoing sustainable energy project and now, as BBT, is co-owner, with Contour Global, of the solar field at Karpata. (Both companies can be commended for having 11,000 solar panels installed and producing.)

The OLB has a long list of concerns regarding EZB's intentions to build more fuel tanks at the airport. EZB has responded with: "The ministry is committed to agreements made, but is prepared to investigate, together with the Executive Council, which solutions can count on joint support."

The current Executive Council wants the tanks to be built on the former BOPEC site immediately next to the Contour Global power plant, which is now powered by fuel hauled all the way from the airport. Now that the BOPEC infrastructure has been restored to partial operation and recertified, two fuel depots, one operating at each end of the island is feasible and is by far the most sensible arrangement. But the BOPEC bankruptcy manager still has a lot of work to do before that site will be in use again. *DMR*

Fishermen and charter operators at odds over bait-rafts



Ernest de Lanoy, Piska Bon president
Photo Julie Morgan

Ernest de Lanoy, Piska Bon president, speaks for the local fishermen. One of the seven charter captains on Bonaire, unnamed, speaks as the chairman of the newly formed Bonaire Fishing Charter Association.

De Lanoy and the fishermen believe the charter boat operators should pay a fee to fish at the FADs. He contends the charter operators don't depend on selling fish to make their living but on collecting charter fees. (And, he believes, they are getting rich doing it.)

De Lanoy's thoughts also echo the "real" Bonaireans question. He sees the issue as crucial. "We are now working with the government, STINAPA and licensing authorities. I scaled it up. It's absurd, but necessary. In order to be able to fish fairly near Bonaire, the problem must be solved by the FADs."

The Charter Association spokesman says the idea they are hauling money is a fantasy. He says their revenues are much lower than the fishermen claim, and their overhead costs run much higher than the fishermen's. "We will soon unite with the aim of promoting sport fishing. We would like to put this sport on Bonaire in a positive way." The charter captains say they are not asking for special treatment. They just want to be treated equally.

The present debate is not about using FADs now but in the future. De Lanoy said, "In the past we have deposited the buoys with our employees around Bonaire. These were four pieces. Within two months there was only one FAD left. In other words, fishing can only be done at one bait raft. And this is also one that produces poorly."

The members of the Bonaire Fishing Charter Association are thinking about depositing their own buoys around Bonaire. They say anyone will be able to use the FADs, including local fishermen. *DMR (Bonaire.nu)*

Venezuela's military poses little threat in the region

According to the Military Intelligence and Security Service, the military intelligence service of the Netherlands, the Venezuelan regime has not had full control over its entire territory and airspace for years. In addition to the police and the army, the country has a conglomerate of all kinds of irregular armed groups with varying loyalties, such as guerrilla groups, paramilitaries and other criminal gangs that have violently taken over power in certain neighborhoods, cities and regions.

The Venezuelan armed forces suffer from staff shortages, inadequate training and overdue maintenance. In 2023, the Venezuelan Navy celebrated its 200th anniversary. The fleet was renovated for the occasion, only in many cases by cosmetic changes. Some Guaiqueri-class ocean-going Patrol Vessels have been armed with

new anti-ship missiles. The navy has purchased new surface units, including a new coast guard patrol vessel, a logistics support ship and several fast attack boats with anti-ship missiles.

In December a referendum was held on the status of Essequibo, the area west of the Essequibo River that is part of Guyana. The referendum concluded the area was Venezuelan territory. Subsequently Venezuela conducted limited defensive military activities in the border area. The leaders of both countries have stated that they do not want to settle the dispute by military means. *DMR (Dossier Koninkrijksrelaties)*

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Recompression Chamber gets new DAN training

and training updates of some new chamber staff along with specialized DAN (Divers Alert Network) course training. Recently Francois Berman PE of DAN headquarters in North Carolina and Sherry Shea RN of the Cozumel chamber, visited Bonaire to enact a two-week DAN Chamber Tender and Operator training for 12 students. The course was in person and online with eight taking the course on Bonaire and the others remotely.

Currently Bonaire's chamber has five experienced supervisors, operators/tenders and the majority have been working at the job since the beginning but more were needed.

Rodrigues said, "Berman is one of the best engineers of hyperbaric chambers in the world. The new people need the standards of operation and DAN is the better way to function. We're trying to make this uniform knowledge in hyperbaric medicine because every chamber is unique."

The course consisted of several modules, safety risk assessment, operator/supervisor/ tender and emergency drills.

!)Rodrigues said, "Our chamber is well constructed for dive accidents. We have room for the patient, a doctor and tender. Most chambers only have room for the patient. The tender or doctor provide comfort for the patient and they don't feel so alone."

With more people the Chamber will be able to move forward in providing not only dive treatments but hyperbaric wound treatments and many other diseases. Operation of the Chamber is the same for both diving and wounds with the differences being in medical management of each disease.

Dan Recompression Chamber network maintains a

global database of hyperbaric chambers ensuring rapid and effective referral in dive emergencies.

For more information about DAN visit their website <https://www.dan.org>. Story/Photos Julie Morgan



A look inside the chamber: L- Dr Marianne Voesten, nurse Sheryl Shea and Dr Mignon Smit



Controlling the operation of the chamber: (standing) - Engineer Francois Burman; Dr Lucia Rodrigues; (seated) L- R- Astrid v de Jager; Frances Allee-Fiewger and Frank Eiking.

With 169,706 stayover visitors on Bonaire in 2023 it's pretty safe to say a number of the visitors either came to dive or will dive while on the island. After all, this is Diver's Paradise.

Since the late 80s, Bonaire has given a little piece of mind to divers by providing Recompression Chamber Bonaire. In recent years changes have been made with a new larger chamber and the retirement of the chamber founder Dr. Dick van der Vaart. A new hyperbaric and diving doctor Dr. Lucia Rodrigues was hired as new director last summer, along with four part time diving doctors.

And changes are happening again with the education

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Hi Bob –

I was hoping you could clarify the difference between leasehold and freehold when it comes to paying taxes and what the difference is monetarily.

René R, Texas, USA

Hi René –

There are actually two primary types of land “ownership” on Bonaire:

- **There is “owned land” (in Dutch: eigendom)** in which you have clear title to the property. This is also the most common type of land ownership in the US and Canada. If you have owned land you normally pay property taxes, and the property value is calculated on the value of the land and the building that are on it. You can buy and sell leased land without restrictions.
- **There is also “leased land” (in Dutch: erfpacht)** in which the government retains ownership of land, but they grant you a long term lease for a period that’s normally between 40 and 60 year. Leased land was originally given by the government to Bonaire residents for free in order to encourage home ownership and home construction. Under the original lease terms the person that was given the lease also signed a contract to build a home or other approved structure on the land within a two or three year time period. Once you built a structure on the land that was wind and water tight you had the legal right to sell the property incusing being able to transfer the lease and structure to the new owner.

From a property tax perspective there are normally two types of property tax, plus the leased land fee:

If you are a Bonaire Resident, and this is your primary home, you are charged Ground Tax (In Dutch: grondbelasting) or GB. Ground tax is charged at a rate of 0.345%, or about \$345.00 per \$100,000 in the value of your house.

proachable and was speaking gibberish. As a result, he was taken to hospital by ambulance for medical check-ups.

Apr. 11. Around 7 a.m. the central control room received a report that a lifeless body had been found in a home on Lagun Hill. The medical examiner declared the death of a 60-year-old woman with initials M.L.J.Z. born on February 14, 1964 in the Netherlands. Since no contact could be made with the family members in the Netherlands, this news could not be communicated earlier.

Apr. 8. The central control room received a report of an accident at a home in Sabadeco Courts. The victim had forgotten to activate the vehicle’s handbrake. When she walked to the back of the vehicle, the vehicle rolled backwards and collided with her legs. The victim was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Dangerous dogs

Apr. 18. At Kaminda Nieuw Amster-

If you are a not a Bonaire Resident, or if you are a resident and the property is NOT your primary home, such as a rental property, then you are charged Property Tax (In Dutch: vastgoedbelasting) or VGB. Property tax is charged at a rate of 0.91%, or about \$910.00 per \$100,000 in the value of your second home or investment property.

If your house or property is on leased land then you ALSO pay the government a long lease fee (In Dutch: erfpacht canon) which is charged based on the area where your property is located. The lease fee charge is charged on a per square meter basis and can range from \$1.49/m² if it is on the ocean, to \$0.12/m² if it is in another area of the island. Both residents and non -residents need to pay the leased land fee if their property is located on leased land.

So the leased land fee does act as an additional “property tax” that applies only to leased land. Leased land fees are usually less than \$1000 per year for an average sized lot.

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

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dam a woman told police that her lambs were killed by her neighbor’s dogs. She asked police to mediate. The owner of the dogs decided to have one of the dogs put to sleep. The local police officer made clear agreements with the owner of the dogs to, among other things, keep the second dog on a chain because the back of their fence was not properly closed. The owner was also informed that if the police receive another report about the dog, action will be taken.

Apr. 16. Around 6:20 p.m. the central control room received a report about a dog that had killed pigs on Kaminda Jato Bako. The reporter told police that this is not the first time that his neighbors’ dogs killed his pigs. The dogs owners were confronted and were aware that their fence is not properly closed. Agreements were made between both parties and, among other things, it was decided to have one of the dogs put to sleep.

under the influence of alcohol. On Kaya Korona the suspect drove on the sidewalk and crashed into a traffic sign. He then drove a little further and parked his car on the sidewalk at Plasa Reina Juliana. When the patrol arrived, the driver was sleeping in the vehicle. The vehicle had damage to the left front side. A breath test showed that he had consumed more than the permitted amount of alcohol. The suspect was arrested and his driver’s license was confiscated.

Apr. 5. Around 8:40 p.m. a man, 37, was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol. The suspect was involved in a collision on Kaya Andres A. Emerenciana. A breath test showed that he had consumed more than the permitted amount of alcohol. The suspect was arrested and given a 2-hour driving ban.

Traffic accidents

Apr. 6. Around 11:45 p.m. a car and a scooter collided at the intersection of Kaya Korona and Kaya Caribe. The driver of the scooter wanted to turn left but did not give priority to the car coming in the opposite direction. The victim was taken to hospital by ambulance for medical treatment. The driver of the car was cited for driving without valid proof of insurance. Traffic was temporarily regulated by the police until the services had finished their work.

Apr. 6. Around 8:20 p.m. an E-bike collided with a pick-up at the intersection of Kaya International and Kaya Maximiliana Rosario. When the patrol arrived, the driver of the E-bike was lying injured on the ground. An investigation revealed that the E-bike was going at too high speed to brake when the rider wanted to turn right. As a result, she crashed into a pickup truck that was stationary at the intersection. The victim was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Apr. 6. Around 4:30 p.m. a single-vehicle collision occurred on Kaminda La Union. A passenger car rolled over into the bushes next to the main road and trapped the driver in the vehicle. The fire brigade assisted in removing the victim from the car. When the driver was unable to pass the breath test correctly after several attempts he was arrested for driving under the influence. Because he started to feel nauseous, he was taken by ambulance to the hospital. The road was closed to traffic until the services finished their work.

