

FREE

BONAIRE
The

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REPORTER



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Bonaire's favorite Santa Claus,
aka Raja Daou, of Tekibon
Photo Julie Morgan

What is your Christmas Wish for Bonaire?

The Christmas and holiday season is a time for wishes whether you are eight years old and want a new bike, 30 and wishing for a new car or 60 and wish we had taken better care of our oceans and planet. We sent out an email to a broad group of people requesting an answer to, "What is your Christmas Wish for Bonaire?" The responses we received made us think a bit more about this beautiful island we all love.

Gary Barrett
I went to school on Oahu, Hawaii where development replaced most of the agriculture; runoff damaged the reefs; tropical forest and watershed was lost to condos and buildings ... The island I knew then is mostly gone today. I hope that Bonaire can preserve its land, reefs, and sea for future generations.

George Buckley
For 2025 my major hopes for Bonaire are that Antillean culture will be deeply honored, respected, valued and protected with wide ranging discussions about what that means as Bonaire continues to develop. I wish that development much better controlled, limited and that it include work to begin a major reduction in the size of the landfill.

Lynne Culbreth
My Christmas wish is for Bonaire to value quality over quantity and to realize mass tourism equals mass destruction. We have one

reef and when it's gone, Santa can't bring a new one. Bonaire is really a unique place if only people would embrace saving it instead of destroying it.

Foundation Save Plantation Bolivia
'Cherish Biodiversity: Earth's Resilient Guardian'

Xiomara Frans-Muller
I wish that all parents would educate and discipline their children. So that at a very young age they know to respect everyone and spread positive vibes.

Bregje Koedooder
Christmas is full of miracles. And Bonaire is one. Keep your toes in the sand, and stay tanned.

Marissa Lamers
I wish for Bonaire that there will be a lot of love for all the animals on the island, that all the puppies, kittens, birds, bunnies, and all other little creatures will be spoiled a little extra this holiday season.

Mel McCombie and Harris Friedberg
Our Christmas wish for Bonaire is for no cruise ships and a healthy reef.

Miles Mercera
My Christmas wish for Bonaire is that we stay true to our roots—protecting our unique envi-

ronment, celebrating our diverse culture, and ensuring a brighter future for generations to come. Let's move forward together with purpose and pride.

Marian Passchier
We wish you all a happy Christmas full of music and Christmas songs. Enjoy the life on our beautiful island and join the people in singing, playing and dancing. May the year 2025 be filled with joy and lots of music.

Leanne Pinkerton
My Christmas wish for beautiful Bonaire is for more love be given to her by the residents and visitors.

Piskabon Bonaire
A blessed and fishful 2025 with a lot of happiness. Let's be there for each other.

Bart van Oost
In the spirit of these holidays, my wish is that we continue to honor and preserve the historical foundation that makes this island so special. Let us protect our cherished heritage, so future generations can experience the same wonder and pride we feel today.

Gwen Versteegh
A Bonaire Animal Sanctuary. Where all animals, in the water, on land and in the sky are being respected and treated equally. Where cats and dogs are taken care of with respect.

Where sharks and dolphins are thriving on the reefs without threats. Where birds are free and find an abundance of food in the wild. Where lands are being protected to stay the habitat of wildlife. Where humans & animals can live in perfect harmony, care and free of unnecessary suffering.

Hans Voerman
I hope that all relevant politicians go into the kunuku with me so I can show them all the illegal mining and trash dumping that takes place and that they see that their promises about illegal mining had zero effect.

Jeff and Valerie Wolf
I'd really like for those in charge of planning for the island take a look at the demographic ages of those that live on island and the ages of the visitors that come for a day or months, whether diving or not. The population is getting older, and services need to be planned not just for young people but older ones as well. Sidewalks, bike lanes, public transportation that can handle walkers and wheelchairs. Senior housing, retirement housing, etc. need to be planned for now to meet the needs of the now, and near future of the aging population.

*Thank you to everyone who responded and we truly hope your wishes come true.
Happy Holidays from The Bonaire Reporter
Julie Morgan*

Last minute heroics block onerous tax plan

The coalition in parliament discovered recently it had inadvertently passed tax legislation that, as of January 1, would require minimum wage earners in the Caribbean Netherlands to start paying taxes on their incomes and benefits for the first time. The legislation had almost no defenders except Bonaire's Executive Council, which had lobbied strongly for passage of the tax bill. Had the tax legislation still been under consideration it could have been withdrawn. Having been passed, it was law. Rescinding a law is complicated. However, apparently laws can be replaced by new legislation. But time was running out.

A new version of the law was written that did not include the offending provision. In order to pass it before parliament shut down for 2024, rules were bent; required advisory bodies rubber-stamped their approval; on the last day parliament met this year it passed the replacement legislation as a "gavel piece" not requiring a vote; and an emergency courier rushed the legislation to Noordeinde Palace so King Willem-Alexander could sign the required Royal Decree.

Employees in the taxation department were called in to cancel the measures they had put in place to start taxing the poor on January 1.

So the lowest income earners will not be taxed after all. But taxes will increase for almost everyone else in BES. *DMR*

OLB acts against gun crisis

The number of violent incidents has increased sharply on the island. Consequently Governor John Soliano has designated several 'security risk areas.' In these areas the police will not need specific suspicion to conduct preventive searches. They will also be allowed to install camera surveillance in public areas.

The number of violent incidents involving firearms has risen steadily: 36 in 2021, 66 in 2023, and 101 as of December 1 this year.

Empowered by the "Island Ordinance Designating Safety Risk Areas and Camera Surveillance" that the Island Council adopted in an emergency meeting, the Governor designated six safety risk areas on the island in consultation with the public prosecutor and the chief of police. The designation will be in force for one month and can be renewed if police staffing restraints allow. *DMR*

Thodé appointed to the Chapter for Civil Orders

Glenn Thodé has been nominated by the Kingdom Council of Ministers for appointment as a member of the Chapter for Civil Orders, effective the beginning of the year.



Glenn Thodé

The Chapter for Civil Orders advises the Dutch government on proposals for Royal honors. Thodé was the first governor of Bonaire as a special municipality of the Netherlands. He still holds various social positions in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. From 2012 to 2021 he was rector of the University of Aruba. Since 2022 he's been a lecturer at the University of Groningen.

Thodé said his appointment at the Chapter for Civil Orders is an opportunity to participate in "honoring people for their extraordinary contribution to our society and fellow human beings... That, in my opinion, provides a fundamental confirmation of the good in us. It makes the empathy in all of us visible."

DMR / Photo via The Daily Herald

Executive council praises its 2025 budget

On its website the Executive Council of Bonaire has informed the public that the 2025 budget has been approved. The budget is balanced and shows surpluses for the years 2026 to 2028, which means Bonaire remains on a sound financial course.

"The approval of the 2025 budget confirms that we are dealing responsibly with the resources of our island. We continue to focus on a just society, sustainable development and improving the services to our residents," says deputy Abraham.

