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BONAIRE The REPORTER

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REEF'S first Golden Hamlet Club member Linda Baker
Photo Julie Morgan

REEF - Surveying Bonaire for 30 years

REEF (Reef Environmental Education Foundation) members have been diving into Bonaire waters for over 30 years. REEF members aren't university degreed scientists, for the most part, but just regular divers and snorkelers. They are on a mission to protect the biodiversity of ocean life by simply recording the different species and numbers they see on a dive. The surveying divers are called 'citizen scientists' and though they have a lot of fun the work they do is serious. The gathered information is the basis for a huge public data base of fish and marine life from all over the globe. To date 300,251+ surveys have been submitted and 32,000 have been done right here on Bonaire.

Just last month, REEF visited Bonaire on a Field Survey Trip with 20 fish surveyors led by REEF staff members Janna Nichols and Sierra Barkdoll.

REEF organizes 12-15 trips a year and one third to one half are

in the Caribbean.

Nichols, who has been a REEF surveyor for 25 years, said, "The trips are eco-vacations, or vacations with a purpose." Just this year they have traveled to Grenada, Galapagos, Utila, Raja Ampat, St. Lucia, Cuba and now Bonaire, with more trips ahead to Tobago, Malta, Grand Cayman, Dominica, Lembeh and Cozumel.

The surveyors do scheduled boat dives together and shore dives on their own. The mixture of experience varies and the surveyors are classified from Level 1-5 defined as novice or expert. Fish ID classes or fish boot camps are held and Levels 1 and 2 are tested on their fish identification accuracy.

Nichols said, "The mixture of experience varies on each trip. On this trip there was a range in ages from 20-80. Half of the people on this trip were beginners. One of the things that's very neat is

they are all so excited and passionate. They are excited when they learn a fish and then excited when they find them. I love the excited chatter on the boat telling about the first time they see a fish."

Over the years this excited chatter of fish ID on surveying trips spread to whatever island REEF visited and the local population of divers, divemasters and instructors embraced it. This is certainly true for Bonaire. The first Volunteer Fish Survey Project began in 1993 and it wasn't long after that REEF was introduced to Bonaire. Local Bonaire instructor Linda Baker was the first ever to complete 1,000 or more REEF surveys making her the first member of REEF's Golden Hamlet Club. Joining Linda in the club from Bonaire are Dee Scarr of Touch the Sea and the late Cassandra and Franklin Neal.

REEF ID surveys to page 7



REEF Field Survey group in July

Venezuela has another phony election

Reportedly, with 80% of the vote counted and Nicolas Maduro leading by only 1%, the Maduro government decided it was a good time to stop counting and declare itself the winner of the July 28 election. Opposition leader María Corina Machado said in a news conference that their records showed their candidate, Edmundo González Urrutia had received 70% of the vote against Maduro's 30%. Maduro has not published the itemized results of the individual voting districts, and international community is convinced that Urrutia won handily. The U.S. has officially recognized the Urrutia government.

Demonstrations broke out in Venezuela and other places around the world where the Spanish-speaking diaspora is represented. In Latin America, Argentina, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru and others criticized the results. The Bolivian, Honduran and Cuban presidents congratulated Maduro though, as did Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

Venezuela had agreed to election monitoring by observers from the EU. But later withdrew the invitation.

Maduro assured his supporters. "We have 2,000 people detained and we are sending them to Tocarón and Tocuyito [the maximum security prisons]. This time there will be no pardons." Laboratorio de Paz, which investigates civil rights abuses in Venezuela, reported that at least 71 people had been arbi-

trarily detained during the election campaign. Opponents of the government were routinely jailed following previous elections. But they didn't receive life sentences.

Since Maduro took power in 2013, Venezuela, an oil-rich nation, has experienced the world's worst peacetime economic crash in recent history. Once the fifth-largest economy in Latin America, Venezuela's economy has shrunk to the equivalent of a medium-sized city, smaller than say, Milwaukee, according to data from the International Monetary Fund. Some 8 million Venezuelans have fled the country amid shortages of vital goods and soaring inflation.

Maduro has to stay in power to stay out of jail. He is facing drug trafficking and corruption charges in the U.S. and is under investigation for crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court. Maduro's government controls all public institutions in Venezuela including the Supreme Court – which could be the final arbiter on any claim of electoral fraud.

Both the Defense Caribbean Region and the Coast Guard Caribbean Region are on extra alert to deal with the likelihood of another exodus from Venezuela. Aruba and Curaçao have many thousands of migrants from Venezuela already, most undocumented. *DMR*

Cecilia burns executive council for development duplicity

Dr. Willem A. Cecilia, who has served at the highest levels of government on Bonaire for three decades, broadcast a statement on LIVE99FM on August 1. He charged that "different irregularities" are taking place because the OLB Executive Council is avoiding implementation of the new Spatial Development Plan for the BES that the Dutch Council of Ministers has approved.

The Spatial Development Plan came to public notice following the outrage over the Chocogo Beach and Sunset Beach Resort development embarrassments. The new Dutch plan sets requirements that the public bodies of the islands must meet when drawing up or amending their local spatial development plans. The requirements are intended to protect each island's total resources, human, physical, and environmental, from behind closed door development approvals. The Plan was developed after a period of public input and in consultation with the OLBs.

Bonaire's executive council has announced that it is going to develop its own special development plan. It will not base its plan on the government's thought. Instead it will work from other interim plans in place following 2010. In the meantime, the Executive Council says, the original development plan dating back to 2010 will be continue to guide development on the island. The 2010 plan is not only weak but unenforceable, as Chocogo and Sunset Beach demonstrated.

Cecilia indicated that developments are still being approved that would be prohibited under the new Spatial Development Plan. He said "the executive board has misinformed the Dutch government," and even used the term lying, "or next thing to it." "We must also point out, Cecilia said, the tone of arrogance in the letter of the executive board of 23 May 2024."

Until last year Cecilia served as Registrar (griffier). The position of Registrar was created in 2010 to serve "in a public administration with a secretarial, administrative and advisory role." The Registrar is the official support of the Island Council and is tasked with assuring the council performs its duties properly and legally.

DMR

New fuel terminal tendered

Bonaire Bon Transition (BBT) has publicly tendered the construction of a new fuel terminal on Bonaire. It will be built south of the airport and connect to the existed fuel dock. *DMR*



Daan and Kate swim for the turtles

The goal was to raise \$11,000 for two new research nets to place in Lac. All donations aren't collected yet, but it looks like the two employees raised over \$13,000 for the Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) by swimming around Klein Bonaire. The twelve kilometers swim took them 7.38 hours. The swimmers made seven stops to eat and hydrate. They counted eight turtles. *DMR. Photo via STCB*

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The REPORTER HAS A NEW NUMBER

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Bonaire has a new Lt. Governor



Happiest man on the island.
Oleana relinquishes the official regalia Photo Julie Morgan.

Governor Oleana said. "This beautiful island has a unique vibe and has given me many opportunities to take a more prominent role and to work on Bonaire's progress...I truly love our island and its people dearly... I have always taken into

account the limitations of our island and I have learned that-as the English say-"good things come in small packages."

New Lt. Governor
continued on page 7



First Lady Solange Soliana, Lt. Gov. John Soliano and retiring Lt. Gov. Nolly Oleana and First Lady Ann Oleana. Photo Julie Morgan.

Bonaire said goodbye to interim Lt. Governor Reynolds "Nolly" Oleana and welcomed new Lt. Governor John Soliano in an inaugural ceremony before invited members of government at the Pasangrahan on August 3.

kept the atmosphere light with a kind of "roast" of the governor bringing laughs from the crowd and Oleana. Referring to the governor's official ceremonial regalia, Tromp said, "Take that bling bling necklace and run, run before the Dutchies change their minds."

Prior to the official oath of office ceremony, several government officials expressed their thanks to Lt. Governor Oleana with gifts and speeches. Deputy Angelica Cicilia and island council Democratic party member Delno Tromp

The ceremony became more serious with Governor Oleana's speech and his removal of the regalia of the governor's office. Oleana's departure ends his 38 year professional career on Bonaire.

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POLICE REPORT

Property crime

Aug. 4. Around 2:45 a.m. the central control room received a report of a robbery on Kaminda Lac. A man who was walking home after a night out at a bar was approached by an unknown person on a scooter who offered him a ride for a fee. When the victim took out his wallet, the unknown person said it was a robbery and demanded all the money. The victim handed over the wallet, after which the unknown person took the money out and drove off towards Playa. The victim stated that the unknown person was probably in possession of a firearm.

Aug. 3/ 4. In the night Yamaha Drive 2 PTV golf cart license plate B-6557 was stolen from outside a company on Kaya Irlanda. The cart was later found on Kaya J.N.E. Craane.

Jul. 31 /Aug. 1. In the night a black and brown Sparta bicycle was stolen. It was locked with a bicycle lock against the wall of a house on Kaya Ricarda.

Jul. 31. A beach bag with contents was stolen while the owners were swimming. The bag was hanging from a tree on a beach at E.E.G. Bulevar. It contained a wallet with cash and various cards, three iPhone telephones, Rayban sunglasses and car keys.

Jul. 29. Stolen from a tourist accommodation on Bulevar Gobernador Nicolaas Debrot were an LG television, two modems, a Weber BBQ, an Inventum microwave, glasses and cups, a Severin filter coffee maker and an Oyster blender.