Traffic control

Between Mar. 25 – Apr. 15 fines were issued for traffic violations during routine traffic checks. These were driving without: 8x a helmet; 17x a valid driver’s license; 12x valid insurance; 3x a license plate; 2x a seat belt on. Tickets were also issued for 2x for holding a phone while driving.

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

Public order

Apr. 17. Around 7 p.m. the central control room received a report of a missing man, Silvrick Martha, aged 70, who was last seen at a drinking establishment at Kaminda Lagun around 1 p.m. when he left the place in his car. Around 10:45 p.m. a resident of Lagun reported that he had found the missing man. When the patrol arrived, they saw that the man was not entirely ap-

Property crime

Apr. 17. A burglary was reported at a home on Kaya Mississippi. A kitchen window was forced to enter the home between 8:10 and 11 a.m. and the bedrooms searched. They were probably looking for valuables.

Apr. 13. In the evening two women, aged 22 and 41 were arrested as part of an investigation into a number of thefts of vehicles, including e-bikes and scooters, that have occurred recently. The investigation into this case is ongoing.

Apr. 9. Between 11 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. a white Old Navy bag was taken from the car parked near the red slave huts while the owner was diving. The bag contained various goods, including a red Olympus TG6 camera, clothes, slippers and diving equipment.

Apr. 8. A burglary was reported at a company located on E.E.G. Boulevard. Between 12:30 and 8 a.m. a digital safe with its contents was stolen.

Arrests

Apr. 18. Around 3:55 p.m. a man, 61, was arrested on Kaya Patrushi because he possessed a gas cylinder that had been stolen from the yard of a house on the same street.

Apr. 16. Around 5 p.m. two homes were searched on Kaya Johanna in Antriol in connection with violations of the BES Opium Act. During the search, the suspect, a man, 48, tried to flee, but was arrested for violation of the BES Opium Act. Various items and cash were seized during the searches.

Apr. 15. Around 9:50 p.m. a man, 24, was arrested at a house in Bario Mamparia Kutu for vandalism. The suspect had destroyed several items in a home.

Driving under the influence

Apr. 19. Around 2:05 a.m. a scooter was stopped at Kaya International because the driver was wearing a helmet but the passenger was not. An investigation determined that the driver, 22, was under the influence of alcohol. He was arrested and given a two hour driving ban. The passenger was fined for riding without a helmet.

Apr. 18. Around 1:35 a.m. the driver of a scooter at the Kaya International was stopped for a routine check. A breath test showed that she had consumed more than the permitted amount of alcohol. The woman, 20, was arrested for driving and given a one hour driving ban.

Apr. 15. Around 9 p.m. the central control room received a report of a collision near Kibra’i Montaña on Kaminda di Rincon. A driver drove his car into a fence, hitting a parked scooter, causing it to fall over against a parked car. A breath test showed that the driver had consumed more than the permitted amount of alcohol. The driver was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Apr. 12. Around 9:20 p.m. a man, 23, was arrested on Kaya Amsterdam for driving under the influence of alcohol. He drove into a traffic sign and came to a stop against a tree on the side of the road. A breath test showed that he had consumed more than the permitted amount of alcohol. His driver’s license was confiscated.

Apr. 9. Around 9:25 p.m. a man, 36, was arrested at Plasa Reina Juliana for driving

Letters & Opinions

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

The effects of banning short term vacation rentals

For decades, the island government has turned a blind eye to short-term vacation rentals in areas not zoned for such purposes. This tacit approval has been the status quo for as long as most can remember, going back well over a decade. Indeed, many second-home buyers factored in the freedom to use their homes as income-generating investments when buying property on Bonaire.

The government's arbitrary decision to suddenly and immediately enforce these long-dormant zoning regulations caught many off guard. An agenda pushed by a few paid consultants with a known hotel-centric bias appears to be behind this push for immediate enforcement.

The OLB's rationale is based on several inaccurate statements of "fact."

- **Hotel and resort guests spend more on the island than renters of private villas.** Untrue. Hotels keep most, if not all, of their accommodation support services (cleaning, laundry, catering, maintenance, car rentals, etc.) in-house, and the profits derived from overnight stays flow off the island to foreign investors in most instances. Contrast this with private home rentals where all these services are hired from local, independent suppliers. The money paid for these services stays on Bonaire and directly supports our economy.
 - **If private homes are no longer available, short-term visitors will book a hotel or resort next time.** Untrue. While some private apartment renters may move to hotels for a similar experience, the higher-spend private home renters will not. There is a reason these affluent travelers choose a private home rental – they want privacy. If there is no inventory of private homes, these travelers will simply trade Bonaire for a different Caribbean island where their demands will be met.
 - **This enforcement action will impact fewer than 100 private home rentals.** Untrue. A 2022 online inventory of private home rentals conducted by local realtors revealed at least 300 short-term vacation homes in Residential Areas I, II, and III. This number is likely higher, as some private landlords don't have a website or property manager.
- The OLB's decision is based on inaccurate data. The OLB also makes inaccurate assumptions to justify enforcement.
- **Banning short-term vacation rentals will improve social cohesion in the impacted neighborhoods.** Untrue. From

what I understand about OLB's plan, only rentals shorter than three months will be prohibited. It is difficult to believe that a three- or six-month rental to a group of interns will boost the social cohesion in any neighborhood, especially the upscale neighborhoods directly impacted by this ban. The same is likely true for the Mariadal specialists who come to the island for a few months and intend to depart after their contract is complete.

- **Affordable housing will be the result of this enforcement.** Untrue. Homes in the highest price range, \$750,000+, will likely decline in value if this ban is enforced. This is because many homeowners there rely on vacation rentals to offset the high ownership costs. When a large volume of homes floods the market, prices go down – as does the associated VGB the government relies on.

However, the real pain point for affordable housing in Bonaire lies in the \$200,000 or less properties. These modest homes will not see any price drop benefit from any change in pricing in the high-end housing market. Even if a Sabadeco villa drops in price by 25% (which is a very likely scenario across the board for all properties in the impacted areas), that will absolutely not equate to an identical percentage drop for properties in the price range where a reduction is most needed. This is basic economics.

Enforcement isn't going to help the affordable rental market, either. If villas in areas like Sabadeco, Belnem, or Punt Vierkant are even put into the long-term rental market, no private home in those areas will have a market rental rate of less than \$2,000 per month (on the very low end). This ban will not help the affordable rental issue at all.

Homeowners, renters, and vacation visitors will not be the only ones affected. Active enforcement will negatively impact the island's economy.

- **Local businesses will take a big hit to their bottom lines.** Profit drops in service-adjacent industries like property management, house cleaning, laundry, and rental cars should be expected. But it goes beyond profit for local business owners.
- **Unemployment will rise.** Jobs are on the line. Plain and simple. When there is less demand, there will be fewer jobs for house cleaners, property managers, maintenance crews, and gardeners. Unemployment rates will certainly rise.

Then, there is the concept of the Blue Economy and its goal of attracting well-heeled visitors with deeper pockets instead of low-value, mass tourism. Reducing the private residence pool does not align with this goal.

Many of our valued, higher-spend visitors come here specifically for the privacy and peace that a private residence provides. These visitors rent vehicles, shop at local grocery stores, and dine in our many restaurants. All these activities boost our local economy far more than the "all-inclusive" hotel and resort guests who rarely venture beyond their property's walls, let alone contribute directly to the local economy in the ways private home renters do.

The loss of these well-heeled tourists will directly impact the economy, but the impact won't stop there. If there is no future demand for upscale, villa-style second homes, the construction industry will also see a downturn.

Construction is the second-biggest economic driver on this island after tourism. Fewer new homes mean fewer construction jobs and reduced demand for materials, further damaging Bonaire's overall economy and job market.

If the government persists with its plan to immediately enforce this rental zoning ban, I believe the island's real estate market will plunge into a similar scenario to what happened in 2008-2009. If you weren't here to witness that downturn, count yourself lucky. It took years to recover from depressed property values and a shaky economy.

The strangest part of this situation is that the only people who stand to gain from enforcement are a handful of homeowners vocal about not wanting vacationers in their neighborhoods. These homeowners do not realize that if this enforcement initiative is executed, the value of their own properties could plunge by 25% or more.

Perhaps holidaymakers aren't so bad to have as short-term neighbors after all.

RE/MAX Paradise Homes
Sunwise Bonaire
Harbourtown Bonaire
Sunrentals Bonaire

Loyal servants of the King?

Dear Editor,

On March 5 the outgoing Minister of Nature and Nitrogen Van der Wal and the outgoing Secretaries of State for Surcharges and Customs De Vries and for Justice and Security Van der Burg blocked in parliament the support previously decided by the council of ministers for the European Nature Restoration Act. Therefore also by themselves. By doing so they violated the unity of government-policy as enshrined in Article 45.3 of the Constitution. And they did also at this moment as if they were not servants of the King. An insult for Him. Further on the outgoing government had to vote in Brussels against this law instead of support it.

In an earlier, less serious case, Prime Minister Rutte reacted immediately. He dismissed the involved Secretary of State for Economics and Environment Mona Keijzer the next day. She had only said she disagreed with government policy. Not blocked.

In the former case, outgoing Prime Minister Rutte didn't react at all. Up to now. How can that be? Because he is outgoing? But the King and the Constitution aren't outgoing at all.

With kind regards,
Gerrit van der Meij,
Retired senior civil servant

To the Ombudsman, King Willem Alexander and all it concerns:

It is clear that the Ombudsman and the Prosecutors do not do what they are supposed to do. You are charged with acting on behalf of people wrong by government's inappropriate/illegal acts and you claim that it not in your jurisdiction when asked to act.

The major offenses: The roundabout on Kaya Amsterdam; the wrongful building at Chogogo and Ocean Oasis; the actions/inactions of the Polis and the OLB based on clearly erroneous information, are all in your jurisdiction yet you do not act or act sufficiently/properly.

It is clear that the OLB is corrupt and now there is a movement to 'cleanse' the Post & Archief of 'un-needed' documents. How much more cover-up will Bonaire be subjected to?

If you are unable to properly do the jobs properly that your job descriptions dictate, please step down and allow the job to be properly performed.

Charles M. Baltayan
Gov N Debrot #18, Bonaire

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Buckley's Books

by George Buckley

With Earth Day now being called Earth Week and Sustainability Week, and having been there at the beginning of the movement, I wanted to chat about never being too young or too old to be inspired by a good book about nature and what has inspired me. Sometimes all it takes is a spark to get your imagination percolating.

When I had award winning natural history author Sy Montgomery at my Harvard University group recently, one of the graduate students was in near tears explaining how she was at Harvard completing her Doctorate in Biology because she was inspired as a teenager to study nature after reading several of Sy's books. Sy was in near tears when she told her about the profound impact that she had upon her. Sy now has several dozen books published, some for children and many for all ages. Go online and check them out!