According to its news release, the budget was drawn up in accordance with the advice of the BES Financial Supervision Board (Cft BES) and complies with the legal requirements as set out in the FinBES. *DMR*

OLB giving two Christmas vouchers

The OLB is giving families who received financial help in 2024 two Christmas vouchers. All children aged 0-3 and all primary school students will receive a gift voucher. Families will be given a food voucher as a bonus. Both vouchers were issued during December 12 – 18. People who did not get their vouchers in December can pick them up at the Department of Society and Care beginning January 8. *DMR*

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Interim report confirms dioxins at landfill

At the request of the OLB, the Environmental Accident Service (MOD) of the RIVM has collected soil, plant and sweep samples in the vicinity of the waste dump on Bonaire. The MOD interim report confirms that significantly elevated levels of harmful dioxins were found on plants in an area

up to 4 kilometres from the landfill. The Public Health Department advises that fruits and vegetables from the effected area be peeled or washed thoroughly before eaten. It also recommends that people avoid consuming chicken, eggs, meat or milk from animals that have been roaming in the affected area. *DMR / Map via OLB*



Artisan Bakery Bonaire celebrates

Artisan Bakery Bonaire, best known for its amazing sourdough breads and plant-based pastries, celebrated its one year anniversary on December 13.

In honor of the occasion owner Payam Elhami offered special Christmas buns, cinnamon rolls and drinks. Fans of Artisan Bakery Bonaire dropped by to wish Payam congratulations with gifts and to purchase their favorite specialty pastries and breads.

Lisa Steen, owner of BOB, (Box on Bonaire), had a tasting event with her delicious olive oils and products she sells at the bakery - all a perfect complement to Artisan Bakery Bonaire's breads.

The bakery will be open this week for Christmas purchases on Tuesday, December 24 from 9 a.m. till Sold Out.

Visit Artisan Bakery Bonaire on Instagram and Facebook.

Top photo: Payam and his specialty pastries including his much sought after pistachio.

Bottom Photo: Lisa and Payam with BOB products.

Photos Julie Morgan



Dive into the underwater world with the new Caribbean guilder

The redesigned currency for Curaçao and Sint Maarten features stunning marine life. Each new bill has a marine animal on the front (the gray angelfish, spotted eagle ray, green sea turtle, stoplight parrotfish and longsnout seahorse) and a cultural landmark across the back (lighthouse on Klein Curaçao, Simpson Bay, Grote Knip Beach, St. Maarten's Courthouse and the Queen Emma Bridge). In addition, a special security feature has been added, which includes a sea sparkle that lights up under special lights.

New Caribbean Guilder to page 7

FOR SALE Kaya Oro 33 Spacious Villa with Wide Views



- Location: Nawati
- Lot size: 1,063 m2 / 11,442 sq. ft.
- 3 bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, laundry room, storage

- Modern open floorplan, vaulted ceilings
- Roof terrace, tropical garden

Virtual Tour



Asking price \$549,000 US Dollar

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



POLICE REPORT

You can contact the police via 715 8000, 911 or via the anonymous tip line 9310.

Property crimes and arrests

Dec. 19. A patrol on Kaya Victoria in Antriol saw a scooter without a license plate parked in front of a building. A group of people were also present. The officers asked about the scooter, but no one said they owned it. When checking the scooter, the officers found that both the chassis number and the ignition lock looked suspicious. Further investigation revealed that the scooter was stolen from Kaya Kòrsou on the evening of October 6 to 7.

Dec. 18. Around 3:20 p.m. a man, 18, was arrested at Kaminda Lagun in connection with multiple scooter thefts.

Dec. 18. Around 2:20 p.m. a 15-year-old minor was arrested at Kaminda Lagun for handling stolen goods. When the suspect saw the police, he tried to hide a scooter in the bushes and flee. The scooter had no license plate and a broken lock, and further investigation revealed that this scooter was stolen December 13.

Dec. 17. A blue Kymco Agility scooter, license plate MF-4061, was stolen between 5 and 8:30 p.m. while it was parked with a steering lock in the parking lot of an apartment complex on Kaya Sirena.

Dec. 16. A red Sym Orbit scooter, license plate MF-3564, was stolen between 9 p.m. Monday and 1 a.m. Tuesday. The scooter was parked with a steering lock in the parking lot in the Centrumgebied.

Dec. 16. A black rented bicycle (Fat-Bike), model Biker's Choice Helmet, was stolen between 1 and 8 a.m. while it was parked at a house on Kaya Nikiboko Zuid. It was attached to a tree with a lock.

Dec. 16. A black rented bicycle (Fat-Bike), was stolen between 1 and 11 a.m. while it was parked on the veranda of an apartment on Kaya Libertador Simon Bolivar. It was locked with a chain lock attached to the rear wheel.

Dec. 15. Around 4 a.m. a violent robbery was reported at an ATM on Kaya Monseigneur Nieuwindt. Shortly afterwards, two people, aged 25 and 26, were arrested in connection with this case. As part of the investigation, the home of one of the suspects was searched. Several items relevant to the investigation were seized. The police are asking anyone with relevant information to report this via 715 8000 or the anonymous tip line 9310.

Dec. 13. In the early evening hours a black Hyundai Grand i10 with license plate B-16998 was reported stolen. The unlocked car was parked with the keys in it in front of a club on Kaya Prinses Marie. When the owner returned, his car was not where he left it. On his way to the police station to report the crime, he saw his vehicle with two occupants. He followed the car and called the police. On Kaya Isla Ariba, after the suspect parked the stolen car, the owner blocked it. A female passenger immediately got out of the car and ran away, but the male driver was stopped by the owner. This led to a physical confrontation. The owner eventually managed to hold the suspect until the police arrived. A man, 26, was arrested for theft of a motor vehicle.

Dec. 13. A Kymco Agility scooter, license plate MF-3958 was stolen between 1 and 4 p.m. while it was parked in front of a primary school on Kaya Mississippi.

Dec. 13. A black Kymco Agility scooter, license plate MF-9 was stolen between 1:15 and 2:45 a.m. while it was parked on Kaya Bonaire. Around 7 a.m. the scooter was reported found in good condition on Kaya Libertador Simon Bolivar. The scooter has been confiscated by the police for further investigation.

Dec. 10. Around 1 p.m. a 16-year-old minor was arrested at the police station for theft of a scooter and receiving stolen goods. Employees of a scooter rental company saw the boy riding a scooter that had been stolen on November 15, 2024 from a tourist accommodation on Kaya Gobernador N. Debrot. After the driver was stopped by the employees, he complied when told to hand in the scooter. The police asked him to come to the station, where he was subsequently arrested.

Shootings

Dec. 19. Around 2:30 a.m. a problem was reported involving a group of people in the vicinity of a catering establishment on Kaya Bonaire. After the incident, bystanders reported hearing shots. Upon arrival at the scene, officers found no further details. The case is being investigated. The KPCN requests anyone with information about this incident to contact the police.

Arrests

Dec. 18. Around 9:20 a.m. a 16-year-old minor was arrested connection with the arson of a palapa at Chachacha Beach on Friday, September 27. The investigation into the case is ongoing.

Dec. 17. Around 6:05 p.m. a man, 35, was arrested for assault at a home in the Mexico district.

Dec. 16. Around 3:15 p.m. a man, 34, was arrested by the Special Assignments Group (GBO) on Kaya Tintorero in connection with a violation of the Firearms Act BES. Officers searched a house in the Nawati district in connection with this arrest and various articles were seized.

Dec. 12. House searches were conducted at three different addresses in the Nikiboko area as part of the investigation into recent shooting incidents. There were no arrests. Investigations into the cases are ongoing.

Dec. 10. Around 6 a.m. a house on Kaya Avelino J. (Abechi) Cecilia was searched in connection with a violation of the BES Opium Act. A man, 26, was arrested. Various items relevant to the investigation were seized.

Traffic accidents / 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.

Dec. 19. Around 10:20 a.m. a car and a scooter collided on J.A. Abraham Boulevard. The scooter driver was taken to the hospital for a medical check-up.