Jul. 26 / 27. A report was made of the theft of a battery that was taken from a car. The car was parked in front of a house on Kaminda Djabou. The battery was taken during the night. The car was locked but the passenger window remained open a few centimeters.

July 25. A few minutes before midnight, at an ATM on Boulevard Miguel Pourier a man was forced to withdraw money under threat by a suspect, who then got into a vehicle and drove away. The victim and witnesses immediately contacted the central control room and provided a detailed description of both the suspect, the vehicle and the license number. A police patrol was able to stop the vehicle and arrest two men, aged 24 and 23

Jul. 19/20. Between 1:30 p.m. on Friday and 7:30 a.m. on Saturday items were stolen from a boat that was moored in a marina on Boulevard Governor Nicolaas Debrot.

Jul. 18-20. Three scooters stolen: a blue Kymco Agility scooter license plate MF-4008 from a parking lot in an apartment located on Boulevard Julio A. Abraham; a black Sym Mio scooter of the brand, license plate MF-4139 parked in front of a house on Kaya Oniks; a black Sym Orbit scooter license plate MF-4307 parked with a steering wheel lock in front of a shop in Kaya Grandi.

Jul. 17. A robbery took place on Kaminda Gurubu near Bona Bista. A man on a scooter drove past and blocked two women riding a scooter. He got off his scooter and grabbed the victims' bags but failed to remove them because the women resisted strongly. One of the victims took a hundred dollar bill and gave it to the man who snatched it, got on his scooter and drove towards Playa.

Arrests

Aug. 2. Around 2:15 p.m. a man, 18, was arrested on Kaya Boebi for public violence

and assault. The suspect allegedly assaulted a victim several times.

Jul. 22-31. Two suspects, aged 16 and 17, have been arrested in the July 22 shooting case in which the 17-year-old boy was injured. The shooting, contrary to previous reports to the police, was not a drive-by shooting. The young people involved were in possession of a firearm and a shot was accidentally fired. The 17-year-old youth who was injured by the shot was sent abroad for further medical treatment. On the same day as the shooting three young men were arrested, two 18 year-olds and a 20 year-old. The first arrest took place at the Playa police station. Shortly after, Royal Marechaussee (KMar) arrested two other people at the Bonaire airport. A vehicle was confiscated as part of the investigation. On July 24 two of the four suspects were released. The other suspects remain in custody for further investigation.

Jul. 30. Two young men aged 16 and 20 were arrested on Kaya Linda for assault.

Jul. 26. A man, 26, was arrested on Kaya Macario (Cai) Sint Jago for threatening and threatening with a weapon.

Jul. 26. Around 1:35 p.m. a fight was reported at the south port at Kaya C.E.B. Hellmund. When the patrol arrived, one of the parties handed over a knife to the officers. The other suspect was searched and officers confiscated his knife. Then the suspect started walking around, picking up rocks from the ground and looking very aggressive. The officers tried to calm him down but the suspect threw stones again and walked away. Because the suspect's actions are known to the officers, they used their pepper spray to make the arrest. The man, 21, was arrested for violation of the BES Weapons Act and for not following police orders.

Jul. 18. Around 3:15 p.m. a man, 33, was arrested for invasion and destruction after he destroyed the door of an apartment and entered the house.

Jul. 16. In the morning a woman, 48, was arrested at the police station for aggravated battery.

Jul. 16. A man, 24, was arrested on Kaya Korona for threats and violation of Firearms Law BES.

Jul. 15. Around 11:20 a.m. a woman, 50, was arrested on Kaya Kanari for ill-treatment.

Driving under the influence

According to the policy 'botsen is blazen' ('to collide is to blow') a breath test is given drivers involved in accidents.

Aug. 2. A man, 38, was arrested on Boulevard Gobernador Nicolaas Debrot for driving under the influence of alcohol. The suspect crashed into the back of a car and then tried to drive away. The suspect did not have a valid driver's license and insurance. The suspect's vehicle was taken to the police station for safekeeping.

Jul. 28. A man, 31, was arrested on Kaya Blenchi for driving under the influence of alcohol. After the suspect almost hit a person with his vehicle, he got out of the car and wanted to fight with the person. The suspect was also unable to show a valid driver's license.

Jul. 28. Around 11:20 p.m. a man, 49, was arrested on Kaya Nikiboko Noord for driving under the influence of alcohol. The suspect was involved in a collision between two vehicles. Based on the breath analysis, the suspect's driver's license was confiscated.

Ask Bob

Bonaire real estate advice

Hi Bob,
Are most houses on Bonaire sold furnished?
If I don't want the furniture, can I offer a lower sales price?

Bill

Hi Bill,

Most homes on Bonaire are sold with at least some furnishings, especially if the owners do not live on the island and do not want to ship furniture off the island. Used furniture does not have high value, so generally Sellers are just including it with the sale of the home and are not willing to reduce the selling price to sell it unfurnished. If you buy a furnished home and do not plan to use the furnishings, you can donate them to a Bonaire charity such as the Animal Shelter, or sell them.

When making an offer on a furnished property, you will receive an inventory list that shows what items are included. Look at the list carefully, since the owners may exclude some furnishings in addition to their personal

ed.

Jul. 28. Around 1 a.m. a woman, 21, was arrested on Kaya Rubi for driving under the influence of alcohol. As a result of exhibiting dangerous driving behavior, she was stopped by a patrol. Based on the breath analysis, the suspect's driver's license was confiscated.

Jul. 27. Around 3:30 a.m. a man, 74, was arrested on Boulevard Julio A. Abraham for driving under the influence of alcohol. The suspect was involved in a collision between two vehicles. Based on the breath analysis, he was given a 5-hour driving ban.

Jul. 22. Around 1:45 a.m. a man, 36, was arrested on Libertador Simon Bolivar Street for driving under the influence of alcohol. A patrol stopped the suspect's car for speeding. As a result of the breath analysis he received a 3-hour driving ban.

Jul. 19. Around 10 p.m. a man, 49, was arrested on Kaya Korona for driving under the influence of alcohol. The suspect crashed his vehicle into a light pole and could not show a valid driver's license and insurance.

Jul. 17. Around 1 a.m. a man, 30, was arrested on Boulevard Julio A. Abraham for driving under the influence of alcohol. A patrol stopped the suspect's car driving slowly on the road. As a result of the breath analysis his driver's license was confiscated.

Jul. 16. Around 4:10 a.m. a man, 41, was arrested on Boulevard Governor Nicolaas Debrot for driving under the influence of alcohol. The suspect ran his vehicle into a wall on the mentioned street. As a result of the breath analysis his driver's license was confiscated.

Traffic accidents

Aug. 4. Around 7:40 p.m. two cars collided at the T-junction of Kaya Nikiboko Noord and Kaya Sonmontuno due to failure to give way. Because one driver had to be taken to hospital by ambulance, only one driver was given a breath test in accordance with the 'collision is blowing' policy. The result was negative. One of the drivers could not show a valid driver's license and valid insurance, for which he was fined.

Aug. 4. Around 8:40 a.m. two vehicles collided on Hanchi Amboina when car 2 collided with the back of car 1. The driver of car 1 was taken to the hospital by ambulance for a medical check-up. The driver of car 2 did not have a valid driver's license and valid insurance, for which he was fined.



items. At the final walkthrough prior to closing, this list is used to verify that the items listed remain with the home.

Bob Bartikoski, Re/Max Bonaire
Broker/Owner

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

info@bonairehomes.com.

Bonaire: +599-717-7362.

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

Aug. 2. Around 9:50 a.m. the central control room received a report of a single-vehicle collision on the Kaya Ir. Randolph Statius Van Eps. The driver stated that while she was busy with the children in the car, she lost control and crashed into a lamppost. The collision caused the vehicle to sustain a lot of damage to the front. The driver and the three minor passengers were taken to hospital by ambulance for medical check-ups. The electricity company arrived to repair the damage to the lamppost. As a result, the power went out in the area.

Jul.26. Around 7:30 a.m. two cars collided at the intersection of Kaya Maximiliana Rosario and Kaya Monseigneur Nieuwindt due to the failure to give way. One of the drivers was taken to the hospital by ambulance.

Jul.25. An accident was reported around 6:05 p.m. When the patrol arrived at Kaya Fidelia, bystanders stated that the driver of a car was driving recklessly, hit a man who was walking on the road and then crashing into the fence of a house. When the bystanders approached the driver, he pushed one of the bystanders, causing him to fall onto the broken wall. The driver then drove away. The pedestrian and the second victim were taken to the hospital by ambulance. The driver returned to the scene a little later saying he became very scared when a number of people approached him, so he to drove away. The driver was fined for driving without a license.

Jul.20. Around 12:30 p.m. two vehicles collided on Kaya Esther. A medical check was done with both drivers and they did not have to be transported to hospital. Both drivers were fined for driving without a valid driver's license.

Jul.17. Around 3:05 p.m. two vehicles collided at the intersection of Kaya Korona and Kaya Papa Cornes. Ambulance personnel treated two people who were in one of the vehicles at the scene.

Public order

Jul. 27. A lifeless body found in a house on Plenchi Makamba was reported. A patrol, ambulance personnel, personnel from the forensic department of the KPCN and the coroner went to the scene. The coroner determined the death of a 61-year-old man with initials P.J.G.P. born on April 19, 1963 in Venezuela.