(<https://symontgomery.com/books>)

Rachel Carson had a similar profound impact on me many decades ago when I read her wonderful *The Sea Around Us*

and *Silent Spring* and my high school biology teacher took me to hear her speak and meet her. The books are still great reads!

Likewise, I was inspired to dive and study the oceans by Jacques Cousteau and his son Philippe who had a series of books about ocean life as well as the famous television program, *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau*. Together they inspired the careers of legions of divers and ocean scientists. I worked with them on projects when Jacques' grandson and Philippe's son, also Philippe, was at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology working on a Fellowship there. Many years later, young Philippe Cousteau followed his grandfather and father's dedication to the ocean. He and his mother Jan and sister Alexandra traveled to Bonaire to dive at Captain Don's Habitat and work with Jack Chalk and myself on environmental projects. Jack and I served as the early Chair and Vice Chair of the environmental organization EarthEcho International which Philippe now directs. He has focused on youth and the environment with his work and books

which include the futuristic environmental adventure, *The Endangered*s, wherein animals take fate into their own paws. He also worked with several groups, including my students in the Sustainability and Environmental Management Program and Cathryn Berger Caye on the very popular book *Going Blue - a teen guide to saving our oceans, lakes, rivers and wetland*.

Next month I'll continue sharing my ever growing bookcases of environmental and ocean books.



George Buckley has been coming to Bonaire since 1976, working with Captain Don (who called him CLAM for his work with mollusks), Hendrik Wuyts and others

on environmental and educational projects and films. He has led over 100 study groups to Bonaire with many of his students returning often. Semiretired from decades of teaching Environmental Management and leading an active graduate program in Sustainability, he now works with many environmental groups and as an environmental consultant.



A Garden?

Just Do It!

by Angliet, Nature Lover
Dia di Rincon,
written in the stars

One cannot miss Dia di Rincon if you are living or visiting Bonaire. The whole month of April people in Rincon are busy preparing: local food and beverages, cultural music, dances and cultural dress for the Simadan /harvest festival parade. The food and craft stalls are decorated traditionally giving the festival a great nostalgic ambience. It's always cool and fun to meet with family and friends who come to Bonaire just for this great occasion.

Dia di Rincon is associated with the old days of harvest time on Bonaire. When the dry season begins so does the harvest of fruit, corn (maishi chiki) and vegetables that are ready to consume.

This was a happy time of the year when the kunukeros (farmers) could enjoy the result of their hard work on the land. They would share their crops, goat meat and chicken eggs with families and friends and sell some in the neighborhood. The delicious flavors and smells of kabritu stoba (goat stew) with pumpkin and corn, sopa ku piska (fish soup) with jambo and sweet potato would mix in the air. Everyone enjoyed the foods along with tamarind marmelade with funchi (polenta) with bonchi or bembe and lemon - tamarind juices. There were fresh fruits like watermelon, bacoba, papaya, mispel, mango, chimaruku, sunsaka and others and a dessert called "lee" - a homemade ice-cream with fruits from the garden.



In fact, this is the most pure Sustainable Urban Agriculture. This modern trend for fighting climate crisis, but was practised in the past, producing tasteful, healthy food. agriculturally friendly to our Mother Earth. In many ways I'm telling the kids in school about this special day.

Children like stories and especially historical stories with exciting events of the past. A good story teller can beat internet when bringing a story alive. Often, after a story, I let the kids do something creative with it by making a painting that tells their own little story, or a work made from raw plant material.

For Dia di Rincon, we made house pictures and the kids loved it. The house roof is made of coconut leaves from my garden. The old man face is decorated with cotton from the wild cotton plant and other kinds of leaves. The kids made so many nice pieces including some decorated with tamarind seeds and dry flowers.

The pumpkin is the best one I have ever grown. A few months ago I planted some seeds from a nice orange pumpkin that I bought and a few plants grew. I had

many small flowers but few females and no pumpkin. At a certain time a female flower appeared and I helped pollinate it with a feather. That was the last female flower on the plant and it produced this delicious pumpkin. I planted the seeds, just in time and it grew before the strong drought began. The plant dried out, but I have my big pumpkin and many male flowers which I added to scrambled eggs.



Last but not least, look around you, there are mangos in the air. Enjoy. Have a great Dia di Rincon on April 30.



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.

Sint Eustatius has its governor

Mrs. Alida Francis was sworn in as Island Governor of Sint Eustatius on April 10.

February 2021 Statia-born Francis (58) was appointed Government Commissioner of Sint Eustatius. Before that, she was acting commissioner, worked as senior communication advisor and spokesperson at the Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland (RCN) and was Director of Tourism of the Island Territory Sint Eustatius.

With the appointment of the island governor, the third phase of the Restoring Facilities Sint Eustatius Act goes into effect ending the administrative intervention on Sint Eustatius since 2018. Sint Eustatius now is responsible for carrying out its financial and administrative tasks. The Acting Kingdom Representative has a number of additional powers until the Act expires on September 1, 2024. RCN



Comply or explain principle not taking hold

Reportedly the comply or explain principle has been slow to gain traction in The Hague. Apparently the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, and the House of Representatives itself, seem to have gotten the hang of it. Others largely ignore it. The principle, proclaimed in 2019, declares that all laws passed by the House are in effect throughout the kingdom, including BES. During the legislative process, the Caribbean OLBs can propose provisions adapted to the special needs and interests of the islands. But they must do so proactively and explain their reasons, not make the issue an entry to a general debate on the legislation. *DMR (Dossier Koninkrijksrelaties)*

Major investment in BES Childcare has strong support

The BES Childcare Act can count on broad support from the House of Representatives. Groups believe that support from The Hague for the (further) professionalization of childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands comes too late rather than too early.

The law must ensure that the quality, housing, safety, supervision and financial accessibility of childcare is significantly improved, thereby benefiting childcare providers, their staff, parents/guardians and last but not least, children. Minister Carola Schouten warned that there is a “growth path” that will easily take several years.

From 2027, the parental contribution to the cost of child care will be significantly reduced. Local authorities can step in for families who cannot afford a low contribution.

The Free Benefit paid to BES to increase

The Free Benefit from which Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba finance their island tasks will from now on grow along with economic growth. The free allowance is the fixed amount that the islands receive annually for, among other things, management of public space, supervision and enforcement and welfare.

Effective this year, in addition to the structural increase already announced and in addition to the annual indexation, another 4.5 million euros will be added to the Free Benefit. The BES islands, just like municipalities in the Netherlands, will have more room to make their own policy choices and budget for the future.

The government will allocate 8.6 million euros annually, from 2024, to better enable Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius to properly perform their tasks as public bodies. With this extra money, the three public bodies, in their role as employers, can absorb the consequences of the increase in the Statutory Minimum Wage (WML). The additional funding improves their position as employers and creates more financial scope for carrying out major tasks in both the social and physical domains.

The ‘GDP’ system will also come into effect for Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius. That is, increases in the Gross Domestic Product will be reflected in increases government funding. That will make another 4.5 million euros available for the three islands. *DMR*

Some slots in medical education likely to be reserved for Caribbean students

In 2017 the practice of designating “ministerial positions” in higher education ended. Under that program, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science could designate a limited number of seats in high-demand educational programs as reserved for students from selected populations that might be excluded by the entrance requirements. The number of Caribbean students seeking medical degrees dropped when the ministerial positions ended. There’s a strong movement in Parliament to restore the ministerial positions to medical education.. *DMR*

Recovery from covid strong but one-legged Council finds

In its annual report the Council of State of the Kingdom declared the Caribbean islands have made a strong economic recovery from the corona crisis. It added a caveat, however: “The good growth figures threaten to conceal the fact that excessive reliance on just one economic pillar (tourism; ed) inherently contains weaknesses. In addition, on most islands there is still too much emphasis on quantity in tourism, while the development of higher-quality and more sustainable variants should be sought.” *DMR*

Climate Table being formed

Combating client change and protecting the public from it have become international legal and civil rights issues. Governmental bodies are being taken to court, and sometimes losing, for failures to meet their responsibilities. The Island Council has decided to create its intended Climate Table.

Reynold (Nolly) Oleana, acting governor, has been appointed independent chairman. The Island Council requested the Executive Council to set up and fund a secretariat office and Climate Bureau with the necessary expertise and capacity to support the Table.

Before the end of October 2024, the Climate Table must submit a climate plan that focuses on measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation on Bonaire. *DMR*

Flamingo Airport Bonaire celebrates 79th anniversary

On Monday, April 15 the airport of Bonaire celebrated its birthday. The airport is officially 79 years old, although its history began several years earlier with the construction of the first runway at the old location near Subi Blanku on the road between Kralendijk and Rincon.

Letters & Opinions, continued

OLB asking for participation by community

I read a press article hoping the public will re-use items they have been tossing away. Especially plastic items. It mentions bringing one’s own utensils and water bottles. A good idea but I would suggest putting out press releases going a bit further. Ask for suggestions from people on their ideas which possibly may not be known to others. They probably have a treasure trove of ideas passed down by ancestors or friends.

Foods on Bonaire soils rapidly because of the heat and humidity. I’ve learned from a friend to use waxed liners in cold cereal boxes to store items to place in the refrigerator/freezer. Simply place open bakery items or meats in their original packaging into one of these liners, fold over the open end and place in the freezer. I have even rinsed out used liners to use a 2nd and 3rd time before tossing in the garbage container. Those boxes themselves may be reusable for storing similar items such as small-size toys or the inside can be used by young children for craft projects.

Purchase as many products as possi-

ble in wide mouth glass bottles. Re-use these to store bags of noodles, rice, flour and other products that attract bugs if left in their original packaging.

Sort plastic, paper and metal and other various throw away items to recycle. Craft people on Bonaire are ingenious when it comes to making something for resell at open-air markets. One lady who sells jams reclaims clean small glass bottles that she re-uses to fill again with her product. I’ve purchased local teas that the sellers ask to have their bottles returned so they can be reused. Let’s support them in their crafting. Use sturdy cardboard gift boxes in drawers to separate items. I use plastic candy box liners to separate small pieces of jewelry preventing them from getting tangled. Empty dry contents containers can be used to store other dry items such as dry animal food.

I hope others will offer their ideas as I’m always willing to learn from others.

Masha Danki, Earline Wasser
Kralendijk, Bonaire



WestJet announces a second season, YYZ-BON

Starting December 10th, 2024, WestJet will resume the winter season schedule with flights to Bonaire on Tuesday, departing Toronto at 10:10 a.m. arriving in Bonaire at 4:30 p.m. and departing Bonaire on Wednesday at 9 a.m. and arriving in Toronto at 1:29 p.m. The season will run until April 30th, 2025.

In March 2024, Bonaire experienced an increase of 186% in Canadian visitors due to the new WestJet flight out of Toronto, Canada.

For more details and to book your flights, please visit the WestJet website at www.westjet.com or email marketing@bonaireisland.com.