Dec. 19. Around 9:25 a.m. a collision was reported on Kaminda Lagun. A tractor with a container, two cars and a pick-up were involved. The tractor (vehicle 1) was not damaged but the driver stated that he was driving on Kaminda Lagun and turned left. When he was halfway on the road with the container, he saw a pick-up (vehicle 2) approaching at high speed. To avoid a collision, the driver of the pick-up tried to swerve to the other side of the road. In doing so, he collided with another car (vehicle 3) that was driving behind the tractor with the container. The driver of a fourth car that was driving behind vehicle 3, also had to swerve and the passenger in the car (vehicle 4) hit his head against the windshield. Two people were taken to the hospital by ambulance. All drivers were given a breath test, with a negative result. One of the drivers was fined for driving without valid insurance.

Dec. 18. Around 11:50 a.m. a collision between two vehicles occurred on the Kaminda di Rincon near Onima. Upon arrival, officers found a SUV in the middle of the road and a rented car in the bushes. Both vehicles had significant damage to the right front. The ambulance crew medically checked the passenger of the SUV and the driver of the rented car.

Dec. 17. Around 1 p.m. a scooter and two cars collided at the intersection of Kaya L.D. Gerharts and Kaya General C. M. Piar. The scooter driver had fallen and was injured. He was taken to the hospital by ambulance. The driver of car 1, which was on Kaya L.D. Gerharts, stated that she had given way to car 2 that wanted to enter from Kaya General C. M. Piar. However, the driver of car 2 had not seen that a scooter was approaching at that moment. To avoid a collision with car 2, the scooter driver swerved and collided with the front of car 1.

Dec. 14. Around 10 p.m. two vehicles collided on Kaya Korona. One driver did not have a driver's license or valid insurance documents. After a breath test the driver, a man, 44, was arrested for driving under the influence.

Dec. 13. Around 9:55 p.m. a pick-up and a car collided on Kaya Korona. One driver, a man, 54, was given a 5-hour driving ban for driving under the influence of

alcohol. The other man, 43, had consumed alcohol, but not above the legal amount of alcohol that a driver may consume.

Dec. 13. Around 5 p.m. two pick-ups collided on the 'Queens Highway,' also known as the Tourist Road. When police arrived, they found the people arguing. Both drivers were given a breath test. One of them, a man, 53, had consumed more than the permitted amount of alcohol and his driver's license was confiscated.

Dec. 12. Around 7:55 p.m. a pick-up truck which was reversing out of a parking space near a catering establishment collided with a passing car on Kaya Andres A. Emerenciana. A breath test was administered to both drivers. The driver of the pick-up truck, aged 51, had his driver's license confiscated for driving under the influence of alcohol. The suspect's vehicle was not insured, for which he was also fined. This is the third time that this man has been arrested for driving under the influence, and the second time that his driver's license has been confiscated.

Dec. 12. Around 4:10 p.m. a single-vehicle collision occurred on Kaminda Tras Di Montaña. A caller reported that the driver had become unwell and drove his vehicle into the mondi. Upon arrival, officers found the ambulance crew working on the driver who was responsive and had no visible injuries. After a medical check and a negative breath test, the police decided to confiscate the driver's license because the driver had recently been involved in several collisions. The ambulance crew took the victim to the hospital for further medical examination.

Dec. 12. Around 2:25 a.m. a scooter collided with a power pole on Hanchi Amboina. When the patrol arrived, officers found an injured man who smelled of alcohol. He was taken to the hospital by ambulance for medical treatment and the scooter was taken to the police station.

Dec. 11. Around 4 a.m. two cars collided at the parking lot in the city center area. A woman, 20, was given a 6-hour driving ban for driving under the influence of alcohol. The other driver was fined because he could not show valid proof of insurance.

Dec. 11. Around 2:55 a.m. a patrol on Kaya L.D. Gerharts stopped a scooter with three people, one of whom was not wearing a helmet, coming from the opposite direction. A passenger was fined for not wearing a helmet. The driver's documents were in order, but she was given a warning for transporting three people on a scooter. After testing, the driver, a woman, 25, was given a 4-hour ban for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Dec. 11. Around 1:20 a.m. a man, 48, was given a 3-hour driving ban for driving under the influence of alcohol. A patrol saw the driver driving suspiciously on Kaya International and decided to stop him for a check. This was the second time that this suspect has been arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol. His driver's license had previously been confiscated.

Dec. 10. Around 1:20 a.m. a man, 19, who was riding a scooter was stopped on Kaya L.D. Gerharts by a patrol for a general check. After a breath analysis he was given a 2-hour driving ban for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Traffic control

Dec. 19. Police checked 12 cars on Kaya Korona and all of the drivers' documents were in order. A little later, on Kaya Nikiboko Zuid near Kaya J.C. Van Der Ree, eight cars, a scooter and a dirt bike were stopped. Three fines were issued for driving without a seat belt and one driver was fined for not being able to show a valid driver's license.

Dec. 17. During a morning traffic control on Kaya Amsterdam 37 vehicles were checked. Two fines were issued. A scooter driver was fined for not being able to show valid insurance documents and a car driver fined for driving without a seat belt on.

The fine for traffic violations varies between \$30 and \$225.

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.

Guess which way your taxes are going

When the residents of the Caribbean Netherlands wake up on January 1, they will be living under a vastly changed tax regimen. According to the announcement of the current governing coalition, the islands' tax system has been "modernized," "become more balanced." "Technical improvements" and "streamlining" have been implemented. The tax system will be "simplified," "more transparent." And, "If the new measures result in income reductions below the social minimum, it will be examined whether and how these can be corrected."

Translation: the Schoof cabinet, presumably at the insistence of Geert Wilders' far-right wing Party for Freedom (PVV), is going to put a stop to the Rutte government's coddling of the 30,000 residents of the Netherlands who live on these three little islands in the Caribbean. The PVV wants us to start pulling our weight. Our taxes have been increased in almost every category of tax revenue.

The broad range of responsible islanders who serve on the Central Dialogue had agreed the system of local taxation needed to be changed. But they believed the overhaul should be conducted in the Dutch way: collect the facts, anticipate the consequences, make reasoned decisions, and do as little inadvertent damage as possible. But the PVV's opportunity had finally arrived, and it would brook no delay.

The government's announcement repeatedly reassures us that under the new legislation people living on the minimum wage will not be taxed on their incomes and benefits after all. But that reversal was inevitable. It was a politically embarrassing mistake made when the new tax act was being negotiated with the Executive Council.

A complete overview of all changes can be found here <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl>

Don M. Ricks

"Diesel cars are choking us while we long for a cleaner future."

Open Letter to the Administrators of the Public Body of Bonaire, December 11, 2024

Dear Administrators,

"Worldwide, air pollutants from vehicles, including diesel cars, are responsible for an estimated 4.2 million deaths per year due to air pollution. Diesel exhaust contains harmful substances such as nitrogen oxides (NOx) and fine particles, which contribute to respiratory problems, cardiovascular diseases, and lung cancer."

While the Netherlands and other European countries are proactively working on stricter environmental regulations to limit the harmful effects of diesel vehicles, Bonaire finds itself in a troubling position. The island is increasingly becoming the final destination for Europe's discarded diesel cars. This is not only harmful to public health and the environment, but it also jeopardizes Bonaire's sustainable future.

A Threat to Health and Nature

Diesel vehicles emit significant amounts of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and fine particles, the negative effects of which are scientifically proven. These substances have serious consequences for both human health and the environment:

- For Public Health:

- Reduced lung function and increased risk of chronic diseases such as COPD and lung cancer.
- Increased risk of cardiovascular diseases and a potential link to neurological conditions such as dementia.
- In children: increased susceptibility to respiratory infections, asthma, and growth delays.