Letters & Opinions

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

Garbage not collected

As a Bonaire diver visitor for 15 consecutive years, who became a resident and a STINAPA Ranger, I would like to make a comment about a subject that needs to be taken more seriously: GARBAGE

As visitor, resident and ranger I make a daily clean up on every single dive site a go. I also participate on the regular clean up dives and volunteer clean ups performed on the island. It means citizens do our part. Selibon is doing a great job but it's still not enough.

I guess both STINAPA & TCB could promote educational initiatives in order to encourage locals and tourists to put litter in the bins, trash cans and containers provided instead of 'hide' it in between the bushes, throw it on the ground, or even worse, in the sea!

If Bonaire wants to be a true Blue Destination, this issue has to be solved. Otherwise, BD would be nothing



but a joke.

I took visitors diving Nukove and Playa Frans three times this month. Not only were both places full of waste right in front of King and Queen marine reserves where our beautiful flamingos are, but all the waste and debris we collected has been there the whole month!

For a tourist paying 75 USD fee this is not nice, can be dangerous and gives a very bad impression of our beautiful island.

Bonaire is my home and I care about it, that's the reason I took my time to write this comment and attach the picture that confirms my words.

Hope to contribute to enhance this issue.

Kind regards, Alejandra Rosa

Injustice by the tax system in the Caribbean Netherlands: A personal protest

Alfred Burgos of the M21 political party is a concerned citizen. The reason for this Mr. Burgos describes as follows: 'In principle the tax system must be a fair and well organized system, which citizens must be able to rely on. However, my recent experience with the Caribbean Netherlands tax service has seriously affected my confidence in this agency. According to them in 2023 I would not have paid \$ 838 of motor vehicle tax (motorrijtuigenbelasting – MRB), which resulted in a fine of \$ 140. I have to say that I properly made this payment, but service of tax does not recognize this. This is not only frustrating, but it is also unfair.'

Administrative indifference

Alfred Burgos explains further that in correspondence with tax service they told him the following: 'Without your proof of payment we can not get your payment and

book it on your anslag that is open According to Mr. Burgos this implies. that taxpayers have to submit proof, so that the tax service can do its job. "It is absolutely unacceptable that an agency that receives millions of tax dollars, is so indifferent and disorganized that they can not verify payment in an independent manner, without a citizen having to submit proof of this.

A double burden for citizens

'It's already very annoying that I have to prove that I paid the motor vehicle tax. To finish the work, on June 19 I received a reminder for 'grondbelasting' for 2023, which I have also already paid. This reminder is dated June 11, 2024, and I made the payment so late, because I made an objection against the height of the tax. After the tax service approved my objection, I paid the adjusted amount more than a week before that date,' according to Alfred Burgos.

Complaints and delays

Mr Burgos has filed a complaint with the National Ombudsman, Reinier van Zutphen. About this he says: 'In the meantime I am waiting for a response from the Ombudsman. Until then I expect the tax service itself to collect my payments. It is unacceptable that the tax service works from this system and unfairly imposes charges and fines on citizens.

Call to action

According to Alfred Burgos this article where he gives his opinion, is a call to all people who have faced similar problems: 'We have to unite our voices and demand that tax services are going to work in a more efficient way, more transparent and fairer. By working together we can put an end to this injustice. It is time for the tax service to assume its responsibility and stop imposing fines and charges, without first finding out if the payment has already been made. Let's fight together for a fairer tax system!'

Father Marc Hooijschuur, La Birgin Coromorto Church Antriol, Bonaire

When Father Marc's mother passed away at an early age he grew up fast. Upon meeting an older priest in South Holland at 15 years old he was inspired to become a priest.

He studied in Maastricht from 1990-1998 and became a priest in 1988. The bishop asked him to go to Rome and study for a master's degree in Pastoral Theology. On his return to Holland, he received a master's degree in education from University of Utrecht while serving at seven small parishes.

Looking for a new challenge, he heard Curaçao was looking for priests and in September 2015, he moved to Curaçao and the parish at Santa Familia in OtroBanda. But another calling came in 2021, when the bishop asked him to go to Bonaire for two purposes: Parish La Birgin Coromorto in Antriol and spiritual counsellor at the prison.

His education degree offered the pathway to help people in prison in dark situations with loss of hope, loneliness and reflecting on their life choices. Some have low self-esteem, or their family has disowned them. Addictions run high and prison is not a good place to resolve that. Many are open to faith and changes, both mentally and spiritually. Working with the prisoners on their future and to be able to regenerate them back into society once they pay the price for their mistakes is rewarding.

Father Mark said, "We pray, read the Bible, sing, talk

in groups or one on one, expressing feelings etc. Not only focused on Catholic faith but all faiths and Christianity in general. Thankfully, the Dutch system gives them opportunities in prison, such as teaching them a trade, carpentry, chefs, etc."

Father Mark explained, It's a very interesting time now, with diverse needs and influences by other countries. Many places in Europe and the US don't know or believe God exists.

The future of our Church is in Africa and Asia (S Korea, Philippines) because one of the reasons is that there, they have many more men becoming priests.

The church started in 1957. We have three Parishes on Bonaire, Playa, Rincon and Antriol. The Saturday 6 p.m. mass is the only English mass on Bonaire. The church is reaching out to more tourists and English-speaking Catholic's to join. There are plans for English mass at Christmas and Easter.

The Parish is run 100% by the donations from the barrio. Reach out to Father mark at: mhooijschuur@icloud.com

Mass times: Mon-6:30 a.m.; Tues & Thurs-7:30 p.m.; Sat-6 p.m. (English) / 7:30 p.m.; Sun-7a.m. / 10 a.m./ 6 p.m.

Story / photo Sara Matera



Tera Kora bario observes 174 years

Tera Kora Day was celebrated with speakers, music, dancing and, of course, food and drink on August 1 at the Centro di Bario. Felix Papa Cicilia served as MC. Father Mark Hooischuur of La Birgin Coromorto Church blessed the celebration, followed by words from deputy Angelica Cicilia, Timeteo Silberie of SKAL and John Soliano in his first act as governor.

Lauriane Ammerlaan presented awards to Tera Kora residents Sra Ariena Vis and Franklin Molina in appreciation for their longtime service in the community.

The choir Sta. Cicilia with organist Franklin Scherptong led the attendees in several songs and the cultural dance group Nos Pais performed. The dancers engaged several crowd members to dance.

In addition to the indoor festivities, attendees visited the new bario greenhouse built by Tera Kora residents Egilio Bubui Goeloe and Chon Theodora. The small raised greenhouse is made of shipping pallets and contains 15 different plants



The choir Sta. Cicilia.
Photo Julie Morgan

suitable to Bonaire's climate grown with advice by agricultural specialist Onnie Emerenciano.

With the help of LVV, a large community garden of 200 sq. meters is planned at the Centro di Bario to help the com-

munity enjoy healthy living and fight the high cost of food.

Story / photos Julie Morgan



Nos Pais dancer Monique Mercera and Lt. Gov. John Soliano. Photo Julie Morgan



Jahleel da Silva waters the plants in the little greenhouse, with the help of Lauriane Ammerlaan. Photo Julie Morgan

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In the job and in life the former governor acknowledged the importance of hard work, trying not to disappoint anyone, and treating people with respect. "Being honest, it comes at a price and all those who are NOT honest and want to do illegal things will become your enemies."

On governance Oleana said, "I see a less pleasant trend developing where antagonism is created, where groups are pitted against each other, where polarization takes place, where the truth is distorted and where even death threats are made... Lack of respect, discrimination, fraud, lying and incorrect behavior can be considered to be seeds of weeds sown to create a divided society, in which there is no trust and no unity... Peace and tranquility among the people means progress."

Following his speech Lt. Governor Oleana relinquished the official regalia and Kingdom Representative of the Caribbean Netherlands, Jan Helmond, spoke to the crowd. Helmond issued the official oath of office and placed the ceremonial regalia on new Lt. Governor John Soliano.

In Lt. Governor Soliano's first official speech he discussed how he came to the position as governor and pictured himself in this role. Soliano said, "Bonaire is an island in full development and it is strong and resilient! In recent years the explosive growth of our island has caused a lot of change to our socio-economic development but it has also created several challenges..."

Soliano spoke of good governance being much more than following the rules. It also means exemplary behavior, trust and respect so all people feel valued and heard. "For me, as a Lieutenant Governor, it is fundamental to promote these values, both within our administration and within our society overall... We as the island government must set a good example and promote a vision that is supported by the administration in its entirety. As Lieutenant Governor, this will be one of my key areas of focus..."

The new governor explained his definition of people on the island was every single individual in society contributing in a good way to Bonaire with no regard to their age, nationality, gender or religion.

Soliano said, "On Bonaire the quick pace of change and the complexity of our world today cause daily conflicts of us versus the others. We witness them often. I appeal to everyone, especially the leaders in our society, to engage in healthy discussions about policies or changes in policies that are necessary to create well-being and happiness for all residents of Bonaire. It is a great honor for me to serve my island as its Governor. My mission as a professional is to serve my island and I can only be successful with your support."

(Bonaire's Lieutenant Governor is responsible for security and public order and chairs both the Executive Council and the Island Council.)

To read the governors' complete speeches visit page 18 of *The Bonaire Reporter* online.