Board artists perform twice



Pianist Claudia Cassier performs Dussek's Sonatine Op. 20 No.1 Photo Julie Morgan

Podium Bonaire Classical Music Board held two concerts this past weekend, April 20 and 21, one at Wilhelminaplein's Protestant Church, and one at the airport's Dabboussi Center. The concerts showcased talented local musicians. Many we know from previous performances held by the Board but some were new to us.

Both concerts began with Bonairean local favorite Amancio and Friends performing their interpretations Caribbean/Latin/Local music. The group played seven songs including the familiar Remailo that had everyone singing along and tapping their feet. The group is led by Curaçaoan, Amancio Batta. He found his way to Bonaire in 2018 after first spending time in the Netherlands and then traveling the Caribbean playing in several bands and teaching percussion. The band, more or less known as the Hofi Kultural band, is made up of Francis Domakace, Chon Theodora, Adrey Chin Kwi Joe, Rudolf Mangelsdorf, Luis Figueroa, Loeki Nicolas and Dedrie Pedersen. The group ended their set with everyone singing along to the Bonaire anthem

Harpist Annelies Peeman-Tieleman is new to Bonaire. She performed four pieces high above the crowd on the upper level at the back of the little church.

The music floated down, but it would have been nice to have seen the musician plucking her fingers across the beautiful instrument. From an early age, Peeman-Tieleman has been a musician and began playing the harp in 2011. She moved to Bonaire in 2020.

Well known to the Board concerts is pianist Claudia Cassier. She performed Sonatine Op. 20 No. 1 by Jan Ladislav Dussek. The piece has a very quick tempo that Cassier handled beautifully as she does in every genre of music. Proving her versatility and love of music, she contributed her talent to accompany performers Alan Bowen playing saxophone, Brad Howard singing and Zahid Frans on steel drum.

Seventeen-year-old newcomer to the Board, pianist Floran Daman, performed the Mariage d'Amour by Paul de Senneville. Daman's fingers flowed across the keyboard in this moving piece that evokes every emotion from sadness to happiness.

Veteran musician and early contributor to organization of the Board, Hans Odin Faassen took requests for types of waltzes from the audience. He beautifully improvised three different 'waltz' type pieces including one reminiscent

of Charlie Chaplin movies. A composer since the age of 13, he has created 800 instant compositions for piano since moving to Bonaire in 2006. Faassen's music can be found on YouTube, Spotify and SoundCloud.

Alan Bowen, originally from Atlanta, Georgia, played Eugene Bozza's Arid for alto saxophone accompanied on piano by Cassier. Bowen performed the emotional 1936 piece with perfect tone and breath phrasing. Bowen performs classical, jazz and pop and is featured quite often in a trio with Cassier and Howard at local events.

Another newcomer to the Board was acoustic guitarist Alex Jeffe from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He entertained the crowd with two pieces by Johann S. Bach, Prelude in A - Cello Suite #3 for guitar and Prelude in D-Cello Suite #1 for guitar. Who would suspect this talented classical guitarist is a dive instructor at Captain Don's Habitat.

Brad Howard's operatic voice is a welcome addition for music lovers on Bonaire. He sang Choral Cantata #140 by Johann S. Bach and the dramatic Sonnetti di Petrarca #3 for voice by Franz Liszt accompanied by Cassier. Howard's career includes roles in the world's classic operas including The Magic Flute, La Boheme, Candide and more.

Zahid Frans performed on steel drum Bellafonte's famous Island in the Sun and then played and sang in Papiamentu Atardi by Curaçao musician, the late Rudy Plaate. Cassier accompanied him on both songs.

Visit the Classical Music Board Bonaire on Facebook to keep up to date on the next concert.

Story/Photos Julie Morgan



Jeffe performed two Bach pieces Photo Julie Morgan

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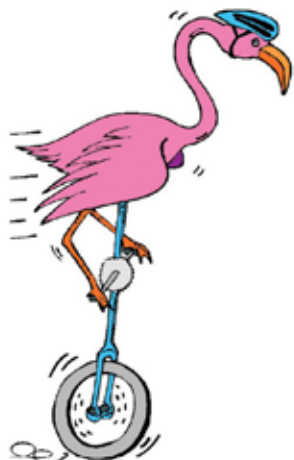
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Climate Resilience project launched

With the effects of climate change becoming more evident: intense weather, storms, drought, higher air and water temperatures and sea level rise, STINAPA is taking action. On April 11, they announced their collaboration with Florida State University (FSU) in a new Climate Resilience project funded by Pew Charitable Trusts. A team has been put together with eight members from STINAPA and three from FSU.

From STINAPA there is: Judith Raming, Bonaire National Marine Park (BNMP) manager; Roxanne Francisca Sr. Conservation manager; Caren Eckrich, principal investigator; Jerianne Terlouw, project coordinator and Danielle de Kool, ecology advisor. Collaborating from FSU are: Sarah Lester, principal investigator; Laurel Field FSU phd candidate and Andrew Rasweillier, FSU professor

Kalli de Meyer, STINAPA nature conservation director said, "The effects of climate change will affect everyone and finally people are able to talk about it, which is great. The project is about climate resilience. Coral reefs are at the extreme end of their thermal tolerances. We want a future where we know we have all these changes, but we can still focus on our coral reefs."

Caren Eckrich, explained work has already begun by examining data from FSU's Andrew Rassweiler's study since 2021 on branching corals and how they are growing. Rassweiler's study is ongoing, and more data will be input.

Regarding climate change, every year the marine park checks 10 sites at different depths to see how many corals are affected by thermal stress. The temperature is monitored with sensors and the data collected is analyzed. Several different factors have affected Bonaire's corals: bleaching events, wind reversals, SCTLD and other diseases.

Coastal water quality has affected the coral in negative ways: too many nutrients, run-off from land and just plain dirty water entering the ocean. Monitoring the water quality can help manage the reef and make it more resilient to climate change.



Climate Resilience project: L-R, Roxanne Francisca, Jerianne Terlouw, Sarah Lester, Laurel Field, Kalli de Meyer and Caren Eckrich. (members of the team not pictured Judith Raming, Andrew Rassweillier and Danielle de Kool)

ient to climate change.

Eckrich said, "The problem is way bigger than Bonaire, but we can manage some things through monitoring and improved data."

Sarah Lester explained that early detection of climate stress events with data driven management is important mainly for coral reefs, but also for mangroves and seagrasses. By adjusting where and when we monitor, we have the best ability to follow climate events.

With data driven management we can identify sites that are at a higher risk.

Laurel Field has been working with Rassweiler's study for two years as part of her thesis. She is combining STINAPA's monitoring with their water sensors/loggers that give open access monitoring.

Field is using information from satellite data giving base ocean temperatures with more data than temperature sensors/loggers/ at the surface.

Field said, "Stressors on the corals are recreation in the water, bleaching, temperature and water quality. We are integrating our resources; everything that happens both globally and here."

Project coordinator Jerianne Terlouw is working to acquire the data and analyse findings. She is reaching out to the dive schools to gather their input as they are on the reefs everyday.

She hopes to conduct general public sessions to get their input on various sites and

draw solutions from their findings. Recommendations are needed on how to manage outreach and education.

STINAPA's Sr. Conservation manager Roxanne Francisca, is creating an overview of what we plan to do and questions we need to answer.

"None of us really have hands on experience but we need to find out what hands on things we can do and how we can collaborate. At the end of this we will have a really robust program, not just here, but across the region, so we can have a better grasp on what we can do," said Francisca.

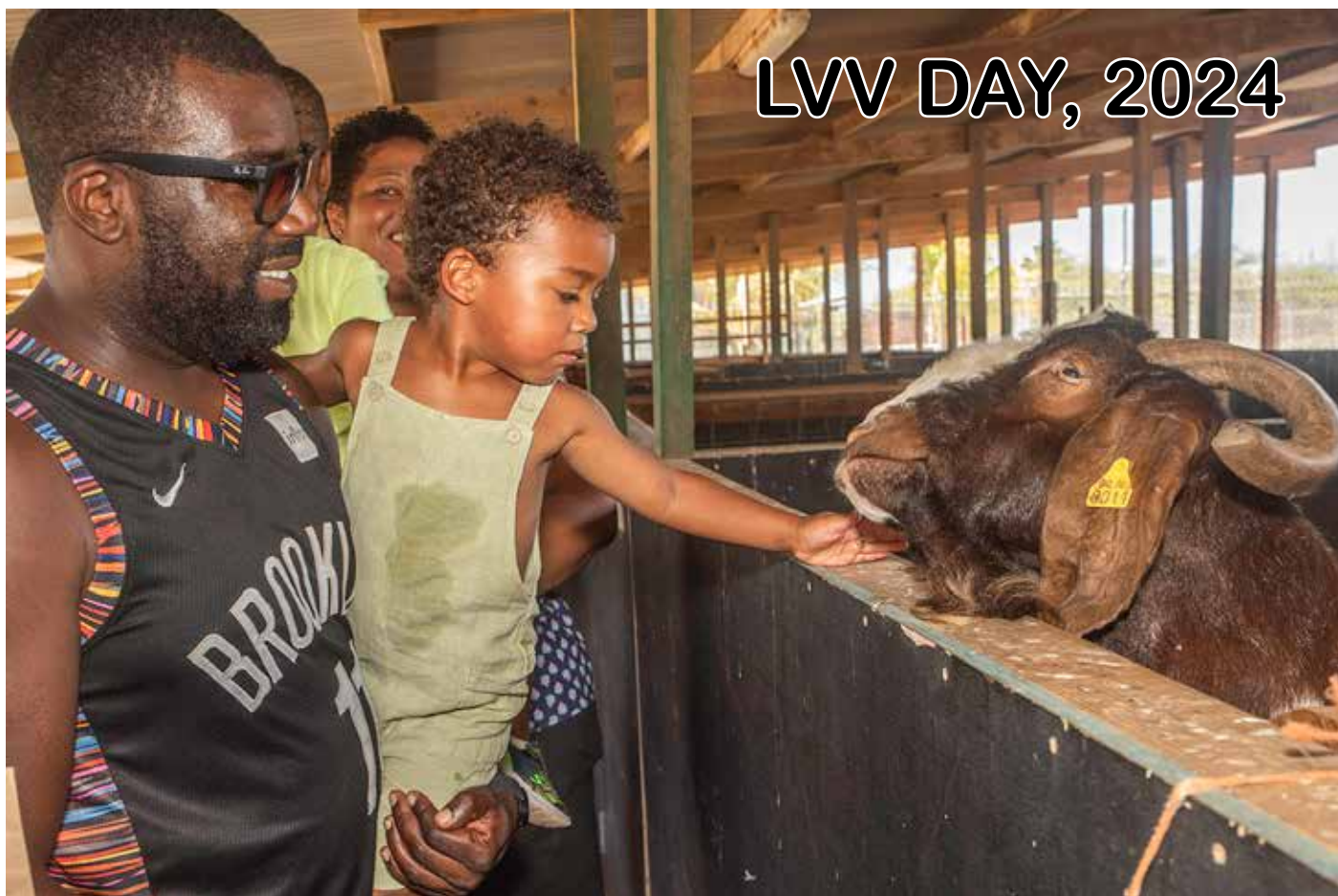
Story/Photo Julie Morgan

Spring time is here and LVV Open Day on April 14 came at the perfect time for Bonaire gardeners, plant enthusiasts and homegrown veggie lovers. Local gardeners sold plants, fresh veggies and fruit, fresh local food, natural drinks, specialty sweets and there was even a bar.