- For the Environment:

- Harmful effects on Bonaire's unique flora and fauna.
- Contamination of soil and water from leaks of oil and other fluids from abandoned vehicles.

This issue affects everyone, but the most vulnerable – children, the elderly, and people with pre-existing health conditions – bear an disproportionately large burden.

The Contrast with European Policy

In Europe, diesel vehicles manufactured before 2009 are banned from many city centers, and regulations will be further tightened starting in 2025. These cars find their way to Bonaire, where they are imported without restriction. This reflects a troubling pattern of problem export: pollution and waste are transferred to regions that often have fewer resources to manage them.

Time for Sustainable Action

Bonaire has a unique opportunity to become a leader in sustainable development, rather than a "dumping ground" for polluting vehicles. The following steps are crucial:

1. Strict Import Rules and Vehicle Inspections:

Prevent the influx of vehicles that do not meet minimum emission standards. Introduce a system for periodic inspections to ensure the technical condition of vehicles.

2. Ban on Diesel Cars Without Particulate Filters:

Ban the import of vehicles without working emission control systems, and encourage technologies that reduce pollution.

3. Investments in Sustainable Mobility:

Build infrastructure for electric vehicles, improve public transportation, and make the island more bike-friendly. This will not only improve air quality but also contribute to a healthier lifestyle for residents.

4. Awareness Campaigns:

Inform the public about the health and environmental benefits of sustainable mobility. This will create support for necessary changes.

A Forward-Looking Vision for Bonaire

Bonaire has the chance to be an example for sustainable development in the Caribbean. Through clear regulations and decisive leadership, the island can protect both its unique nature and the health of its residents.

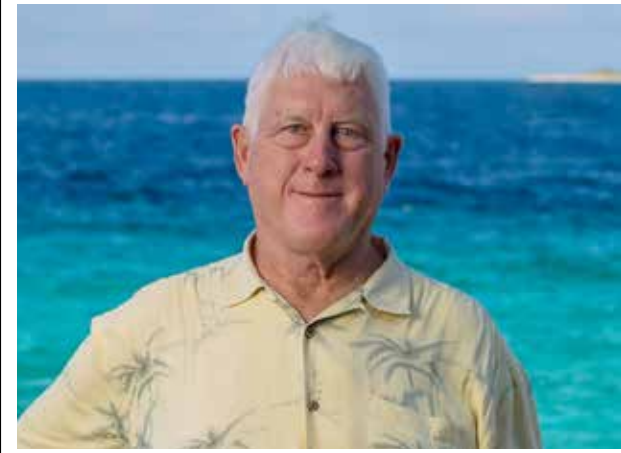
Do not let this issue persist until it becomes an irreversible crisis. Choose a clean, safe, and healthy future.

*A concerned resident and advocate
for a sustainable Bonaire.*

Henk Keers

Ask Bob

Bonaire real estate advice



Why isn't my Bonaire house selling? My agent says it is a fair price and some people have looked at it, but there have been no offers. R.T.

Dear R.T.,

We have a saying in real estate that the first reason a property doesn't sell is the price, and the second reason is also the price. However, here on Bonaire there can be some other reasons why a house takes longer to sell.

Your house's location, condition and rental status are other factors. Some locations appeal to buyers more than others, especially if they hope to use the property for vacation rentals. Cleanliness is also important. Buyers looking for their dream home are not envisioning clutter and untidiness, so it is important that the home looks as clean and spacious as possible. If your house is rented, do the tenants keep the property clean and permit showings when requested? Some tenants may not be eager to agree to showing appointments, especially if they want to keep living there.

Have you received feedback from your agent after each showing? This is a good indication of whether there is a specific concern about your house that you can fix or update. If there are no negative comments after a showing, but lookers end up buying other houses, it's probably the price. Wishing you all the best for a successful sale!

Regards, Bob Bartikoski,
Re/Max Bonaire Broker/Owner

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Statia unable to protect its heritage sites

St. Eustatius is experiencing a boom in infrastructure development projects and consequent destruction of cultural heritage sites. Damage to archeological sites and the illegal dumping of cement are of particular concern. The island has a heritage inspector who is tasked with inspecting vulnerable site in advance of construction and advising contractors how to meet their legal obligations. But unlike his counterparts in the European Netherlands, Statia's heritage inspector has no enforcement authority.

Some Statians claim that local contractors generally follow the instructions of the heritage inspector to prevent damage. Reportedly the worst offenders are companies with head offices in the Netherlands, like Statia Roads & Constructions. The Rijkswaterstaat' (the ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management) is also accused of disregarding the laws and heritage on St. Eustatius. DMR

Adrián Fernandez Ojeda and Minelly Wu Crowned Champions of 'Lovers Ice Cream' Chess Tournament



The Bonaire Youth Chess Club with their coach during the chess tournament sponsored by Lovers Ice Cream. Photo Julie Morgan



Winners girls' group with Coach Serapio Pop and Sulivienne St. Hilaire and Jarrod Dijkhuizen of Lovers Ice Cream. L-R: Lisa Plantaz second place, Minelly Wu first place; and Elisabeth Klinger third place Photo Julie Morgan

Last Saturday, the Bonaire Youth Chess Club (BJSC) hosted a commercial chess tournament sponsored by Lovers Ice Cream. The event attracted 17 participants, with the aim of promoting chess and bringing the game into local neighborhoods.

Chess is not only a fun and engaging pastime but also a valuable tool for developing critical life skills such as strategic thinking, planning, and decision-making. Studies have shown that playing chess can positively influence academic performance in areas like math, arithmetic, and language. It also teaches resilience and the ability to cope with loss.

The tournament provided an enriching experience for the young players. Notably, Emanuel Lont, a former champion with an impressive record of success in Bonaire, as well as tournaments in Curaçao and Aruba, attended the event.

The competition was divided into two groups: one comprising seven girls and another with ten boys. After a day of intense matches, Adrián Fernandez Ojeda and Minelly Wu emerged as the winners of their respective categories.

This event was another step forward in popularizing chess among the youth of Bonaire, showcasing its potential as both a recreational and educational activity.

In the girls' group, Minelly Wu dominated the competition, winning all six of her games and securing first place. Lisa Plantaz claimed second place with five wins, while Elisabeth Klinger finished third with four victories. Sara Plantaz came in fourth with three points. The top three players were awarded medals for their impressive performances.

The boys' group featured a fierce rivalry between brothers Adrián Fernandez Ojeda

and Daniel Fernandez Ojeda, both competing for the top spot. Adrián drew against Matthias Mendoza, while Daniel drew with Matthew Wu, creating a close competition throughout the tournament. The brothers also faced off against each other in a hard-fought match, which ended in a draw.

Ultimately, Adrián and Daniel were tied, each earning 8 points. This led to a decisive tiebreaker game, where Adrián emerged victorious, securing the championship title.

The final standings for the boys were as follows:

1. Adrián Fernandez Ojeda – 8 points
2. Daniel Fernandez Ojeda – 8 points
3. Matthew Wu – 7½ points
4. Jerome Lont – 5 points
5. Matthias Mendoza – 4½ points
6. Nathan Gutierrez – 4 points

The tournament showcased intense competition and excellent sportsmanship

among all participants, further highlighting the educational and developmental benefits of chess.

The top players received their well-deserved medals in recognition of their outstanding performances.

Finally, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Mr. Jarrod Dijkhuizen of Lovers Ice Cream for his invaluable support, which made it possible to organize this wonderful tournament for our young chess players.