Story /Photos Julie Morgan



Selibon has new interim director

Edsel Winklaar has been appointed the new director of Selibon N.V. on an interim basis. He succeeds Rudsel Leito who was director for the last 12 years. Winklaar has more than 30 years experience in profit and non-profit organizations, and has been involved with strategic advice on large projects, organizational analysis and change management. He has been head of the implementation department in the Directorate of Planning and Development, manager of the commercial unit of WEB N.V., and general manager of Telbo N.V. He has also served as a deputy and member of the Island Council of Bonaire.. *DMR*

WEB proceeding with LED streetlights

Water and Energy Company Bonaire (WEB) is proceeding with the full roll out of smart LED streetlights. It will install 1,000 more lights between August and November. During a successful pilot program which began last August, WEB installed 625 LED lamps along sev-

eral main roads. The LED lights provide better visibility and increased safety at night. They also use much less electricity.

Amboina, Bario Wanapa, and Bario Selesie will be the first neighborhoods to get the new lighting. The first section of Kaya Internashonal, from Rotonde Bonaco to Kaya Gilberto F Croes, will be equipped next. *DMR*

Exec Council to be investigated for data protection violation

The Commission Supervision Personal Data Protection BES (CBP BES) has announced it will investigate the media reports that someone on the Executive Council, or on behalf of the Executive Council, may have violated the privacy of a former civil servant by leaking the employee's exit interview to the press.

The information that went public appears to connect the leak with the news that broke recently of an exodus in recent months of senior management from the Finance Department of the OLB. People were allegedly resigning because they objected to how Deputy Clark Abraham managed the Finance Department. Parts of the leaked information reportedly can be interpreted as exonerating Abraham.

The person whose interview was leaked said, "I gave absolutely no permission. This could be very bad for my new position." The BES Personal Data Protection Act (Wbp BES) does not allow a document that falls under the protection of the law to be used without "the unequivocal" consent of the person concerned, and certainly not for political gain. A violation carries a fine, but if committed knowingly, a prison sentence of up to 6 months can be imposed. *DMR*

REEF Fish ID surveys continued from page 1

Buddy Dive has an active REEF Fish ID class and though separate from REEF, the resort hosted a Marine Life Education program with Anna and Ned DeLoach of the Fish ID book series, from 2002 – 2022. Anna and Ned serve on the REEF Board of Trustees. Managing director of new World Publications (Reef books) and REEF member Eric Riesch is keeping the tradition of the marine life program going and will be at Buddy Dive August 10 - 24.

Riesch said, "I think the work of volunteer surveyors contributing their sightings to REEF is important to establish a historical set of data... I do hope that I can excite more divers to become REEF surveyors, but I also want to encourage divers to be curious, learn about the issues facing our coral reefs and become better stewards for our oceans."

SCTLD, bleaching and climate change are the issues. Many of our local and regular visiting divers frequently comment that Bonaire's reef fish population is down and blame these threats. We posed this question to REEF: If fish populations are down, does this mean that REEF surveys and monitoring are even more important now?

Christy Pattengill-Semmens, co-executive director for REEF said, "I'm not sure I would say that the surveys are more important now than they were before. In

terms of whether there has been a decline in species and or abundance because of changing reef conditions... I would not anticipate that fish populations would respond too quickly to the SCTLD epidemic."

Board member Anna DeLoach said, "I think we all feel SCTLD and bleaching have to be affecting species abundance but a lot of other things can be blamed too."

REEF board member Mel McCombie said, "Bleaching, warm water, fishing pollution, runoff, etc. along with SCTLD could be the cause of fish population decline... And now I think surveys are more important than ever—we need information in order to make decisions!"

To join REEF for free and become a 'citizen scientist' visit REEF.org and learn about all their projects.

REEF was founded in 1990, in Key Largo, Florida. Today, REEF's marine conservation and education programs operate worldwide.

Julie Morgan



World Ranger Day, July 31



Thank you to our STINAPA Marine Park Rangers on World Ranger Day July 31

Diana Sint Jago, Dustin Abraham, Ruthsel Paula, Andy Lepelaars, Ovier Maduro, Judith Raming, Danielle de

Kool, Kerenza Rannou, Melissa Rendon Restrepo, Henry Beaumont, Christopher Ramirez Ojeda, Arthur Domacasse, Oscar Ogenia, Edwin Domacasse, Clifford Cicilia, Raigil Molina, Enchomar Wanga, Shaun De Meyer, Leonel

Martijn and Suradno Mercera.

Front row: Sixto Trinidad, Edgar Ortegon Rueda, Roxanne Francisca, Jonathan Pourier and Deangelo Martijn.

Photo by Casy Roosje



Miguel "Popi" Saragoza
February 4, 1988 - August 1, 2024

We Love you Popi
HORECA and Chefs Bonaire



The Mantelzorg Foundation works to support Bonaire's informal caregivers, recognizing not only those caring for loved ones but also the neighbors and acquaintances who help out those in need. Many people are informal caregivers without knowing it.

The foundation further recognizes the heavy burden caregivers can carry and loneliness and isolation they can feel. To better understand and serve the needs of caregivers, Stichting Mantelzorg Bonaire has launched a survey. The foundation is asking caregivers on the island to participate in this research. The online survey is available in [Dutch](#) and [Papiamentu](#). An English version will be available soon.

Research estimates that by 2040, one in three resi-

dents of Bonaire will be a caregiver. Currently, one in five Bonaireans is caring for a loved one. The number of elderly people on Bonaire is increasing: in 2023, 5,344 individuals were aged 60 and older, a 6.2% rise from 2022. This increase makes it crucial to recognize informal care as an integral part of the care chain.

Caregivers, volunteers and professional care associations come to the Mantelzorg Bonaire Foundation with questions such as: informal caregivers currently available; finding a person to listen; keeping healthy; a shopping companion; how to deal with certain disease symptoms; financial problems; and legal issues.

To reach Mantelzorg Foundation: call, app +599 790 1813 or email via mantelzorgbonaire@gmail.com.

Funrace in the park a success



The STINAPA Washington Park Funrace was a success with 35 participants taking to the roads of Washington Park on July 28. Despite the fact that many athletes are on holiday, we can still speak of a good turnout. The fun began at 8 a.m. with the mountain bikers taking either the long route of 30 km or the short one of 23 km. The long ride winds all the way out to Slagbaai. The short route

cyclists travel over the foot of Brandaris and come together with the long route in front of Slagbaai. A jug with cold water and sports drinks stood were waiting at Slagbaai for everyone who needed it. After Slagbaai the route became really difficult. Fatigue, the heat and the steep climbs demanded a lot of the endurance of the participants. At the end, just before the finish, a climb with loose

ground had to be overcome. The organization looks back on a successful event.

The next ride is September 21st with the opening of the Berezinski trail. For more information visit the Bonaire Bicycle Club or De Freewieler on Facebook.

Frank Bohm

The Bonaire Reporter Aug. 7 - Aug. 21, 2024

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Is there safety in numbers?

by Ria Evers-Dokter

Every time I start looking at my old pictures, I find there are a lot of those old photographs with the ridged white edge. Most of them are from the trips we made in school. I do not really remember the trips very well. But I do remember that I was always very nervous, always got sick riding in the bus and that we were always supposed to enjoy those trips. Since we were living on a small island, we did not have many students. Most of our trips were to the mainland. There was always the same bus company that drove us and I still remember one of the driver's family name. He loved to speed. When our ferry got to the mainland I spotted him from far away and I was sure that my motion sickness was on its way. I was always very glad when we came back and saw the ferry waiting for us to get home safely.

This week I saw that a large group of elderly made a trip through town and elsewhere. And right away I got that feeling again. And it made me wonder....

Did the elderly really enjoy this trip? They had to get up a bit earlier, shower and get dressed for the occasion. I knew they waited endlessly for the big yellow school bus un-equipped with a wheelchair lift and waited in line to get in, assisted by volunteers and or interns who mean well but do not really know what they are doing. Then there is the long wait till you and everybody else is seated and ready to go. And perhaps even a wait for the refreshments that somebody else was supposed to bring to the bus. And then a wait till the ride begins.....

I also wonder: did every person want to join this trip? Or did they come because that is what you do when something is organized?

More and more I get the feeling that it would be much better and enjoyable if only those who want to come join the party. Perhaps it would be good to offer the rest of the people a nice program at the home.

One could also get volunteers and the teenagers who have "adopted an elderly," in combination with staff members to organize small trips for only two or three elderly at a time and just use cars. Or organize an outing for about six elderly and

use a small bus. The accessibility must be as good as possible and the participants of the groups must really want to take the trip.

And for those who do not want to go at all, organize small parties for a small group, after the participants make it clear exactly what they want during coffee time or a group talk.

With careful planing everybody can enjoy themselves as much as possible. Small groups can be safer for every participant and everybody gets the attention they need. Because when you go on a trip, the trip should be enjoyable and not cause fear and or stress.

I think I'll go back to my pictures for more inspiration.



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.

A Garden? Just Do It!

Allies & pests by Angliet, Nature Lover



The Katuna di Seda (*Calotropis procera*) or milkweed plant will attract Monarch butterflies to your garden.

This unusual wild plant, the Katuna di Seda always catches my attention when I pass the public healthcare building across from the stadium. It has beautiful big flowers made up of many small single flowers and they live a long time. After a while, a kind of big, green fruit appears that contains the seeds.

One of my colleagues told me that it's a great plant for pain so I asked a local what precisely the health benefits are of this plant. Locals use it as a remedy for muscle pain and in

the belly. And at the same time it makes a nice shrub with beautiful long lasting flowers. Good to have in your kunuku. If you want to use it as a health remedy ask the local elderly or visit Miss Letty at Mangazina di Rei's market at the monthly event Nos Zjilea.