LVV director Maurice Adriaens designed a duplicate presentation schedule for the early and late visitors and alerted the crowd when something of interest was about to begin. Greenhouse tours were available several times during the day for visitors to find out just what is growing at LVV, how to successfully grow a garden on Bonaire and even purchase plants and trees. Gacha Coffie held several demonstrations on cooking that included instructions on how to make iguana soup and her famous kadushi soup with free tastes available. The human kids and parents could take a tour of the goats and sheep and even pet and feed them. Caroll Ann Soliano taught ladies how to tie the famous Bonaire headscarf just in time for the upcoming Rincon Day.

More and more people are gravitating to growing their own foods and LVV is the perfect place to learn about gardening and agriculture on Bonaire. For more information visit LVV Boneiru on Facebook or call 717-8836.

Story/photo Julie Morgan



Parrots and People

Popinjays: Parrots in Renaissance Art

by Mel McCombie



In Middle English, the word for parrot is “popinjay,” though today, if the term is used, instead it refers to a dandy or fop. By the fifteenth century, popinjay had acquired a figurative meaning as a lady or the Virgin Mary. This led to a circuitous elevation into important symbols in Christian religious art. How I discovered this first was reading about a 1496 painting.

Cockatoos are quintessential Australian parrots, so much a part of Aussie identity that they are featured on the Australian ten-dollar bill. Cockatoos do not migrate, and live only in Australia, Indonesia, the Solomon Islands, and parts of the Philippines. So, it’s no surprise that art historian Heather Dalton at the University of Melbourne did a double-take when she looked

at a reproduction of Andrea Mantegna’s 1496 altarpiece, the *Madonna della Vittoria* (in the Louvre Museum). Perched in the background, peering down at the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus is an unmistakable sulfur-crested cockatoo. Baffled, she asked how and why an antipodean parrot showed up in an Italian Renaissance painting?

In a paper published in 2014, Dalton argues that the cockatoo depicted was likely originally from Indonesia and was likely brought to Europe over land and sea trade routes. But why include it in an altarpiece? What possible connection could a cockatoo from Sulawesi have with the court of the Gonzaga family in Mantua?

The cockatoo is depicted largely from the front, its crest quite

tight to its head, and it peers down with the bright eyes and mien we see when parrots are comfortable in human company. It’s likely that this bird was drawn from life, not a stuffed animal—particularly since stuffed cockatoos invariably are displayed with their citrine crests erect and splayed out. This bird is far more naturalistically depicted.

Traders knew that the most valued parrots were those stolen from their nests when just old enough to survive without its parents. Such parrots quickly identified with their human captors, and mimicked human speech. A trip to Italy would have been very stressful, confined at sea and carried over land in caravans that jolted along. But once arrived in Venice, a cockatoo became a coveted symbol of elite status. If you owned one, it meant you could afford to pay for the months, even years, of effort that brought the cockatoo to Europe.

We all know that parrots can not only communicate effectively with each other but can mimic human speech (and often use it correctly). Roman writers record that after the battle of Actium in 31 BCE, a parrot greeted Julius Caesar with the words “Ave Caesar” (Hail Caesar). This was seen as proof of the parrot’s prescience. The story was repeated so often that by the fifteenth century, the parrot’s “ave” was reconfigured, and related to “Ave Maria” (Hail Mary). Parrots assumed a new role as a symbol of the virgin birth of Jesus and became standard in many artistic depictions of the Virgin and Child.

When I read this—in a number of scholarly sources—I was struck by how hard people worked to make the connection between parrots and Christian religion. I can’t help but wonder, though, if the many parrots depicted in images of Mary and



Andrea Mantegna’s 1496 altarpiece, the *Madonna della Vittoria*

Jesus were included because of their beauty, and for the pleasure the artists surely took in depicting these wonderful birds. You can see other wonderful parrot images in works by Albrecht Durer, Jan Van Eyck and Peter Paul Rubens.

For those of you interested in learning more, see: Rebecca Mead, *Where Did That Cockatoo Come From?*, New Yorker, June

28, 2021; and Richard Verdi, *The Parrot in Art, From Durer to Elizabeth Butterworth*, Scala, 2007, among many others.



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

Captain Don’s Habitat’s Baby Dock and dive staging area have been transformed following semi - destruction from a big storm two years ago.

Divers can now get back to the normal business of diving freedom with a mini-wall to counter any huge waves, built in staging area, renovated rinse tanks and all new lockers.

Divers tried out the new dock over the weekend and the locker room will be fully intact later this week.



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Artisan Bakery Bonaire

Kaya Grandi 67

They come to
dive and dine.
Help them find you.

A local threat for sea turtles: the sharpnose pufferfish

At the start of 2023, we had a large abundance of pufferfish larvae that settled on Bonaire. This resulted in a large bloom of sharpnose pufferfish around the reefs of Bonaire. These small fish are common in our waters and are harmless when seen on the reef. However, in April of 2023, we saw a large population crash. The hypothesis is that this population crash was caused by too little resources and too much competition for the sharpnose pufferfish. The crash resulted in many of the small fish washing onto shore or floating at the surface, making it the perfect prey for juvenile green turtles that are opportunistic feeders, meaning that they will eat any easy prey they can find. Sharpnose pufferfish contain saxitoxins (STX), a neurotoxin that is also found in shellfish and the reason for bans on commercial and recreational shellfish harvesting. This neurotoxin paralyzes fish or sea turtles, which can result in secondary mortality. The population crash led to quite a few sea turtle deaths in 2023. STCB tried to rehabilitate eight juvenile sea turtles of which only three could be released. We had a total of 21 reports in 2023.

So, when we started receiving phone calls of sea turtles acting strange at the end of March 2024, we responded immediately. This year we did not see a large population crash of sharpnose pufferfish, but we did notice a large increase in sharpnose pufferfish on the reef. Learning from last year's experiences, we have been taking out sea turtles



that have trouble swimming and proactively started looking for sick sea turtles. All sick sea turtles captured are put into our sea turtle rehab tank. Here we can monitor their swimming behavior, regularly feed them, give fluids and activated charcoal or any other medication they may need. When there are no symptoms observed for 24 hours, they are released back to the ocean. So far, we have had a total of 22 sea turtles in our rehab facility. Not all of these sea turtles were related to the sharpnose pufferfish; one juvenile green and one juvenile hawksbill were taken out of the water because they were very weak, and two juvenile green turtles were put in our rehab facility because of buoyancy and lung issues. Our efforts have shown to be successful by the high number of released turtles. From the 22 rehabilitated sea turtles, 20 have made it safely back to the ocean. We currently do not have any more sea turtles in our rehab facility. Two turtles did not make it.

Based on last year's event, we are expecting the sharpnose pufferfish threat to last until the end of April. We could not have given these turtles the care we have without the support of the amazing vets at Flamingo Island Veterinary Center and the owners of One Ocean Boutique Apartments and Suites, Vronie & Geert. Another big thank you goes to everyone who has reported sea turtles in trouble. If you see any sea turtle acting strange or unresponsive, please call our hotline on +599 780 0433.

STCB-Sea Turtle Conservation, Bonaire

Lion's Club Captains of Industry art



Felix Pepito Thomas takes a photo of his painting Photo Julie Morgan

Lion's Club Bonaire created Captains of Industry, a fund-raising art and silent auction held April 13 to support their many charitable contributions on the island. The silent auction offered a variety of services and products contributed by local businesses.

The unusual Captains of Industry art auction asked 19 individuals in business on Bonaire to create a painting based on the theme, Bonaire and the Netherlands from 2010 to present day. Many of the artists-to-be had never painted in their life. Educator at Liseo and Lion's Club member, Edelmira Carolina, headed up the project. She recruited local artist Janice Huckaby and Liseo School art teacher Kamla Thomas to instruct the businesspeople turned artists. The students met at Liseo school art classroom for four Saturdays but that was extended for three more to enable the artists to complete their work.

Thomas said, "Many of the people said, 'I can't draw,' but then when they

heard the theme they became more comfortable. They began with a sketch, each of them doing it in their own style. When they finished, they couldn't believe what they had done."

The paintings were auctioned with beginning bids of \$3600 to \$700. Many of the new artists said they would purchase their own painting to take home and, of course, contribute to the Lion's Club. Several of the artists said they would like to continue painting.

The artists were: Janice Huckaby, Gregory Colina, Felix 'Pepito' Thomas, Eugenio de Jongh, Claire Sealy, Miles Mercera, Marlon Bermudes, Mohamad Harmoudy Dabboussi, Delno Tromp, Carlos Lopez, Nina den Heyer, Jeaniro Balentien, Deepak Daryanini, Ralph Jantiji and Mimi Dongen.

No information was reported at press time as to money raised by the auction.

Story/Photo Julie Morgan

Make Bonaire Accessible by Ria Evers-Dokter MiVaBo is 16

When you celebrate a birthday, you usually get a cake and blow out all the burning candles while making a wish. Alas... that was not the case this time. A few people wished us well, sent a cute pictogram and that was it.

Was it really something to celebrate? It was certainly something to commemorate. After all, 16 years is a long time and there have been goals that we have reached.

But the real cherry on the cake would have been this important signature on the United Nations rights for the handicapped bill and that Bonaire's handicapped citizens would have the same rights as all other people.

Pleading, talking, writing has not been helpful. Okay, everybody confirmed that everyone should have the same rights, but that was about it. Conversations, workshops, congresses, personal talks, and still only silence at the horizon.

The first goal MiVaBo had 16 years ago was getting decent airlift. We all have seen how that went. The two airlifts that have been acquired were no good. They are still here and will finally be sold. Now we have a really nice airlift and it works fine. MiVaBo has even tested it. But there are still a few small problems.

Everyone with a handicap can now board a plane in a decent manner and that was our main goal.

MiVaBo will keep on working for everybody, because when Bonaire is accessible for the handicapped, Bonaire will be accessible for everyone!

And I guess everyone has read about Billy Valentijn's struggle to make his dream come true. Along with Dave Molina, he began a fundraiser to return to the island of his birth and celebrate a nice vacation, feel the warm sun and see the blue waters. He even started painting wonderful pictures with his mouth, to sell and raise money to reach his goal. But it was very hard and went very slowly. In order for Billy to get into a plane, 19 chairs have to be removed. And this vacation plan-fundraiser requires a lot of money to pay for the seats. Ingrid Havermans picked up the plan and with David Molina she has cranked up the fundraising again, because we are not there yet. If you want

to help <https://www.gofundme.com/f/billy-naar-bonaire>. Billy would be forever grateful. To see more about Billy and his art visit Billy Valentijn on Facebook. Billy paints with his mouth. His beautiful pictures are all about Bonaire. <https://www.facebook.com/billy.valentijn>

MiVaBo has continued with the water-wheelchairs that everyone fell in love with last year. Once a month we go to the Sorobon Beach or the lagoon at Ocean Oasis with a small group of elderly and offer a lovely and safe time in the water.