We also wish to thank Mrs. Julie Morgan, Edson Pietres (Fittypaldi), Charles Lont, Emanuel Lont, and Kathiusca Ojeda for their presence and cooperation, which contributed greatly to the success of the event.

Serapio Pop, BJSC Leader and Coach



Winners boys' group with Coach Serapio Pop and Sulivienne St. Hilaire and Jarrod Dijkhuizen of Lovers Ice Cream. L-R: Daniel Fernandez Ojeda second place, Adrián Fernandez Ojeda first place; and Matthew Wu third place. Photo Julie Morgan

Orco Bank supports Bonaire Wolf-Pack Baseball Foundation



Judy Diaz, Country Manager at Orco Bank Bonaire with young representative of the Bonaire Wolf-Pack Baseball Foundation

Orco Bank announced its support for the Bonaire Wolf-Pack Baseball Foundation (BWBF), a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering the growth of youth baseball on the island. BWBF provides young athletes with the opportunity to practice and play baseball, and currently boasts over 110 participants between the ages of 3 and 16 years old.

Recently, four talented BWBF players were selected to participate in the prestigious All Ripken Future Games in Panama City, Florida. This prestigious event brings together top young baseball players from around the world.

“We are incredibly proud to support the Bonaire Wolf-Pack Baseball Foundation and these talented young athletes,” said Judy Diaz, Country Manager at Orco Bank Bonaire. “Investing in youth sports is an investment in the future of our community. We believe that by supporting organizations like BWBF, we are helping to develop not only skilled athletes but also valuable life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and perseverance.”

For more information about Orco Bank, please visit <https://www.orcobank.com>. Follow us for daily updates on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/OrcoBank> and <https://www.linkedin.com/company/orco-bank>.

Orco Release

“Proteha mi” awarded grant to preserve cultural heritage in Bonaire

BONAI Foundation, in collaboration with archaeologists Daudi Cijntje (Archol B.V.) and Dr. Maaïke de Waal (Leiden University and ARGEoGraph), is proud to announce that the project “Proteha mi” has been selected for funding under the Faro Initiative of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (Rijksdienst voor het cultureel erfgoed (RCE)). This project, submitted on September 6, 2024, was not only approved on December 4, 2024, but also ranked among the top three initiatives.

The “Proteha mi” project will be carried out between 2025 and 2027 with the goal of protecting Bonaire’s rich cultural heritage, emphasizing the involvement and perspectives of the local community. Last week, the project plan was presented to Deputies Angelica Cecilia and Nina den Heyer. The first workshops are scheduled for July 2025.

Workshops and Community Engagement

As part of the project, four workshops will be organized, focusing on:

- **Archaeology:** Exploration of archaeological sites, current policies, and ancestral narratives. Community participants will be encouraged to identify important locations and natural areas for further research and legal protection.
- **Genealogy:** Mapping family trees, with participants trained to later conduct their own genealogy courses. During this process, new heritage sites may be identified.

The first workshop on genealogy will be led by the Center for Family History (CBG), while the second will be conducted by a community member who attended the initial workshop.

The workshops will culminate in the selection of three locations where non-invasive archaeological field inspections will be conducted. This research will focus on preservation, ensuring sites remain intact, and will be conducted with and by the community.

From Community to Preservation

The insights gained from the workshops will be compiled into a report that will be submitted to the Public Entity Bonaire and made available to the community. The project aims to have several locations legally recognized and protected as cultural heritage.

The project will conclude with a Caribbean Ancestry Club event, where the results will be presented, artists will perform, and the community will have the opportunity to share new ideas and projects. If you would like to sign up for the workshops in advance, send a message to BONAI Foundation’s business WhatsApp at +599 7951425, including your name, organization, and email address.

BONAI Release



BONAI president Lauriane Ammerlaan presents BONAI’s project plan to Deputies Angelica Cecilia and Nina den Heyer.

New Caribbean Guilder from page 3

The Central Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten announced that the new Caribbean Guilder banknotes will begin to circulate on March 31, 2025. The currency will be pegged at \$1 US Dollar to 1.79 Caribbean Guilder. In addition, the Netherlands Antillean Guilder and the Caribbean Guilder will be exchangeable at a 1:1 ratio.

Curaçao’s Carmabi (The Caribbean Research and Management of Biodiversity) and Sint Maarten Nature Foundation worked together to promote their islands’ unique biodiversity on the currency. Both organizations received a donation



Newly designed coins.

of ANG 10.000 from the Central Bank of Curaçao and St. Maarten (CBCS) at the official introduction ceremony.

The Central Bank website <https://www.caribbean-guilder.com/banknotes> provides information on the marine life and landmarks of each note. The bank has also developed the Caribbean Guilder App. The app will offer a wealth of information, from fun facts about underwater life to practical ways to help protect our marine environment. It also explains how organizations like DCNA, CARMABI on Curaçao, and Nature Foundation St. Maarten are working to protect these species.

DCNA Release

Natural Green Is Good For Bonaire

For the last several years reforestation has been a key word in saving Bonaire's nature to keep the soil where it should be and not sliding into the ocean onto our coral reefs. Reforestation uses the plants and trees that are indigenous, sustainable and natural.

Reforestation is not just something STI-NAPA or the government is doing. Individual home and business owners are doing it too and the family-owned company Natural Green Bonaire B.V. is helping make that possible.

Owned by Theo and Patricia Weijtmans of the Netherlands, Natural Green began in May 2023. The couple originally moved to the island in 2022 with Theo taking care of their children and Patricia working for a residential rental business. When they decided to make a change, it was to something they knew. For 32 years, Theo worked in his family's fifth generation business in the Netherlands, Boomrooierij Weijtmans, a truly green sustainable and innovative tree and forest business.



Natural Green started small with Theo doing some residential and small business gardening with Patricia handling the scheduling and accounts. After just six weeks Natural Green's schedule was full for the entire year.

Patricia said, "First it was only maintenance but after a year we started doing landscaping as we learned the local growing seasons and plants."

The couple had begun working with Johan van Blerk of Tera Barra Native Garden. Having the same vision of sustainable gardening, Johan shared a lot of information about Bonaire's indigenous plants and trees and a working relationship began.

Natural Green provides each customer with a custom-made plan for service whether it is periodic, one-time maintenance or full landscaping. They listen to what the customer wants and how they want their garden or yard to look and then offer advice on what plants grow best on the island and are sustainable. Plants that hold the soil.

Natural Green

continued on page 12



Every Christmas the Iron Order Motorcycle Club dress up in Santa attire and adorn their bikes with lights and Christmas decorations. This year the group got together for a photo before they drove through the streets of Bonaire in honor of the holiday season. Photo Julie Morgan

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OLB details 2024 infrastructure spending

According to an executive council press release, the Public Entity Bonaire (OLB) spent all the money in its 2024 budget that was intended for infrastructure and green maintenance. According to recent news stories, on January 1 The Hague will reclaim \$30 million dollars in budgeted funds that the Executive has failed to spend.

The OLB press release provided the following information. Approximately \$11.4 million in contracts have been awarded for maintenance and improvement projects. Several asphalt roads have been upgraded, and major reconstruction projects have been completed, including Kaya Luna and Kaya Rubi. Major projects have begun in Tanki Matrimonio and Kaya Proud, with completion scheduled for early 2025.

Further, dams and drainage systems have been repaired at several locations, including Kaminda di Rincon and Kaya International. Initiatives have also been taken to manage green areas more efficiently, with a successful pilot in the second quarter.