Lately I am chasing the loras and prikichis from the mangos in my garden. I hear them make a certain sound calling each other to the mango tree. When they are happily picking the fruit, the sound is short and relaxed. When I show up with the long stick, they fly up in a stressful way making a totally other noisy sound. They have different kinds of communication in various situations. The whole day they are around trying to feed on my mangos. Some locals gave the following advice. One is to tie multiple tin cans together on ropes and hang them in the tree. The wind in the cans make a sound that has a shock effect on the birds and keeps them away. Another idea is to hang shiny things in the tree such as aluminum foil. The shininess frightens them and may keep the birds away from the fruit. These ideas are helping me. Now the loras sit high on top of the tree where I cannot reach to place the cans or foil but they don't come lower in the tree for the fruit.

Because of the drought all the creatures are struggling to find food and that includes the lizards which seem to be everywhere in my garden. I planted the seeds of a very tasty pumpkin and young plants popped up fat and strong. To keep out the lizards, I covered the container with chicken wire and a net on top for double protection. So, how is it possible that the lizards came into the container and ate my young pumpkin plants? One day I saw a lizard in the container and tried to catch it. I was totally amazed watching the lizard go through a small hole through the two protective wires on top of each other on the container. How sharp the lizard's eyes must be to measure the size of a hole to jump through it. Nature is really a miracle.

to get rid of this function. That said, it is important to keep in mind that not all people need the same number of hours of sleep. An indicator of good sleep is feeling alert and energetic during the day without the need to consume excessive stimulants, such as caffeine.

It is desirable to fall asleep within 15 or 30 minutes of going to bed and if we wake up during the night, to go back to sleep in less than 20 minutes. Although our sleep-wake cycle is governed by sunlight, some people, considered night owls (about 20% of the population), have their highest energy levels at night. The others, considered larks, are at their maximum in the morning. So, remember there is not a single formula that fits everybody.

What can we do if we suffer from insomnia? In previous articles I have given some recommendations on sleep hygiene and routines at dusk that help to lower the state of alertness, such as dimming the lights, not consuming stimulants or alcohol in excess, using warm light on cell phone and computer screens and eating a light and early dinner, etc. But many times, despite doing all this, it is our thoughts about unresolved problems and worries that invade us and keep us on alert, preventing us from falling asleep. One strategy that can be used is to have a small notebook, or paper diary next to the bed and when these thoughts invade us, write them down, allocating them a in specific moment in the future to take care of to them.

During the last heavy rain shower my garden was a choir of frogs. It was like they were very happy with the rain; but who wouldn't be? I read that frogs are very important to our ecosystem. They are your allies in the garden against parasites and mosquitos and play an important role in creating a balanced eco system by keeping the population of parasites under control. They eat the invertebrate insects thus benefiting the health of your plants. Frogs are precious allies for gardeners. If you want frogs or to get rid of frogs, put a bucket with muddy dirt and water in the garden. They like to be in such a spot where they also lay their eggs and the baby frogs I eat the mosquito larvae.

Two more hints: don't forget to add a bit of coffee grounds to the soil in your pots and other containers to fight against ants and other bugs. Add ground up egg shells to your soil as it's very good for the PH.

Enjoy your summer and make use of the time to try out all these hints.



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.

Creating Optimal Health

Insomnia by Irene da Cunda Costa

Insomnia, who hasn't suffered from it at some point in their life? Insomnia is a sleep disorder of people who cannot fall asleep or stay asleep for a desirable amount of time. This disrupts a person's good rest and general well-being.

Some people suffer from it for just a few days, others for longer periods. Some can clearly identify what it is that disturbs their rest, but many people who suffer from insomnia don't know how to get rid of it effectively and lastingly.

There may be people who only suffer from onset insomnia, this means that it takes them a long time to fall asleep. Others suffer from insomnia of maintenance, or when they wake up earlier than desired and cannot go back to sleep. Many people suffer from both.

In a previous edition I wrote about the importance of good sleep, since during the hours of sleep the body repairs tissues, memory and new learning is consolidated. Hormones are released that, among other functions, regulate appetite and our weight. The nervous system is also cleansed, and the immune system is strengthened. All of this happens while we sleep, which is enough to explain why evolution has not been able

That usually helps to put our mind in rest.

As for maintenance insomnia, one recommendation is to avoid consuming too many liquids in the two hours before going to sleep. Try to consume your daily dose of liquids, whether it is two or three liters of water according to your needs, in the morning and early afternoon to avoid the urge to urinate waking you up at night. Keep a cool temperature in your room and block the entry of light.

In general, try to keep electronic devices out of the bedroom, unless you need them as an accessory to improve your sleep. Sometimes recordings of sounds, such as white noise, help to maintain sleep. You can also experiment with sounds of rain and storms, waves breaking on the beach, nature sounds such as running streams, birds and insects, or any sounds of your choice, accompanied or not by relaxing visualizations. There is a variety of sounds on the Internet that will allow you to do your own tests and see what is most effective for you.



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.

Reef Glimpses by Dee Scarr

Belt and Suspenders

A snail is easily identifiable because of, and by, its shell. It has a shell even in its larval stage, and as an adult often forages in plain sight, trusting to the protection of its shell.

What happens to a snail without a shell? In the case of a queen conch, it may have been de-shelled for chowder or fritters; a cowrie or juvenile conch may succumb to an octopus.

But how can nudibranchs and sea slugs, which are close relatives of snails but without shells, protect themselves?

It turns out that the nudibranchs and sea slugs don't seem to miss the encumbrance of a shell. When human beings talk about "belt and suspenders," they're making the point that they have backup. Shelled snails often have little or no defense other than their shells, but defensive backup of the shell-less snails is a lot more interesting than a belt and suspenders.

First of all, most nudibranchs and slugs are tiny, smaller than the width of a baby's finger; almost all of them grow no longer than a baby's finger. They're not easy for us or predators to find, and wouldn't be particularly filling. Second, sea slugs and nudis in general taste bad; some even produce extra-distasteful chemicals. Thirdly, some nudibranchs are also protected by stinging cells, in what Paul Humann called "one of the Animal Kingdom's most bizarre feeding utilizations." (*Ocean Realm Guide to Reef Creatures*, 1982) The nudis feed on corals, hydroids, and other creatures with stinging cells, and the unfired stinging cells move into projections on their bodies. A predator who nibbles on the projections gets a mouthful of stinging trouble, because that's when the stinging cells fire. The nudis are likely to be spit out, and the predator is likely to avoid creatures like it in the future.

Most shell-less snails are solitary creatures, which means finding a partner for mating could be a problem. It's less of

the problem that it might be, though, because these critters are hermaphrodites, with functioning male and female organs. Finding a mate would be really simplified if they self-fertilized, but nature doesn't work that way most of the time. Instead, what happens is that when two nudis of the same species meet, they exchange both sperm and eggs, and thus each leaves the encounter with fertilized eggs -- which doubles the result of two separate-sex creatures mating.

Nudibranchs aren't particularly common on Bonaire, but diving at night and looking closely are two ways to increase your chances of finding them.

It's the lettuce sea slug that we're most likely to see here, generally on an algae-covered surface in shallow water. Like most shell-less snails, the lettuce slug breathes through its skin, so its ruffles increase its surface area and facilitate oxygen absorption.

Lettuce slugs feed on algae, but, like the stinging cell-using nudibranchs, lettuce slugs don't fully digest what they eat. The lettuce slugs aren't seeking additional protection, though. What they don't digest is the algae's chloroplasts, which then continue photosynthesis, creating food.

So, a lettuce sea slug on a rock may not seem to be doing anything, but right there before our eyes it's getting both oxygen and nourishment.

Survival by sunbathing.



Dee has been guiding divers on Bonaire since 1982. She's written about her undersea experiences in her books, *Touch the Sea*, *The Gentle Sea*, and *Coral's Reef*; in *Dive Training Magazine* from 1990 to 2000, with "Coral Glimpses" in the *Bonaire Reporter*, and now with "Reef Glimpses." The *Bonaire Reporter* is delighted to bring "Reef Glimpses" to you free of charge. through touchthesea.com.



This critter is a snail on its way to being a shell-less snail: Its shell is a flattened spiral, on the dorsal surface of the animal, giving it the name Umbracula snail, Umbrella snail. Photo Dee Scarr



Often seen on Bonaire, the Lettuce sea slug is a variety of colors. Photo Malin Kaijser.

Yorkshire Pudding with Shrimp by Chef Corjan Hoogerheide, Lekker Thuis Restaurant

Stir into a smooth batter and add all ingredients:

150 g (3/4 C) flour • 3 eggs • 150 g (5.25 oz) milk • 100 g (3.5 oz) coconut milk • 50 g (1/2 C) grated cheese • 10 g (1/8 C) grated coconut • 1/2 jalapeno pepper, finely chopped • 5 cm (2 in) leek, finely chopped strips • 3 pieces dried tomatoes, finely chopped • 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped • Pepper and Bonaire sea salt

5 scampi tails, fried on both sides

Grease a plate or dish and place fried scampi tails in it. Pour the batter over it and bake in an oven at 180 degrees for about 10 minutes. Serve the onion sauce over it.

Onion sauce: 1 spring onion, slightly coarsely chopped • 1/2 red onion, chopped • 1/2 white onion, chopped • 1 clove garlic, finely chopped • knob of butter • Pepper and Bonaire sea salt • 1 dl (2/3 C) balsamic vinegar



Cook the onion in the butter and deglaze with the balsamic vinegar, season with salt and pepper and reduce slightly.