So, maybe it is not a party and a big cake, it is all the little moments and actions that count and make it precious. Follow all plans and projects, become a fan and help where you can. Happy Birthday MiVaBo!



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.



People Help Nature

People Help Nature at the entrance of Washington Slagbaai National Park (WSNP) is a collaborative exhibit of WWF, STINAPA and 10 Bonaire nature organizations. The large, beautiful images by Marcel van der Kamp and Casper Duoma portray the different organizations in action via video and include a bar code for the viewer to learn more about the organizations work.

After working on the project for two years, Stacey MacDonald of WWF (World Wildlife Fund) NA said, “We are not only showcasing the organizations but are also showing to the public and people to become more aware and also be very proud.”

The organizations portrayed are active both on land and sea and range from Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire to Clean

Coast Bonaire to Tera Barra.

On the collaboration in the exhibit, Piskabon president Ernest de Lanoy said, “Forty years ago, we used to pick up the conch and we never knew that it wasn’t all right. There was no one to tell us what was correct. And then STINAPA taught us how to preserve and protect our own island to make sure we have this for a long time...someone had to make us aware. We aren’t there yet but together with all the work and all the effort standing shoulder to shoulder we can make sure we have this for a long time.”

The People Help Nature exhibit is available to view at WSNP until the end of June and will then be moved to another public location.

Story/photos Julie Morgan



Top: Looking over the Piskabon exhibit are (L) Piskabon organization president Ernest Martin de Lanoy and (R) lifelong fisherman Johan “Perul” Soleana. Perul will be 70 in May and still fishes five times a week.

Bottom: People Help Nature exhibit was officially opened with a ribbon cutting by Stacey MacDonald of WWF, Michelin Padmore STINAPA communications and Roxanne Francisca STINAPA Sr Conservation Manager. *Photos Julie Morgan*

On Earth Day, OLB asks us to do our bit

“On our island, we find a lot of plastic litter on beaches and in neighborhoods. For instance, in 2020, over 70% of the litter at Te Amo Beach was plastic. Fortunately, we in Bonaire have already taken steps to eliminate plastics. For the past two years, it has been illegal to sell disposable plastic bags, straws, stirrers, and cutlery. The sale of disposable polystyrene meal packaging is also banned.

“The Public Entity of Bonaire encourages everyone to use reusable items whenever possible. ... For example, bring your own utensils or a drinking cup or thermos. And use a sustainable shopping bag.

“We all live off nature; “Nos ta biba di naturalesa.” Participating in a beach clean-up is one of the ways to reduce litter and plastics. Various volunteer organizations organize these clean-ups weekly. We invite everyone to support this movement and participate in these activities. Together, we are making Bonaire cleaner and more beautiful!” OLB



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>


Diver Safety. Presentations with Jason Buttenshaw held the third Sunday of the month 6:30 p.m. at Sugar Thief, 8 Kaya Inglaterra.


Pickleball. Chinese Assoc. Tues. & Thurs 6-8 p.m.; Jong Bonaire Weds 6-8 p.m. this week only; Sand Dollar at Eddy's almost daily 8 a.m. 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.

 **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. April 29; May 6; May 13 - VIP Diving - Divi Resort; Toucan Diving. [Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CaribbeanIslandsMantaConservation). Email: Caribbean.Islands@mantatrust.org

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

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

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 9am till 4pm 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 re-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/terrarmarmuseumbonaire/>

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 to July 2024 **Terramar Slavery Exhibition: WE ARE** Mon. - Sat. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

April **26**-July **26** **Terramar: SALI FO'R LAMAN** Free. Discover importance and beauty of coral reefs. Exhibit is part of community program 'Bou di Awa' which is powered by WWF Dutch Caribbean. Mon. - Sat. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. See page 19.

Art Exhibits April, May opening Waterworks, April 13 5 to 7 p.m. **SACA Art Center Antriol.** Kaya Korona 74. Open Wed - Sat. 3 - 10 p.m. <http://www.sacabonaire.com>

Artist Adrie van de Ven exhibition Mar. 16 - Apr. 29
Alied Lippinkhof, Waterworks, Apr. 13 - May 12.

Month long celebration - 35th year Dia di Rincon see page 15



April **16**-June **30** **"People Help Nature" photo exhibition** Washington Slagbaai Park entrance See page 9.

Saturday, April **20** **Classical Concert Saturday** Protestant Church Wilhelminaplein 5 p.m. (\$20)
Sunday, April **21** **Classical Concert Sunday** Daboussi Center Airport 7 p.m. \$40 (incl. two drinks) Tickets for both concerts at Delmar Bookhandel Kaya sr Bartola

April **25-28** **Softball tournament** Curaçao, Aruba, Bonaire and the Netherlands will compete at Jossy Boekhoudt Ballpark.

Saturday, April **27** **Nos Zjilea Cultural Event** 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei, Rincon. Enjoy the music, dancing, crafts, food and drink.

Rotary International Feria - Giant flea market on King's Day at Wilhelmina Park 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. Entertainment for the kids and family. Proceeds fund community projects.

Wednesday, May **1** **Bicycle Race closes out Dia di Rincon.** For ALL ages and ALL types of bikes.

Thursday, May **9** **KW car wash.** Fund raiser for Bonaire food bank. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Cicila motors. \$10 per car (outside only) See page 5

May **21 - 25** **PWA Bonaire Youth and Junior Salom.** Sorobon. Spanning a maximum of five (5) days, including registration day, the PWA event begins racing May 22.

May **25 - 26** **20th PROKIDS Bonaire 2024.** At Sorobon, mirroring the setup of the PWA Youth event. Registration Sat. May 25, welcoming local and regional participants in windsurfing slalom and sunfish disciplines. Friendly Races on Sunday.

May **23** to June **6** **Bonaire Culinair** Use this 15-day event to discover Bonaire's restaurants. 3-course menu \$39.50 pp. <https://bonaire-culinair.com>

May **25 / 26** **Fifa tournament,** Jong Bonaire on Saturday & Sunday

Sunday May **26** **Guardian Group Walk & Run** 6 a.m.

Bicycle Funrace.

Public Holidays

stock up - if you can

Saturday, April **27** **King's Birthday.** Official ceremony in honor of King Willem Alexander followed by numerous celebrations in Kralendijk. See page 19

Tuesday, April **30** **Dia di Rincon.** National holiday. Rincon is wide open. All else is closed.

Wednesday, May **1** **Labor Day** is a legal holiday. There aren't any official events, but shops, banks and offices are closed.

2024 Cruise Ship Schedule

DATE:	CRUISE SHIP	TIME	PIER	CAPACITY
Wed. April 24	CARNIVAL VISTA	0800-1600	South	4683
Wed. May 1	CARNIVAL HORIZON	0800-2200	South	4683
Thur. May 2	CELEBRITY BEYOND	0800-1700	South	3260
Wed. May 15	CARNIVAL HORIZON	0830-2200	South	4683

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/
Saturday, May 11	Dive Friends Quarterly Clean up. Everyone is welcome. If you don't dive, you can snorkel; if you don't snorkel, you can help out on shore. https://www.divefriendsbonaire.com/eco-activities/quarterly-clean-up-dives/
Sunday, May 12	STCB Fishing line Clean up at north pier 9 a.m. at the Dive Inn. Hosts Dive Friends Bonaire will sponsor our air tanks (INT). Bring dive card, Marine Park tag, shears/line cutters and mesh bag. The north pier is in the red contamination area so use STINAPA r guidelines to rinse gear and to limit your dives to one area per day. To join e-mail to cepa@bonaireturtles.org . 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



One of the events leading up to Dia di Rincon is the "Parada Garoshi-ou" (Anything that rolls is welcome) on Friday April 26. It starts at Botika Rincon at 5 p.m. Categories are 3-12 years, 13-17 years and 18+. Register <https://www.diadirincon.org>

The photo of the young driver was taken in 2019 by Julie Morgan.

Dia di Rincon celebrates its 35th year



Celebrations began March 30 and continue to May 1 as Rincon marks the 35th edition of Dia di Rincon, a national holiday hosted in the heart of Rincon.

Photo Julie Morgan Rincon day 2023

“Den Trin”, pop-up events with music and food
April 26 at Kura di Dòri.

Rincon Parades

April 24 “Simadan di nos Grandinan” elderly folks of Rincon from 4-8 p.m. in Plenchi Carmen Goeloe and streets of Rincon.

April 25 “Ruta di Tradishon”, parading past traditions 7 p.m. - 3 a.m.

April 26 “Parada di Garoshi (Go cart)” 5 p.m. - 7 pm See page 14.

April 27 “Juvedam” 4 - 7 a.m.

Simadan di Shon Cain later 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the northern part of Rincon.

Fiestas - All night long -

April 26 Kings of Krioyo. Local musicians play 10 p.m. - 3 a.m. at Plenchi Carmen Goeloe.

April 28 with Topa mi den Cocorobi

5 p.m. - 3 a.m. in Cocorobi

April 29 eve of Dia di Rincon

4 - 7 p.m. Antesala Dia di Rincon

7 p.m. - 12 a.m. Ban topa dia di Rincon

11 p.m. - 3 a.m. a party in Stadion Antonio Trenidat

Dia di Rincon April 30th

Wrapping up with a bicycle race for ALL ages and ALL bicycles and ...

May 1, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Streets of Rincon. “Saka Raton”

To keep up to date with all the changes and any extra information provided, visit the Dia di Rincon website or follow them on Facebook: [Dia di Rincon Pagina Oficial](#). TCB



Announcing 2024 MoltenWolf Glass Summer Workshops

We are offering two opportunities per month to create your own glass artwork.

No experience necessary. You will be guided in the crafting of your artwork by our team. All materials and equipment will be provided. There is a maximum capacity of 8 participants per class. All classes will take place at the MoltenWolf Glass store at Kaya J.N.E. Craane, Terramar Shopping Center #8.

All classes will be from 13:00 – 16:00 (1:00 – 4:00 p.m.) on Sundays. Class is \$175 pp with payment at signup.

Note: Following the workshop the artwork will be available by Friday for pick-up after spending many hours in the kiln.

Dates:

June 9 & 23 - Ornament Workshops

- We will demonstrate 4 ornaments with Bonaire/Caribbean themes for inspiration.
- We will demonstrate some special never released ornaments for inspiration.

July 7 & 21 - Mosaic Workshops

- We will demonstrate creating a mosaic wall project such as large and small turtles.