The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has also announced that it will release an additional €16 million for future infrastructure projects. This will help the OLB to plan and implement structural improvements in the coming years. One project that is high on the wish list is the improvement of the road between Kralendijk and Rincon. *DMR (Bonaire.nu)*

Parliament moves to approve better health care in BES

The House of Representatives has adopted three motions for improving health care in the Caribbean Netherlands. The motions were approved by a large majority. Only the PVV voted against the measures.

One motion initiated a renovation of the Queen Beatrix Medical Center on Sint Eustatius. The move would

assure that medical care on the island meets Dutch safety and quality requirements while a new hospital is being built. Construction will not be finished for several years.

The second motion instructed the government to organize a healthcare summit that would bring together representatives of local and national healthcare authorities, experts, policy makers and civil society organizations to discuss the current healthcare problems and challenges within the BES islands and develop concrete policies and action plans aimed at ensuring consistent and high-quality healthcare services for all inhabitants.

The third motion proposed that ministries with various responsibilities jointly develop a cabinet-wide approach to improving public health in the Caribbean Netherlands. *DMR*

Immigrants come, less than half stay

Between 2011 and 2016, 8,700 people who were not born in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands came to live in the Caribbean Netherlands. More than half left within seven years.

The largest number of immigrants, 5,700 people, moved to Bonaire. Just under half of them, 2,700, came from the European Netherlands, and 1,700 came from Central and South America. A quarter of the new immigrants, 720, left after having lived on the island for one year. After seven years, a majority were gone, 61% of them from the European Netherlands.

A thousand people immigrated to St Eustatius, 59% of them from the European Netherlands. A quarter of those who left, 167, left after having lived on the island for one year, and 65% left within seven years.

The statistics from Saba are much different than those of the other two islands, presumably because of the medical school located there. A majority of the 1,700 arrivals were from North America, and more than half (969) had left after one year. *DMR*

Police warn of dog poisoning

On Sunday, December 15, the police received a report of a dog that had been poisoned and died. Further investigation revealed that unknown persons had placed dog food mixed with the illegal pesticide "Tres Pasitos" in several places in the Lagoen area.

According to a resident who lives in the Lagoen area, the poisoning has been going on for years. A total of 20 dogs are known to have died from eating poisoned food. The resident we spoke to has himself lost two dogs to poisoning, the first dog was killed in 2020 and the second in 2022.

The Caribbean Netherlands Police Force (KPCN) warns animal owners to be alert to this phenomenon. Be careful not to pick anything up or eat it from the ground. In addition, anyone with more information about the placement of poison is requested to contact the police via 715 8000 or via the anonymous tip line 9310.

DMR / BLL

Good governance to be promoted

According to news from the Netherlands, State Secretary Zsolt Szabó of Kingdom Relations and Digitalization signed memoranda of understanding for the support and professionalization program for promoting good governance on Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba. He did so together with the governors of Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba, and the professional associations of mayors, aldermen, municipal councilors, municipal secretaries and clerks.

Under the support program the professional associations can provide Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba with workshops, education, training for Island Council members, deputies, governors, clerks and employees of the registry. The Caribbean context and the needs of the islands are taken into account. *DMR*

Helmond releases action plan for landfill

On December 19th the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations issued the following press release concerning Selibon Lagun.

In recent weeks, the acting Kingdom Representative (wRv) has taken steps to address the most pressing risks

at Selibon Lagun. Before Christmas, the waste centre is going to be fitted with proper fencing. Containers with asbestos-containing waste are being repaired. The disposal of biomedical waste is also being actively pursued. From the 1st of January, offal will be processed according to the proper rules.

Cooperation

Since the 15th of November, the wRv has replaced the Executive Council of the Public Entity Bonaire (OLB) for certain tasks related to Selibon Lagun. The current measures are being taken in good cooperation with Selibon, the OLB, the residents of Lagun, the ILT, and the Ministries. There are weekly consultations with stakeholders. The ILT appointed a local project manager for the implementation of measures. The Sustainable Waste Management Bonaire Programme Manager of the OLB is involved to ensure that these short-term solutions fit with the long-term policy of the Public Entity.

Proper fencing waste centre

Before the end of the year, the entire waste centre - including the environmental street, sorting stations, cardboard storage, incinerators, waste oil station, and the collection of small chemical waste - are going to be fitted with proper fencing.

Repair of asbestos-containing containers

Currently, asbestos-containing waste is stored in 19 containers, which are unsafe due to rust and holes. Because the opening and repackaging of the waste can release asbestos fibers, the containers are being repaired. This will be completed by mid-January 2025.

Processing offal according to the correct rules

Without a working incinerator, offal can be buried, according to clear rules, wrapped in a special manner, and at the right depth at designated sites. These sites should also be accurately recorded.

Approach for safe disposal of biomedical waste

There are nine unrefrigerated shipping containers containing biomedical waste at the Selibon Lagun site. Some containers have been there for more than a year. Several are in poor condition. Safely disposing of the biomedical waste present, requires a specialist approach. Processing this will take time. Discussions about this are currently ongoing with specialists in the Netherlands.

Moreover, new biomedical waste arrives from the hospital every week. A refrigerated container is being ordered for this new waste.

Work instructions for Selibon employees

For the correct and safe handling of offal, asbestos-containing, and biomedical waste, Selibon employees are receiving new work instructions. They are going to work according to these new instructions as soon as possible.

Follow-up steps

Following the concrete steps that have been taken since mid-November, the safe disposal of biomedical waste will be a priority by early 2025. The processing of the permit application of Selibon from 2022 also contributes to the solution of the shortcomings at Selibon Lagun.

The processing of the permit application of Selibon from 2022 is also crucial in the journey towards a safer situation at Selibon Lagun.

Appeal

The OLB lodged an appeal in court against the substitution by the wRv. This case is scheduled to be heard at the Joint Court of Justice (Gemeenschappelijk Hof van Justitie) on the 10th of January 2025.

Celebrating Christmas with music from CMBB

Classical Musical Board Bonaire (CMBB) ended 2024 with two Christmas concerts that could make any Grinch or Scrooge feel inspired for the holiday. The first concert was December 14 at Corallium Hotel in Kralendijk and the second was at San Luis Beltran Church in Rincon on December 20. Each concert featured the same music and artists with a few slight differences in the program.

At Corallium, Annelies Peeman-Tieleman offered a prelude of harp music prior

to the program. The evening was a mix of classical and popular Christmas music performed in international and local styles by talented musicians living on Bonaire.

Much of the program included Claudia Cassier on piano, Alan Bowen on flute or saxophone and vocalist Bradley Howard. The children's choir Franciscus di Asis performed and the group Amancio and Friends played on many of the selections.



Claudia Cassier, on piano, Bradley Howard and the Amancio & friends Band
Photo Julie Morgan.

The crowd enjoyed renditions of Christmas favorites: *Silent Night*, *Little Drummer Boy*, *Christmas Song* and a moving *Ave Maria* from Howard and Cassier.

hem, *Nochi di Pasku*, *Paz I Felisidad* and *Happy Christmas*. The entire group of musicians joined for a closing song of *We wish you a Merry Christmas*.

Cassier and Bowen performed J.S. Bach's *Miracles* and emerging pianist Dimar Klama performed a *Prelude Opus* by Frolov and a prelude by Maurice Ravel. Young saxophonist Tiger Frans played *Christmas at Home* and *Christmas Time is Here*.

The Rincon concert had additional performances by Franklin Scherpton and Marian Passchier who invited the crowd to a sing along. The evening closed with *Hear the Angels Sing the Glory (Hark the Herald Angels Sing)*.