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

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What's Happening

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

Arts & Crafts Market in Wilhelmina Plaza. NEW open Friday 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 reopened May 11 at new location Kaya Gilberto F Croes. Located just past Caribbean Laundry. 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Pakus raises funds for the Animal Shelter by selling recycled and affordable clothes, furniture, books, music, housewares and more.

Terramar Museum Mon-Fri 9-2. Kaya J.N.E. Isla Riba 3. Admission \$10. Residents \$5. Tours \$20.

Children under 12 free. +599 701 4700 <https://www.facebook.com/terrarmuseumbonaire/>

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

Washington Slagbaai Park: Open Tues. - Sun. 8-5 (entry to 2:30 p.m.) \$40 (Free with Nature tag)

Saturday, August 10	Summer edition Taste of Bonaire 2024 (powered by Curolil) 6 - 10 p.m. @ Wilhelmina Park. Food, culture, local handicrafts. Signature dishes of well-known restaurants offered at special prices.
August-October 27	Art center Antriol. Summer group exhibit Wed-Sun 11:30 a.m. - 10 p.m. Kaya Korona 74. see this page
Friday, August 16	Animal Shelter Bonaire Charity Dinner and Auction. Enjoy an evening of fine dining and philanthropy at Red Palm Village Bonaire. Ticket holders will enjoy a delectable four-course dinner paired with exquisite wines followed by an auction all proceeds to Animal Shelter Bonaire. \$175
Monday, August 18	Safety Stop (diver safety) 6:30 p.m. at Sugar Thief, 8 Kaya Inglaterra. Presentation by Martje Bakker on jelly fish stings
Sunday, August 25	MoltenWolf Mosaic Workshops. We will demonstrate creating your own personal sushi set. 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. \$175 pp. Second of three summer workshops. No experience necessary. All materials and equipment provided. 8 people per class. Email MoltenWolfGlassInc@gmail.com .
Friday, Sept. 6	Bonaire Day. Public holiday. Most everything is closed.
Sept. 19-Oct. 3	Bonaire Culinair. Use this 15-day event to discover the wide variety of restaurants Bonaire has to offer. Bonaire's culinary hotspots create a special 3-course menu at a special price. https://bonaire-culinair.com
Sept. 21	Funrace with the opening of the Berezenski trail. For more information visit the Bonaire Bicycle Club or De Freewieler on Facebook. .
Oct. 6-12	Regatta 2024. Races for Sunfish, windsurf, wingfoil, yachts, microboats, Optimist, fishing boats and kitesurfing. Other activities: Oct. 6. Swim to Klein Bonaire Jong Bonaire Fundraiser Oct. 9. Parade of Nations Flag parade Oct. 10. Microboats workshop and windsurf lessons Oct. 12. A boat party between Karels and the North pier.

You can help keep Bonaire clean

Saturdays	One Hour Cleanup Power. Weekly coastal clean up every Saturday, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Location given on FB: https://www.facebook.com/OneHourCleanUpPower/
Saturday, August 17	STCB Fishing line cleanup at north pier 9 a.m. Bring dive card, Marine Park tag, shears/line cutters and mesh bag. To join e-mail to cepa@bonaireturtles.org . see page 13
Sunday, August 11	Clean Coast Bonaire. 4-6 p.m. Piedra Pretu. Donate your time. Work as a citizen scientist to collect marine litter & data. https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=clean%20coast%20bonaire

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. In JULY our open studio is Saturdays. Feel like making some art? You are welcome to use our materials and facilities every Saturday from 11 to 2 pm. Cost \$5. Closing for holidays July 27 till August 25.

Beach Tennis Bonaire <https://www.facebook.com/beachtennisbonaire/>
<https://beachtennisbonaire.com>

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>

Bonaire by Night Shopping night every month

Diver Safety. Next presentation August 18 by Martje Bakker on jelly fish stings. Hosted by Jason Buttenshaw who holds presentations the third Sunday of the month 6:30 p.m. at Sugar Thief, 8 Kaya Inglaterra.

Paws and Foot Prints bi-weekly dog walking group Every other Wednesday beginning July 24, 8 a.m. for an hour at Seru Largu. Signup by sending a WhatsApp message to 599-701-4989 no later than 2 p.m., the day before the walk (so we know how many dogs to bring)

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 at 7:30 p.m. - Nicole Pelletier of the Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation. [Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CaribbeanIslandsMantaConservation). No presentations between July 20 and Sept 7th. 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.

Would you like to learn everything about what we do in the field during nesting season and how we can protect our turtles? Then you can join us in the field! We go out to Klein Bonaire on Monday, Wednesday and Friday to search for nest activity and we sometimes have a few spots open. Sign up by sending an email to cepa@bonaireturtles.org.

Church Services

Roman Catholic Churches Bonaire

- **Parish La Birgen di Coromoto (ANTRIOL):** Holy Masses: Mon-6:30 a.m.; Tues & Thurs -7:30 p.m.; Sat-6 p.m. (English) / 7:30 p.m.; Sun-7 a.m. / 10 a.m. / 6 p.m.
- **Parish San Bernardo (PLAYA):** Holy Masses: Mon,Wed, Fri, Sat-7 p.m.; Sun-9 a.m. / 7 p.m.
- **Parish Luis Beltran (RINCON):** Holy Masses: Tues,Wed, Thurs, Sat-7 p.m.; Sun-7 a.m. / 10 a.m.

International Bible Church of Bonaire (HATO): Kaya Papago 104 Sun: Worship Service & Children's Church 9 a.m. Sunday School 10:45 a.m. Services are conducted in English.

United Protestant Congregation

- (KRALENDIJK), Plaza Wilhelmina: Sun 10 a.m. Services in Dutch
- (RINCON) Kaya C. D. Crestian: Sun 8:30 a.m. Services in Papiamentu/Dutch

2024 Cruise Ship Schedule

DATE:	CRUISE SHIP	TIME	PIER	CAPACITY
Wed. August 7	MARDI GRAS	0700-1600	South	6631
Thurs. August 8	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	0800-1800	North	2417
Tues. August 13	ENCHANTED PRINCESS	0830-1800	South	3660
Wed. August 14	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	0800-2200	South	6630
Thurs. August 15	CELEBRITY BEYOND	0600-1600	South	3260
Wed. August 21	CARNIVAL HORIZON	0700-1500	South	4683
Wed. August 28	CELEBRITY BEYOND	0600-1800	South	3260
Thurs. September 5	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	0800-1800	North	2417

Art Center Antriol Summer group exhibition till 27 October

Dillon Rannou
Alied Lippinkhof
Henk Roozendaal
Markus Taurer
Hilma Koelman

wed - sun 11:30am -10pm Kaya Korona 74

Enhancing physical activity on Bonaire



A cyclist heads in to De Freewieler, Bonaire's bicycle sales and repair shop.

Photo Julie Morgan

- Almost 3 in 4 (72.3%) Bonaire residents feel that travelling between locations on Bonaire by bicycle is too dangerous.
- Over half (56.1%) of Bonaire residents feel the benefits of engaging in cycling outweigh the costs.
- Over one third (36.6%) of Bonaire residents feel that cycling is an urban trend.
- 39.8% of Bonaire residents feel there is a negative stigma associated with cycling.

Next steps

A full list of next steps and recommendations based on the findings of the preliminary research are outlined in the report. However, some key immediate actions are:

- The project team is currently planning the next phase of the research according to the findings of the report above. In September 2024 members of the Baislife team will be on Bonaire and will be conducting various activities and events and will be in touch in due course.

- A point of action is to develop a steering group for the project to act as a key communication point for issues and concerns on Bonaire to the research team. Some have already expressed interest in being involved. If you would like to know more about how to become involved in the steering group, please contact Dr Dylan Power, senior researcher at dylan@urbancyclinginstitute.org.

If you are reading *The Reporter* online, see page 17 for a chart outlining actions arising out of Phase One.

Story / Photo Julie Morgan

gerous, areas needing improvement and the current cycle lanes. They also identified infrastructure for biking and walking that is present but not maintained.

The group suggested the need for traffic calming measures and/or cycle lanes

The report states that over 67% of Bonaire's population lives within a 15 minute walk/5 minute bike ride from major services. And if you increase that to a 30 minute walk/10 minute bike ride to services that number increases to almost 100% of the population.

In the survey of individuals regarding car vs cycling: 75.6% of 93 people claim that they never use a bicycle on Bonaire; 69.9% of 86 state they use a car daily; 94.3% of 116 use a car at least once a week and 17.1% of 21 people use a bicycle at least once a week.

Most respondents believe living on Bonaire without a car is not possible although many would like to travel by bicycle more than they do. And while the majority of people believe in the benefits of walking and cycling, a significant number held a negative opinion.

- Over half (56.9%) of respondents agree that new road and traffic infrastructure changes in their area should prioritize walking and cycling over motor vehicles.

- 71.5% of respondents agree that increasing cycling on Bonaire would play an important role in the reduction of carbon emissions.

- 85.3% disagree with the statement that the active mobility infrastructure in their local area is excellent.

- 61% agree that cycling would play an important role in traffic reduction on Bonaire.

Urban Cycling Institute with support from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and Baislife Bonaire are conducting a four-year research project regarding mobility on Bonaire. They have completed phase one of the project in which they researched the physical state of the island for active mobility, conducted surveys and interviews and held a stakeholder event. The baseline report of their findings was released in July:

<https://urbancyclinginstitute.org/mobility-on-bonaire/>

According to the report data, Bonaire currently is not a conducive environment for walking and cycling safely due to its infrastructure. But Bonaire has the potential to change its environment and increase the levels of physical activity through collaboration of various sectors.