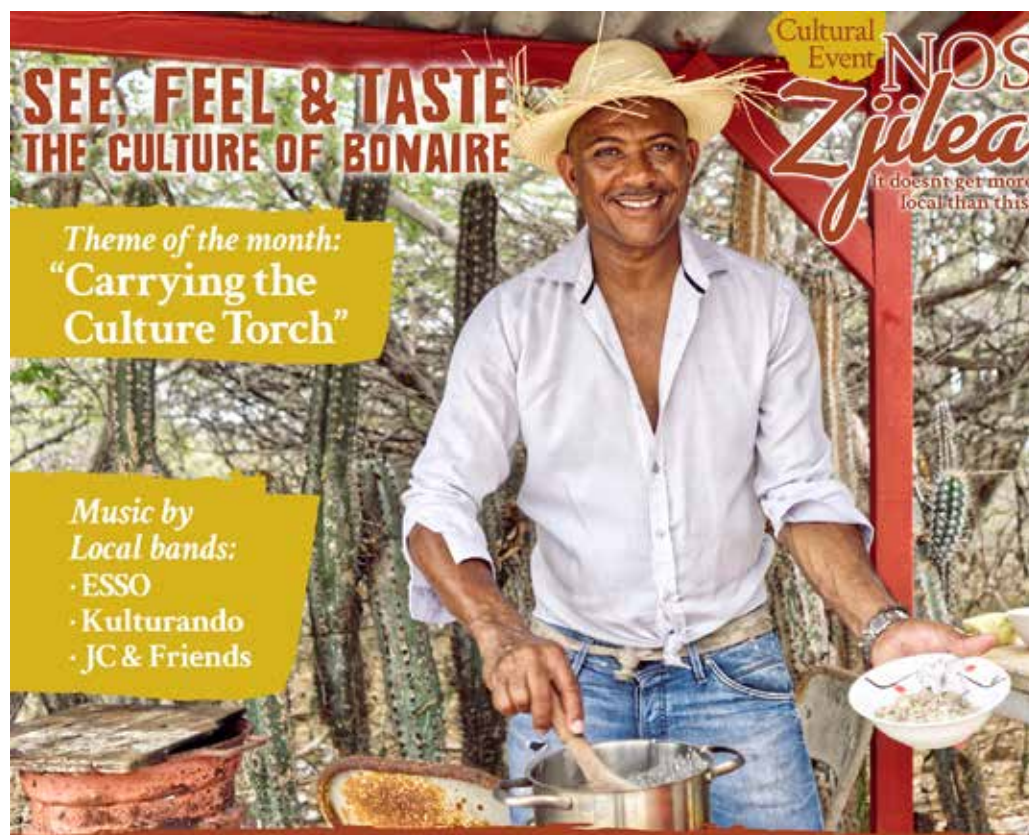
August 4 & 25 - Sushi Set Workshops

- We will demonstrate some design techniques to create your own personal sushi set.

Please come into MoltenWolf Glass or email MoltenWolfGlassInc@gmail.com to reserve your place or ask any questions.

COMING APRIL 27

Nos Zjilea-Carrying the Culture Torch



With creativity and resilience our ancestors managed to survive under difficult circumstances, creating a nice way of life which since then has been passed over from generation to generation. Today we can be proud of traditions such as greeting each other with two words, traditional dishes such as ‘the local goat jerky,’ but also craftsmanship such as building a traditional loam house. It is important that we help carry on the culture torch so all this valuable knowledge and experience will not be lost. We need more people to help with investigation, documentation and the development of educational material so we can prepare, train and guide youngsters who are interested to learn more about the Bonairean way of life. We need to preserve everything that is ours. Let’s carry the culture torch.

This Saturday, March 27th, will be the next edition of the cultural event ‘Nos Zjilea’ at the Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei with the theme “Carrying the Culture Torch”

At 9 a.m. we will begin the podcast Butishi, an initiative of the youngsters and leaders of the educational program of Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei, Talento Kultural. In this program, we’ll explain what you can learn and do in the Talento Kultural. We will also talk with guests about different cultural heritage topics. The podcast will also be broadcast via Facebook, YouTube, Radio Voz di Boneiru 94.7 FM, and on MiTV Telbo Channel 74 VdB TV.

Next up are the educational presentations with Gonsalvo Goeloe explaining the preparations to make the popular local

dish Tete ku Shirishiri. Samples will be available to try. One of our elders Gacha Coffie, is very well known for her local traditional beverage liquor Kukui. She will share how she makes it and you can also ‘wet your lips’ as they say. Sir “Toy-an” Frans, a person who grew up with his elders on a farm, will give a demonstration on how to prepare a goat the jerky style, call “Salon” by the locals.

The language Papiamentu is enjoyable but sometimes when we do not know a word in Papiamentu we use an English or a Dutch word instead. To stimulate the speaking of the language Papiamentu more, Mangazina di Rei in cooperation with Akademia Papiamentu is going to repeat the contest called “Papiamentu Challenge”. The person who can talk about a certain topic without using any words from other languages will win a gift.

Nowadays, you don’t see many women with a headscarf on the street but it is a very beautiful part of African Heritage. Caroll-Ann Soliano will give a demonstration of tying a headscarf and of course you can let her tie one for you as well. Let’s keep this beautiful tradition alive

With this busy schedule, Nos Zjilea has even more with the cultural market of local fresh products such as homemade natural juices, herbal teas, delicacies and local crafts. The kitchen opens at 10 a.m. with a wide variety of homemade soups, various Creole dishes and a delicious grill. And there is still more with live performances of local bands Grupo Esso, Kulturando and JC & Friends along with the folkloric dance couple Duo Mirasol.

Experience Nos Zjilea, the monthly cultural event of Bonaire, at Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei. It doesn’t get more local than this and entrance is free. For more information, please visit Mangazina di Rei’s Facebook fan page, www.facebook.com/mangazinadirei.

Izain Mercera



“I will catch your tears” – Hospice Kas Flamboyan

After six years in operation, Hospice Kas Flamboyan opened their doors on April 13 to give the island a look at the care facility for individuals approaching their end of life.

Founded by Tanja Koklekoren in 2018, Kas Flamboyan is the only hospice on Bonaire and their goal is to create a feeling of home for the residents. A former Bonairean home, the building has been renovated throughout and modernized. There are broad sweeping porches, living room, kitchen/dining, four air-conditioned resident rooms and two shared bathrooms. The large yard is appointed with beautiful local plants and trees for the residents and visiting family members to enjoy. Resident rooms are decorated for the individual to further the feeling of home.

A theme seems to run through Kas Flamboyan and it is literally displayed on a wall for everyone to see, in

Papiamentu, “Mi ta fangu obo lagrima” (I will catch your tears). Before returning to Holland, Koklekoren commissioned the mural to be painted by Loes Praagman of Aloha Bonaire.

Volunteer Rosalie said, “We are here for the people and their family. Family members are welcome 24-7 to visit.”

Some 40-50 volunteers actively help with the resident’s needs and care. They provide the patients with food, drinks, play board games and dominoes, watch movies together, listen to music, read, chat and just be there when needed.

Kas Flamboyan is supervised by Mimi Dongen and nurse, Angelo Goeloe. One of the two are there five days a week along with a volunteer on every shift.

Dongen said, “When we feel that something is a problem we call the doctor. There is at least one of us here. Notes on residents are taken during every shift change, everything that happened and we know if we need to act on something.”

Doctors determine residents that are candidates for hospice. This is usually patients that may have three more months of their life.

Medication is given by Goeloe and Mariadol home health care who visit three times a day. Food is prepared at Mariadol and delivered to the hospice.

Funding is acquired by the Kas Flamboyan foundation, but donations are always welcome. Last year, the Ride for the Roses organization donated the funds for special mattresses for the residents. An unnamed donor contributed a new generator which is necessary for medical needs for oxygen or other devices.

Dongen explained that they are hoping to receive an air conditioner to cool the living room area where residents and family members gather.

Tordoir showed us a mural of a tree with branches and leaves and an ocean with fish in the hallway. She explained, when someone let’s go of life, after the funeral, we ask the family to choose one of the leaves or fishes and put their name. Everyone gets to choose which they would like. Hospice Kas Flamboyan is a non-profit organization that focuses on providing care to people in their final phase of life with a strong emphasis on maintaining quality of life. Kas Flamboyan is located at Kaya Guanare 11, Tera Kora. Visit their website at: <http://kas-flamboyan.com>.



Creating Optimal Health

by Irene da Cunda Costa

Float tanks

Flotation tanks were developed by Dr John Lilly in the 1950s while working at the National Institute of Mental Health. They are also called sensory deprivation tanks as they minimize all external sensorial input and allow you to achieve deep relaxation states. While Dr. Lilly’s initial research focused on sensory deprivation, float tanks evolved into a tool for relaxation and stress reduction. Restrictive Environmental Stimulation Therapy (REST) involves lying in a lightproof, soundproof pod filled with warm saltwater saturated with Epsom salts. This creates a state of weightlessness, allowing the body to deeply relax and the mind to enter a meditative state.

Originally the tanks were vertical, filled with salt water and the subjects would wear a breathing apparatus while hovering inside as some of you might recall from the 1980’s movie “Altered States” with William Hurt. Later the tanks were modified to a more comfortable horizontal layout and filled with water and Epsom salt making them easier to use for the general public. The Epsom Salt produces the buoyancy effect, the water is kept at peripheral body temperature, and the place is kept dark, so ideally you won’t see, feel, hear, smell or taste anything and that is the goal of sensorial deprivation.

The benefits of sensory deprivation tanks come from three different aspects: one is the sensorial deprivation; another is from the Epsom salt dissolved in the water and third is from the flotation itself.

In the proper setting, depriving oneself from all senses makes it much easier to achieve deep relaxation and meditative-like states freeing your mind of distractions. This helps reduce stress levels and anxiety. The relaxing effects of a floating session last for several days and also helps you sleep better.

Another benefit of float therapy is reduction in muscle tension and joint inflammation due to the exposure to the Epsom salt which is rich in Magnesium promoting relaxation and decreasing inflammation. When done regularly, floating can also help relieve migraines.

The buoyancy of the water can alleviate pressure on joints and muscles, potentially reducing chronic pain.

What is a proper setting for floating? A facility where you feel comfortable, taken care of and where you are properly informed about how the experience will develop. Since April 6th, we have such a facility here on Bonaire at Float Bonaire Wellness Center, located at Courtyard by Marriott.

There might be some minor discomforts that some people can experience while floating. Some people

might feel discomfort in the neck if they try to keep the head up. To avoid this, try to be mindful of your neck, explore if there is room for more relaxation trusting that your head will float or just use the small floating roll for your neck provided by the facility. In the beginning you might move too much, and you might accidentally splash some water in your eyes, which can be annoying, but the facility will provide you with fresh water and a small towel to rinse off your face if needed.

Flotation tanks are not recommended for people who suffer from claustrophobia, however if that is the case the tank can remain open. There are some conditions that should be checked with your doctor such as psychotic mental disorders, pregnancy, heart conditions, asthma, sensitivity to magnesium or other salts and severe skin conditions such as psoriasis or eczema.

For more information you can contact Float Bonaire at +599 700 0630



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.