(The Christmas Concert was held in honor of musician Amancio Batta, November 1951 – November 2024)

Amancio & Friends along with the other musicians entertained the crowd with *Campanitas*, *Long time ago in Bethle-*

Story / photos Julie Morgan



The women who made the concert possible: L-R Claudia Cassier, Dedrie Peterson, Esther Bernabela, (chairwoman CMBB), Omaira Nicolaas and Marian Passchier
Photo Julie Morgan.

Pea soup with mint, red pepper oil and cashew nuts Chef Corjan Hoogerheide, Lekker Thuis Restaurant



Ingredients: 500 g (19.4 oz) peas (frozen) • 5 dl (2 c) vegetable stock • 150 g (3/4 c) vegetable cream • 4 sprigs of fresh mint • 3 cloves garlic, minced • 1 onion, coarsely chopped • Some oil
Garnish: 1 sprig of mint, roughly torn • Bonaire coarse sea salt • Drops of red pepper oil • 50 g (1/3 c) cashew nuts, coarsely chopped • Drops of vegetable cream

until smooth. Ladle the soup into a bowl or plate and garnish with drops of red pepper oil, cream, mint leaves, cashew nuts and some coarse Bonaire sea salt. Delicious with fresh, crispy sourdough bread.



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

Fry the onion and garlic in some oil. Add the stock and cream and bring to the boil. Add the peas and let them cook for a while. Add the mint leaves and puree

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Saying goodbye to Miles Mercera



Three of TCB team members and Miles: L-R Rolando Marin, Elesier Angel, Miles Mercera and Cristely Cranston Photo Julie Morgan

Tourism Corporation Bonaire TCB is saying goodbye to Miles Mercera as CEO at the end of 2024. Miles and his 12 member team at TCB have made great leaps in giving Bonaire tourism a different look and feel through their marketing strategies. Bonaire has appeared in more publications in his last four years as CEO than since the late 80's and 90's when every dive publication featured diving on Bonaire. The marketing campaign he introduced was not primarily aimed at diving visitors. But to all visitors who love nature, the ocean and a unique cultural environment of warm people not to be found anywhere else in the world. During the last four years, TCB was rebranded with "It's in Our Nature," the Visitor Entry Tax was implemented, visitor surveys returned, annual Tourism Summits were held, quarterly tourism reports published, a scholarship and tourism training program for Bonaire's youth developed and Regatta was reorganized – to name a few results of Miles' accomplishments as CEO.

Miles grew up on Bonaire and his dream was to work in tourism on Bonaire. He followed that dream, returned to Bonaire and is continuing to move forward with his dream.

Miles said, "Bonaire is big enough to accommodate all of our dreams. With hard work, preparation and commitment, there is no limit to what we can achieve as it's our nature."

From 1994 – 2024, Bonaire has had a total of eight directors of TCB. Each has worked hard to bring and manage tourism on the island through different strategies: Ronnie Peters, Elsmarie Beukenboom, Ronella Croes, Laura Chirino, Edsel Pieterella, Maurice Adrieans, Delno Tromp and Miles Mercera.

Thirty-year TCB employee Rolando Marin said, "They were all good and kept it [TCB] going, but with Miles it changed the gears. But the next one has big shoes to fill."

Cristely Cranston was newly graduated when she came to work at TCB under interim director Delno Tromp. She said, "I learned a lot with Delno but with Miles it has been a blessing with a lot of value. I made a friend, but he was also my boss. Our standards are high now. We won't accept less."

Elesier Angel said, "We will miss the energy he brought to the team. He gave us the opportunity to explore, give new ideas, see the value and always be positive. What he did for Bonaire, we have a stronger TCB and he demonstrated the potential. The beautiful new branding unites us not only to visitors but those on the island benefit. What he did reminds us what Bonaire stands for and keeps sending that message. Nothing is impossible for the island. The island can do better and be more sustainable. Very grateful to have had a boss like him and a friend."

At the fourth quarterly tourism update on December 12, Miles said, "One of the things we need to do is dream big... and be straight forward in the things we can do differently. Being authentic is what we do best. My stepping down gives the opportunity for new insights and a way to do and grow differently."

Elesier Angel has been appointed Interim Statutory Director of TCB, effective January 1, 2025.

Story / Photo Julie Morgan

Natural Green *continued from page 8*

Depending on where the property is, fencing is often recommended to keep out the goats that graze.

Patricia said, "We look for plants that don't need a lot of water. We try to make a mix with local plants that grow better in the garden. A lot of people aren't here on the island all the time, so personal contact and quick action are very important. If we notice a problem during our work for them, we have a fast line of communication to fix it."

Natural Green is growing and now has three employees along with Theo working six days a week.

Tera Barra is often hired for chipping the plant debris and then used for compost.

"We give everything back to nature. Debris is taken to the goat farm and donkey sanctuary. Nothing goes to the landfill," said Theo.

Natural Green sells custom products for use in the prescribed individual garden treatment plans. They also provide drip system/irrigation and gravel regarding the personalized plans. The product Cellmax is often prescribed as Bonaire soil needs treatment and fermentation. Natural Green is the only importer in the ABC / BES islands of the Netherlands made product. The owner of Cellmax is currently testing Bonaire soil and working to produce a specialized product for the best growing potential for the

TCB reports November's statistics



According to preliminary visitor statistics published by the Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB) stayover visitors in November 2024 increased by 19.5% (16,626 stayovers) compared to November 2023 (13,910 stayovers).

Visitors from the Netherlands formed the largest group, accounting for 46.4% of total arrivals with 7,708 visitors, an increase of 9.1% compared to November 2023, when 7,062 visitors arrived. U.S. visitors were the second-largest group, making up 26.2% of arrivals with 4,361 visitors, a significant rise of 60% from 2,726 visitors in November 2023. The remarkable growth in U.S. visitors can be attributed to new flight connections, such as JetBlue's expanded routes and additional flights offered by other carriers.

Cruise passenger statistics are released with a one month delay. November's numbers are not yet available.

The monthly graphs of stayover visitors published by TCB show the same demographic profiles. Bonaire is visited by more Dutch than American tourists. The Dutch stay longer on the island, and visitors from the Netherlands and the U.S. are older rather than younger.

For more detailed statistics and insights into Bonaire's tourism performance, please visit TCB's official website at www.bonaireisland.com or contact them via email at info@bonaireisland.com. *TCB Release*



soil on the ABC / BES islands.

The Weijtmans said, "Our vision is good for our employees, clients and nature of Bonaire. So, the circle come a full circle"

Theo and Patricia love Bonaire with the mix all the different people. "Patricia said, "It's good doing business here. When the work is done you can immediately relax. You don't have to go anywhere. You can just relax – it's paradise and a gift to us."

Natural Green Bonaire B.V. can be contacted at +599-790-1030 or you can visit them on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/naturalgreenbonaire).

Story / Photos Julie Morgan

Reef Glimpses - Sand Tilefish Secrets

by Dee Scarr

Last week I saw three sand tilefish on one dive, right off Playa! On another dive I saw the smallest sand tilefish I've ever seen, only about 6" (5.2 cm) long. I can't believe I forgot to mention seeing more sand tilefish in the *Reef Glimpse* about changes. We'll make up for it now.

You know the sand tilefish, right? It's a longish, slender, pearly-colored fish with a curved tail fin, continuous top (dorsal) and bottom (anal) fins, who grows to be a maximum of about 2' (5 cm) long, more often about a foot and a half (46 cm). I usually see none or one on a dive, but lately there have been more. When two are hanging around together they're likely to be a mating pair.