Phase One

The researchers found:

- 60% of adults in the Caribbean Netherlands are overweight, with one third (34.4%) of women and one in four (25.6%) of men categorized as obese.

- Physical inactivity levels amongst the Bonaire population are high and disparities in physical activity levels exist between genders.

- A high proportion of the population fail to meet the recommended guidelines for physical activity due to the prevalence of obesity and type-2 diabetes.

The stakeholders brought to the meeting experience in policymaking, healthcare, education, philanthropy, and physical activity promotion.

The participants identified island locations where cycling and walking are dan-

Coming up August 17 STCB fishing line clean up



Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) fishing line cleanup makes the ocean safer for our turtles and other marine life. It is scheduled for Saturday, August 17 at 9 a.m. Divers and other helpers will meet at Dive Friends Dive Inn location for registration, briefing and free tank for the dive at the North pier. Sign up early by sending an email to cepa@bonaireturtles.org. Photo Julie Morgan

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A woman holding a small dog, with a beach and ocean in the background.

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Animal Shelter News

Calling all Animal Lovers once again!

Our furry friends at the Bonaire Animal Shelter are getting a bit bored, and they need your help to bring some joy and excitement back into their lives! Many of our regular volunteers have left the island or are on vacation for the summer, so we are looking for people to help clean the animal enclosures in the mornings. We're also on the lookout for enthusiastic volunteers who are ready to play, cuddle and care for our adorable dogs and cats. Your time and love can make a world of difference to these wonderful animals.

Don't have time to volunteer but still want to make the animals happy? We also need toys to keep our pets entertained. Simple items like coconuts, old jeans, balls, and other safe toys can bring hours of fun and enrichment to their days.

If you're ready to make tails wag and purrs louder, or if you have toys to donate, please feel welcome to come by the Shelter during our opening hours: Mon - Fri 11a.m. - 3 p.m.; Sat 11a.m. - 2 p.m.; Sunday closed.

Or email animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com.

Let's work together to make our shelter a happier place for all our four-legged friends! *Marissa Lamers*

Pet of the Week

Please meet our cat of the week, Celestial.

Celestial is a female cat, white and ginger in color and one and a half years old. She is beautiful!

One and half year old Celestial came to the shelter about three months ago and it has taken her some time to adjust as she had escaped from a stray dog attack and survived. Celestial is learning to trust the staff and volunteers more and more each day. She will need a patient owner who will give her attention on her terms. Celestial needs to feel safe and secure with her new owner. Slow and steady works well for her. Once she gains trust she will allow you to hold her and pet her. She is doing fine with other cats. Celestial may shy away from being outdoors, due to her history, but in time, I believe, she will adjust.

Please consider coming to meet the beautiful Celestial. I believe she will make a nice addition to your home inside or out.

Celestial is sterilized and has tested negative for feline leukemia and FIV. *Photo/story: Amy Bowen*



Celestial

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



Bonaire by Night

(Left) The launch of Bonaire by Night offered 31 stores extending their hours for shoppers and many offered discounts. Phish Phactory had their grand opening in honor of the occasion.

(Below) To kick off this special evening, Bonaire's Majorettes performed down Kaya Grandi and Farley Entertainment provided some background shopping music along with DJ Kiart offering some sounds. A bounce house was available for the kids.

Tourism Corporation Bonaire and SKAL's first ever Bonaire by Night attracted quite a few shoppers to Bonaire's downtown Kaya Grandi area and Terramar Mall on August 2.

The shopping event will become a monthly standard on the first Friday of every month. Anyone working during regular store hours can get some shopping done after work and visitors can shop before flying the next day plus enjoy a nice evening out on Bonaire.



Sargassum season is officially over for now



In 2019 BONDDET volunteers helped STINAPA rake up the sargassum.

Photo Julie Morgan

For the first time in several years STINAPA Bonaire National Marine Park (BNMP) did not have to call on local volunteers to help manually remove the sargassum that drifts onto our coastline threatening our wildlife and sensitive mangrove areas. STINAPA is now equipped with the machinery it needs to tackle the job more efficiently.

In a celebration on World Ranger Day July 31 at Sorobon Beach, BNMP manager Judith Raming looked out over the bay said, “Just look at how healthy the mangrove area is. We are closing down the 2024 sargassum seaweed season, but we have already started on the next one.”

The investment in time, energy and money by STINAPA and the Dutch government is costly. The sargassum season runs from January to July and the real planning begins in December. The seaweed drifts into Sorobon, Lac Bay, bokas/bays of Washington Slagbaai National Park and Lagun. The rangers use monitoring tools and travel the shores looking to see if it is coming and where it will land. It takes a half or full day to organize people and equipment. The marine park is now equipped with sargassum excavators, many more workable sargassum booms, using trucks and containers rather than enlisting human volunteers to rake and shovel by hand.

Last year STINAPA learned this new process is 90% effective. After detecting the sargassum the Rangers work from 6 a.m. – 7 p.m. The sargassum has to be removed within three days otherwise it rots and sinks to the ocean floor. The sargassum can suffocate the sea grass and mangroves, so time is of the essence. It took 1300 hours to fully remove +/-1200m3 of sargassum at Lac and Lagun.

There will be more sargassum in the future

and the monetary investments were necessary to protect the fragile environment of the mangroves and sea grass beds.

Raming thanked not only the rangers but the individuals at Foodies and windsurf schools for their constant attention to any sargassum that landed in the Sorobon/Lac areas.

In June 2023, Raming, representing the six Dutch Caribbean Islands on behalf of EU Commission of Santo Domingo, traveled to the Dominican Republic to explain Bonaire’s Sargassum Response Plan.

Raming said, “It was clear that Bonaire is the only island combating sargassum with a

focus to protect and safeguard nature.”

Once again Bonaire is leading in conservation to protect the environment under Raming, the BNMP and local government with the Sargassum Response Plan.

Story / Photo Julie Morgan



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AN OVERVIEW OF

THE ACTIVE MOBILITY SYSTEM ON BONAIRE



In January 2024, Urban Cycling Institute, supported by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, launched a 4-year research project aiming to develop active mobility policy actions on Bonaire. There are lots of impressive actions happening in the active mobility system on Bonaire already:

SPORT AND RECREATION

- 1 URBAN BIKE PARK
- 14KM OF SIGNED MTB TRAILS
- 1 MTB CLUB
- 3 BIKE RENTAL COMPANIES
- 1 BIKE SALES AND REPAIR SHOP
- ANNUAL BAIS FIESTA

EDUCATION

- TRAFFIC & CYCLING THEORY CLASSES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS
- WEEKLY AFTER SCHOOL BMX LESSONS AT RINCON
- 1 RECREATIONAL & TRANSPORT CYCLING ACTION PROGRAM
- MTB LESSONS AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

50 KIDS PARTICIPATING IN A REGULAR BIKE CARAVAN

PLANNING, URBAN DESIGN, AND LIVEABILITY

- 2 DUTCH CARIBBEAN WIDE CLIMATE AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ACTION PLANS
- 1 ISLAND-WIDE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UNDER DEVELOPMENT

PRIMARY & SECONDARY HEALTHCARE

- ISLAND WIDE PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN IN DEVELOPMENT
- 1 DUTCH CARIBBEAN GOVERNMENTAL PREVENTION AGREEMENT

COMMUNITY-WIDE PROGRAMS

- 1 ANNUAL COMMUNITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY EVENT
- ANNUAL BIKE RIDE WITH 100'S OF PARTICIPANTS
- ANNUAL MTB EVENT
- +40 BICYCLES GIVEN TO LOCAL CHILDREN AS PART OF ISLAND-WIDE SCHEME
- WEEKLY COMMUNITY WIDE BMX CLINICS
- MONTHLY CYCLOVIA

MASS COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC EDUCATION, INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- 1 4-YEAR ACTIVE MOBILITY RESEARCH PROJECT
- 1 'TRAIN THE CYCLING TRAINER' COURSE
- +500 MEMBERS OF BONAIRE ONLINE CYCLING FORUM

TRANSPORT AND HUMAN MOVEMENT ENVIRONMENT

- 1 ISLAND-WIDE SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY VISION
- REGULAR DATA COLLECTION ON ACTIVE MOBILITY LEVELS
- PROPOSAL FOR ISLAND WIDE SAFE ACTIVITY LANES IN DEVELOPMENT
- 1 ACTIVE MOBILITY ADVOCACY GROUP (FIETSERBOND)

Results from our survey show, that:

"50% of Bonaire residents want to travel more by bike than they already do."

"More than half of Bonaire residents feel infrastructural changes on the island should prioritise cyclists and pedestrians."

Let's build on these through **collective impact** and create a more **active, sustainable, and healthier Bonaire!**

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Lieutenant Governor Oleana's farewell speech

Last August the first it was exactly 38 years ago that I started my professional career here on Bonaire. Now, 38 years later, I realize how quickly time passes and how short our lives really are. This beautiful island has a unique vibe and has given me many opportunities to take a more prominent role and to work on Bonaire's progress.

I am someone who has never turned away and left our island and its people to fend for themselves. Making false promises that I couldn't keep wasn't part of my daily life. Many of my dreams were always filled with beautiful images of how Bonaire should develop.