Piss and Vinegar

by Gijs Borsten

Puppy Yoga II

In a tangy letter opposing my P&V on the subject, Gwen Versteegh explains why I was wrong on the supposed abusiveness of puppy yoga. Puppy yoga, that, on Bonaire, goes under the guise of Puppy Wellness.

In the meantime, with all the buzz on the island, in Motherland's press, a wide variety of articles has been published in newspapers and on the internet, after a RADAR (being a consumer's TV show) undercover report.

To clarify the nature of the report, I'll paraphrase the lemma published by the national foundation for the protection of animals, Dierenbescherming (DB), airing its concerns, and stating the initiative doesn't seem to show much interest in animal welfare, suggesting the puppies were mainly used as a way to boost the earnings of the initiators. So:

"It's a new hype at the moment, yoga with young puppies. Because the DB always used to keep an eye open towards using animals for entertainment, we're very much interested in following this trend. We're very pleased the RADAR editorial staff approached us with the re-

quest to assess the treatment of the puppies that were involved in the scheme. And, judging by what we witnessed during the session, there were lots of things going wrong.

In theory, to boost the socialization of puppies, it could be a good idea to let them visit a yoga class, ONCE, fifteen minutes to half an hour maximum. The young dog can get used to new scenarios and experiences. Everybody raising puppies knows: during the process of socialization, the dog is exposed to new situations to teach them how the world turns, and to prevent them to fear for new circumstances.

Puppies, however, have to sleep AT LEAST TWENTY HOURS PER DAY to process all the new experiences they lived through during the day. Dogs grow, both physically and emotionally, during their sleep. Activities like yoga with puppies therefore have to be supervised by experts, and the animals have to be able to hide, in an environment without humans. They always have to have access to clean drinking water (and, in case of very young animals, to their mum). Puppies showing signs of discomfort have to be removed immediately, and checked by a vet.

When the criteria mentioned above are met, you could, IN THEORY, accept the sheer existence of something like puppy

yoga, but even then, DB is critical of the phenomenon. Because: what are the positive aspects of sharing a class for the animal? Why do we force puppies in a role like this, JUST FOR OUR OWN PLEASURE? (...) If you EXPLOIT animals to MAKE MONEY WITH THEIR SHEER PRESENCE, there's a PERVERSE INCENTIVE to cross lines you shouldn't cross. Sadly enough, we've seen it happen in the RADAR report.

We therefore appeal to the organizers of these yoga lessons to take their responsibility, and to the customers to listen to their underbelly: if it feels like it's not OK, it most probably isn't." (<https://www.dierenbescherming.nl>) (Caps mine. gb)

As a result of the RADAR show, the government agency NVWA (a kind of a Motherlandish FDA, including animal welfare in its portfolio) is considering to outlaw puppy yoga as a source of animal abuse.

Now, returning to the Bonaire situation, to an island harboring about twenty-thousand dog whisperers: The puppy yoga class that was organized on the island appears to only have had positive objectives, both for the animals, as for FKK as a co-organizer. They made money and the purpose was to socialize the pups, wasn't it?

I'm awfully sorry, but I refuse to buy the glorious story on the positive consequences of the yoga class for the dogs. Although the organizers did everything to reduce the negative impact on the animals, there's still a penetrant smell of amateurism (or the lack of professionalism, still an unalienable part of Bonairean society) hanging over the initiative.

The heart of the matter is: It wasn't organized for the dogs; it was organized for the pleasure of humans.

The fact that some money was collected to support the – not the same - dogs on the side can be considered as an indulgence to compensate for the exploitation of the puppies. I think the DB-guys stated correctly, that the animals are being victimized, victimized, IMHO, to fulfill a sense of decadence and to relieve boredom for the participants (but that's mainly because I'm a cultural pessimist. I deeply distrust ventures solely boasting bright effects. They don't exist).

What, after all, is more convenient than buying an hour of puppy life boosting your endorphins, without the hassle of adopting a creature (which would be a far better solution. Adopt, love and take care of the animal for all its f*cking life), equipped with razor sharp teeth, pooping and peeing all over your expensive IKEA-possession, barking and whining for food and a walk a couple of times per day?

And what the hell is wrong with donating a bundle of dollars to an organization of animal protection WITHOUT asking anything in return? Ever thought of that? ...



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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BONAIRE Guardian Group



Good comportment is recommended for those celebrating Rincon Day on Tuesday, April 30. The community will be blanketed by police surveillance cameras. By Wednesday morning everything that has happened in downtown Rincon in the previous 24 hours will be in the can, just in case the police want to take a closer look at events that transpired.

The Dutch Caribbean Police Force will have 15 surveillance cameras mounted at strategic locations throughout the

downtown core. They will be part of a pilot by the KPCN to determine whether mobile camera surveillance is useful in maintaining public order, effective deployment of police capacity and crowd control.

The camera images will be processed for events that capture the attention of the police. They will be destroyed after four weeks. Unless the police notice behavior they want to take a closer look at.

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Pets of the Week



Indie

Hello dear humans, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Indie - that's short for Indiana Jones of Raiders of the Lost Ark. I'm a healthy boy about 5 years old. I got my name because I was on an adventure before they caught me and brought me to the Animal Shelter. I was walking in the mundi for quite a while and was covered in wounds and cactus needles all over my body. I also had a lot of burn marks, but I don't remember what that was from.

I do remember having an infected mouth and being on medication for that for a long time. It took over one week before I could finally drink water normally again and one month before I was able to eat on my own. Now I have a very beautiful smile and all the ladies love it! I'm a real huggy bear that loves your attention.

I like to go out for walks, I'm very well behaved on a leash and listen very well. I am good with other dogs, male or female, young or old...I don't care, I like them all! I will be a great companion. Are you my new best friend? Then come and meet me at the shelter, and maybe we can both go on an adventure together. I'm waiting for you. *Photo/story: Sanne Attevelt*

Our cat of the week is Liam. Liam is a male cat, tabby in color and is almost 1 year old. Liam was brought to the shelter about three months ago with his two siblings, Larry and Lila. A family found them, rescued them and brought them to the Animal Shelter Bonaire.

Liam is very friendly. You can find him waiting for you in our Kitty Kresh and he will greet you at the door. Liam enjoys being held and scratched by his ears and under his chin. He responds to a calm and friendly tone of voice. Come and meet Liam and take him to his forever home!

Liam is sterilized and has tested negative for feline leukemia and FIV.

Photo/story: Amy Bowen

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



Liam

Animal Shelter News Spring cleaning



It's spring cleaning time everyone. Time to get out all the cleaning supplies and do a deep clean and declutter.

While you're emptying out your closets and cupboards go through everything and think of all the things that are no longer of use to you. You can donate items at the Pakus di Pruga for the Animal Shelter Bonaire.

Deliver your stuff to Animal Shelter Bonaire during opening hours: Monday – Friday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Pakus di Pruga will be open full time very soon.

One man's trash is another man's treasure

Working together for the elderly

The services and foundations for elderly care on Bonaire have joined forces.

The foundation for the collaboration was laid in October 2023 resulting in the *Cockpit Group Chain Alliance for Elderly Care, CKO*. Sentro Akseso, Fundashon Mariadal, Care and Welfare Group, Care and Youth Caribbean, Directorate of Society and Care and Public Health, OLB, are members. The group's aims: to bring together the elderly, experts and groups such as the Fundashon Alzheimer Bonaire, Informal Care Foundation, and Mental Health Caribbean. And to help general practitioners, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and other professionals in their work areas such as day care, home care, community nursing, and homes with 24-hour care.

Danielle van der Linden has been program manager of the cockpit group since

January 1 of this year. Van der Linden explains the benefits of the new way of working together.

“There are many wonderful and fun activities and good care organizations for the elderly on Bonaire. The network around the elderly will become stronger if all groups for elderly care know each other better about what they are doing. Or if the groups complement each other and further develop plans with the elderly. Every older person can then continue to participate in our community in a good way and continue to live safely at home for as long as possible.”

For questions about the cockpit group and the plans for elderly care, please call 7702656, or email danielle.vanderlinden@bonairegov.com.

Come play on Kings's Day, April 27

Bonaire celebrates King's Day on April 27 with fun-filled community events.

- For the children, day full of fun with various activities starts at the stadium in Kralendijk from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Sail for The Roses starts at 9 a.m. at Atlantis Beach! Take part in this special activity for charity.
- The Boat Party on the boulevard takes place between 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Bring your boat or float and party on the water.
- Tera Kora Ranch has a fun flea market from 3 p.m. ending in the evening with the live band Tes A Fesa.
- In the evening there are fun parties, such as King's Night at Little Havana with DJ Tico, Party Like a King at Stadscafé Het Consulaat and a Lemonade party at ZoZo Ranch.

**SALÍ
FO'Í LAMAN**

A 'Bou di Awa' Exhibitio

Free at Terramar. Opening April 26. 6 - 9 p.m. See page 14.

Flaming Flamingos look to the future

Bonaire's own blokart racing club, the Flaming Flamingos, recently made waves at their debut events earlier this month at Ivanpah Dry Lake in Nevada's Mojave Desert. Competing in the North American Blokart Championships and the World Championships, the Flaming Flamingos showcased their skills and determination, despite challenging conditions.

The North American Blokart Championships were a significant test for the club's two competitors, Lennart Felida and Andrew Sands, who both raced in the Performance Division. Felida secured 18th place, while Sands achieved an impressive 8th in their respective weight classes.

The World Championships followed with harsh conditions, including both hot and cold temperatures, dust storms, and light, variable winds. These factors limited the event to only 8 races in each category, compared to the usual 10-15 heats over 3-4 days. Despite this, Felida, competing for the first time at the World Championships, finished in a respectable 12th place. Sands, who had hoped for a stronger finish, placed 11th, battling illness and a high level of competition. Despite the setbacks, the Flaming Flamingos are already setting their sights on the next World Championships in Llanbedr, Wales, in two years' time.

With the events concluded, the Flaming Flamingos are turning their focus to the future. Regular practice sessions will take

place on the sports field at Tras di Montaña, and workshops will be offered to those who want to learn racing techniques and take their blokart experience to the next level. To ensure everyone can participate, practice sessions will be held at various times to accommodate different schedules.

Bonaire's own Caribbean Open Blokart Championships will take place every two years, attracting international competitors and providing an opportunity for the Flaming Flamingos to showcase their talents on home turf. Serious competitors can also look forward to participating in events across North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, representing Bonaire and gaining valuable experience.

If you're interested in joining the Flaming Flamingos, there's no better time to get involved. You can find more information by joining the club's Facebook group, "Bonaire Flaming Flamingos Blokart Club," or by sending a WhatsApp message to +599 701 8475 to be added to the group chat.

Get ready for an exhilarating journey with Bonaire's Flaming Flamingos and experience the excitement of blokart racing. Whether you're a seasoned racer or just curious, there's a place for you in this vibrant community.

Donna Hudgeon

(R) Andrew Sands and his Flaming Flamingo Blokart



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