I also would like to share with you that every year on the first day of January, I would tell my wife the goals I wanted to achieve in the year that had just begun. As strange as it may seem, most of my dreams and goals have actually come true and, for this, I thank God, my family, my acquaintances and our entire community, all of whom have helped me to achieve my goals. Without such support my life would have been very different.

Every year on January first, my wife would listen to me with great attention and look at me with surprised eyes. With her support, I have achieved important results in my professional career in the fields of education, sports, culture, agriculture and governance. She was always ready to encourage me.

So what is (and was) the secret of my life?

First and foremost: love. I truly love our island and its people dearly. At the end of every holiday abroad I feel very happy to come home again.

I have always taken into account the limitations of our island and I have learned that -as the English say- "good things come in small packages".

The song by the Aruban singer JEON entitled 'Ta mi hendenan – Those are my people' reminds me of many Bonairean aspects of life

and the melody and lyrics of the song describe our people and their real circumstances.

Secondly: hard work. Work pays off and I have learned that lazy people are always blaming others but when they get the chance to show what they can do, they run away from their responsibilities. In Dutch there is a saying that says: 'The best helmsmen are the ones on shore' and a Dutch soccer player once said in an interview: 'The best players are the spectators'. Every day I try to surpass myself, and every day I try not to disappoint anyone and to treat everyone with respect. I can share with you that hard work really does bring positive results, even if sometimes the road is long and exhausting.

Thirdly: being honest. Being honest comes at a price and all those who are NOT honest and want to do illegal things will become your enemies. I have consciously chosen to uphold our standards and values. The love for my homeland and my integrity have given me great pleasure and energy in order to continue the struggle during all these years.

Fourthly: discipline and the acceptance of responsibility. In bad times and in good times I have been right here and I have tried to make the impossible become possible. Helping Bonaire and my neighbors was the juice that flowed through my veins and being exemplary has allowed me to reach the top of many mountains.

Governance

As far as governance is concerned, I would like to go back in time. In March of 1949, the first Parliamentary elections in the Netherlands Antilles were held on our islands. Prior to 1949 many of our elders waged a fierce and persistent struggle so that we could become a democratic country. Yes, a democratic country.

Today, 75 years later, I see a less pleasant trend developing where antagonism is created, where groups are pitted against each other, where polarization takes place, where the truth is distorted

and where even death threats are made. In my opinion, politicians who do not speak the truth and who threaten each other are committing a serious attack on our democracy.

I would like to warn all current and future politicians that it is NOT possible to build a prosperous country with lies and false promises. Lack of respect, discrimination, fraud, lying and incorrect behavior can be considered to be seeds of weeds sown to create a divided society, in which there is no trust and no unity. We may differ in opinion, but there should never be room to literally kill each other.

I would like to conclude this section on governance with this thought: When light shines in your soul, there will be beauty in your heart. If there is harmony in your home, there will be peace and tranquility among the people around you. Peace and tranquility among the people means progress.

Finally I would like to express my sincere thanks to all who contributed to my success. Without you I could not have achieved my goals. Today I am saying goodbye to the part of governing that I enjoyed the most, namely chairing the Island Council meetings. You are the heart of our democracy. Make sure you keep the lights on in all homes and that you tackle current challenges, including the effects of climate change, demographic changes, artificial intelligence, digitalization, the safety and quality of our food, keeping our island clean and preserving our culture.

To our new Lieutenant Governor John Soliano: good luck and wisdom. Bonaire is in good hands. Ensure to keep a strong unity between the three administrative bodies and Bonaire will prosper.

Thank you again for all your support and trust.

- Lieutenant Governor Reynold "Nolly" Oleana

Lieutenant Governor Soliano's speech

In life there is an opportune time to do things. There is a right time to sow, a right time to grow and a right time to reap. Each phase in our lives prepares us for the next.

Dear guests, family, loved ones, ladies and gentlemen of the press and my fellow citizens.

I would like to take you back to a moment 33 years ago, when, as a young man of barely 19 years old, I stood at the airport surrounded by my ever-supportive family. I was waiting to board the KLM flight and leave the island where I was born in order to continue my studies in the Netherlands. My grandmother's parting words to me were that hard work always pays off! I vowed then to come back to serve my island. And, after my studies that is exactly what I did!

More than 28 years have passed since I returned. I have worked in a variety of positions at various organizations, private and public. I have also been involved in volunteer work for various foundations in many sectors of our society such as care for the elderly, care for people with disabilities, cultural organizations, social welfare and many more.

I was fortunate enough to meet visionary leaders who gave me their support and space to develop myself so that I could grow as a person and gain sufficient self-confidence in my work to enable me to explore new horizons.

In these last years, with our island in a new political relationship with the Kingdom of the Netherlands, I regularly, consciously or subconsciously, analyzed the activities of the Lieutenant Governors in office during events on our island. On several occasions I asked myself how I would have acted if I were the Governor in a certain specific circumstance. I would also debate these situations with my circle of confidants, and I believe that we were subconsciously preparing ourselves for this exact moment! That is, this moment when I assume responsibility to become Lieutenant Governor and prepare myself to make an even greater contribution to the development of our island and its inhabitants.

Bonaire is an island in full development and it is strong and resilient!

In recent years the explosive growth of our island has caused a lot of change to our socio-economic development but it has also created several challenges.

1. The functioning of our island government
2. The feeling of community in our society in the broadest sense of the word.

Challenges relating to the functioning of the government

Good governance ... a concept that changes over time! Over the last 14 years we have made significant steps in the right direction, but at the same time we are aware that there is still a long way to go. Good governance is much more than just following the rules.

Good governance also means exemplary behavior, giving and receiving trust based on mutual respect!

These are essential values when it comes to effective relationships and collaboration, both of which are necessary to ensure the desired results for all parties involved.

Respect creates a culture in which people feel valued and heard. This is vital for people's relationships on our island and in the rest of the Kingdom.

For me, as a Lieutenant Governor, it is fundamental to promote these values, both within our administration and within our society overall.

Let each of us who are here today and all those listening to me right now commit to a level of leadership that focuses on inclusion, talent recognition and collaboration - starting today. Let us focus on the continuous development of Bonaire for ourselves, our children and our children's children.

Let us empower our people to make optimal use of the scarce human capital that we have as an island. Together, the private and public sectors must create the right conditions for this to take place! This means, among other things, creating safe working environments where there is integrity and security. It also means making the right tools available in order to be able to function optimally, and providing a solid workplace where professional development is a continuous goal.

With this goal continuously in our minds, we as the island government must set a good example and promote a vision that is supported by the administration in its entirety. As Lieutenant Governor, this will be one of my key areas of focus.

We are living in times of change, which lead to rising individualism in our society. This can also be seen in the political and administrative context. The foundations of a healthy and strong society are peaceful coexistence, empathy and compassion. A healthy society is one that creates an environment wherein happiness levels are increased much more. I am sure of one thing: our society's leaders are the ones to set the tone when it comes to behavioral norms, such as peaceful coexistence, empathy and compassion.

Challenges concerning peaceful coexistence

I just mentioned 'our people.' Who are 'our people'? My definition of 'our people' is every single individual in our society who -in their own way- contributes to the development of Bonaire in a favorable way. Their age, nationality, gender or religion does not matter in this context at all.

In times of change, people are inclined to build a high wall around themselves to protect the me - the individual- , or us - my group-, from the others. On Bonaire the quick pace of change and the complexity of our world today cause daily conflicts of us versus the others. We witness them often. I appeal to everyone, especially the leaders in our society, to engage in healthy discussions about policies or changes in policies that are necessary to create well-being

and happiness for all residents of Bonaire. Let us not fall into the trap of antagonism, polarization and identifying specific groups in our society as the source of all our problems...

10-10-10 brought significant developments in the field of socio-economics and in the areas of education, medical care, justice and security. As a result, our population has grown and unfortunately so has the sentiment of us and the others. I appeal to our leaders and to the entire society to unite and to face our challenges based on our strength and resilience as a society. Let us always act with love and respect for each other. As Governor, it is my responsibility to lead the way and to monitor this development very closely, as well as to intervene where necessary.

Obviously, there are many more topics in our society that deserve attention, but -today- my first words to you are focused on our sense of patriotism and peaceful coexistence. This is the foundation for the continued healthy development of our island.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Bonairean society for the support, the good wishes and even the warnings I have received in recent weeks. Your supportive words have given me the strength and confidence that are necessary to bear this responsibility and they will continue to do so.

I would like to thank the confidential committee that chose a new Governor for Bonaire, for their work and for their confidence in me.

Thank you to every member of the Island Council, our Executive Council and the Island Secretary and his team for the support I received.

I received a warm and cordial handover from Interim Lieutenant Governor Oleana. In the past I must have been a good and attentive pupil in Mr. Oleana's class! I feel that, in his position as Lieutenant Governor, he not only wants to convey information about the job to me but that he also wants more than anything to see me succeed in what I am about to do. Thank you very much Nolly and also thanks to your wife Ann.

Last but not least -and given the time constraint I will keep it short and not mention names- I would like to express my thanks to our Creator, to my family, my parents, brothers and sisters, my mother-in-law and my father-in-law and especially my wife and my three children who are there for me every single day, and inspire me daily to be a better person, a better husband and a better father... I grow in these roles every day. Without your support I wouldn't be standing here today.

It is a great honor for me to serve my island as its Governor. My mission as a professional is to serve my island and I can only be successful with your support.

- Lieutenant Governor John Soliano