The life of a sand tilefish seems straightforward: it hangs around a rubble pile into which it bolts if it gets frightened. If it's not frightened, it's keeping an eye out for any small critter it can eat -- which is just about any small critter: worms, shrimp, crabs, fish, etc. At night it sleeps in the tunnel beneath its rubble pile.

The most unusual characteristic of the sand tilefish is its sinuous movement. Even when hovering near one of its two rubble pile entrances, its sinuous movements are eye-catching. When it's spawning time, the movements become even more exaggerated as the two fish swim upwards, finally releasing sperm and eggs, then darting back to the bottom.

The eggs drift around in the blue water, hatch into pre-juvenile tilefish, drift around some more, and finally

settle to a hospitable sand and rubble area when they're about 3" long. From then until they reach about 7" (17.8 cm), the young tilefish burrow around coral or rocks. At around 7" (17.8 cm) they begin their rubble pile.

Simple and straightforward, right?

Except for two things about the pre-juvenile tilefish: first, they have rows and patches of spines all over disproportionately large heads. They are so unusual in appearance that they were originally classified as a separate species, *Dikellorhynchus*. The best translation I could come up for this is "beautiful double snout".

Dikellorhynchus was first described in 1956, from specimens that all had one thing in common: every one of them was found *in the stomach of a dolphinfish* (aka dorado, mahi mahi). Later it was realized that "*Dikellorhynchus*" was actually the pre-juvenile stage of the sand tilefish, the second not-so-straightforward part of tilefish lives. Since dolphinfish feed in the blue water, it was reasoned that sand tilefish drifted in the blue water until they settled to the bottom, at about 3" (7.6 cm).

The actual scientific name of the sand tilefish is *Malacanthus plumieri*. "*Malacanthus*" translates to *mala*, cheekbone, and *canthus*, edge or corner, referring to the spine on the sand tilefish's gill flap.

Reef Glimpses: Sand Tilefish

continued on page 17



A fish who goes through the trouble of building a rubble pile, into which it then clears a burrow for its own safety, is not likely to pose for photographers! Initially, this sand tilefish took sanctuary, but eventually it peeked out, enabling Julie to make the portrait. Her calm behavior evidently reassured the fish, who finally fully emerged. The sand tilefish's unusual black and yellow tail spot is visible on the full-body image.

Photo Julie Morgan



Sand Tilefish - Photo Julie Morgan

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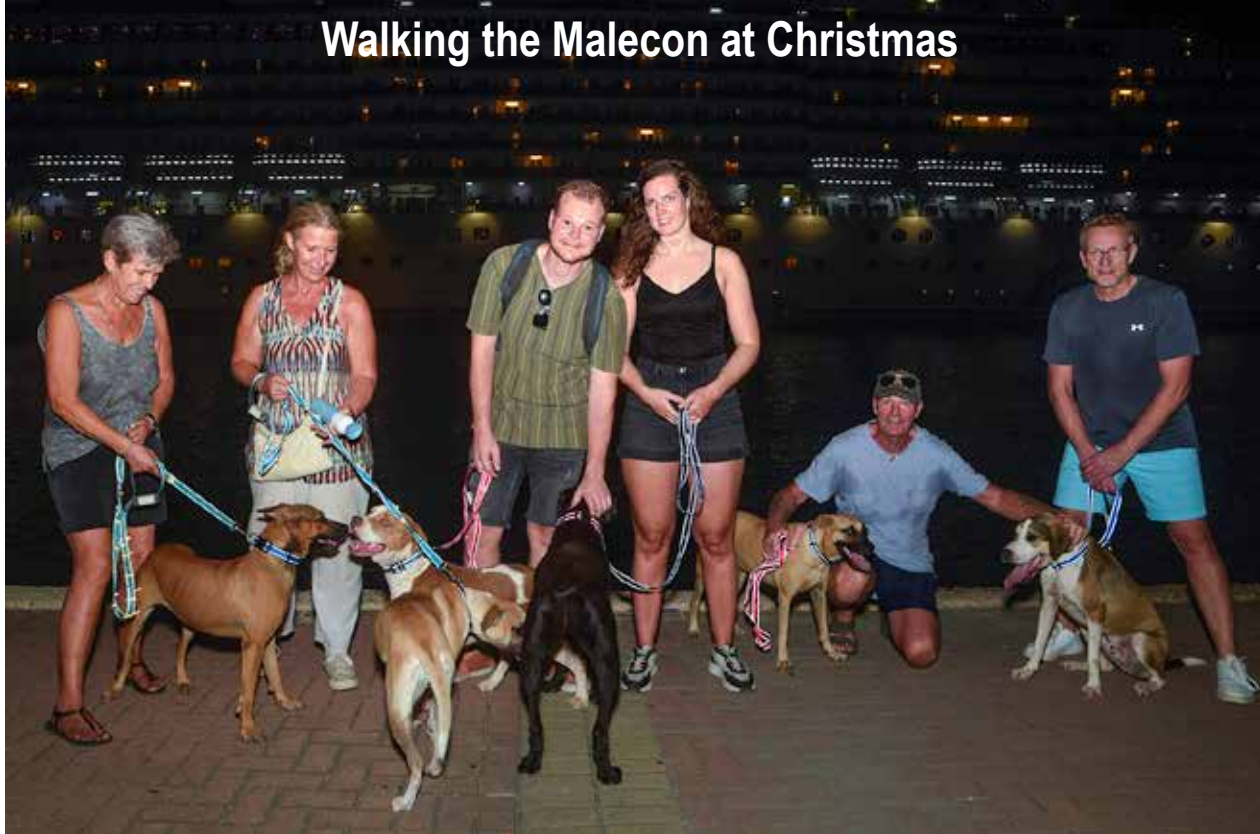
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Animal Shelter Bonaire and 75 local animal lovers gave 62 canine residents of the shelter a Christmas gift of love and time with the Christmas Light Walk along Bonaire's waterfront on December 21. Dogs of every size, color and shape were partnered with their walkers by a lighted Christmas leash for a group walk along the Malecon.



Several of the dogs were treated to pup cups (ice cream) by generous walkers.

Walking the Malecon at Christmas



While the organizers were organizing, two excited young dogs escaped briefly and really enjoyed playing tag with the humans who chased them. After their capture, both dogs and humans behaved perfectly.

The wagging tails and doggy smiles made the walk an unforgettable Christmas gift to dogs and humans alike.

Animal Shelter hopes to organize more dog walks with the public in the near future. If you are thinking of adopting, a

walk is the perfect opportunity to meet the residents.

Animal Shelter Bonaire currently has 180 sweet dogs that wish for and deserve a home of their own. Animal Shelter Bonaire is located at Kaminda Lagun 26A.

Story / photos Julie Morgan

A Garden? Just Do It! Connecting

by Angliet, Nature Lover

Finally, it's Christmas

It started almost two months ago. The decorations, lights, Christmas carols, markets, shopping and lots of delicacies in the supermarkets for the year's best cuisine and creative menus.

When I'm out on my bike I smell the BBQs, the delicious smell of the stobas, cakes and sweet bread coming out from the kitchens. It often makes me long for a taste of it as it reminds me of my childhood. The homes on my whole street were baking and cooking and we kids would hang out around every kitchen to be the first one to lick the pans and pots. And then we would rush away because we didn't want to do the dishes.

But grannies are wise and smart and some of them locked their gate. So it was a surprise when we wanted to leave the yard and find the gate locked.

My granny used this trick. The one who was first at the gate had to stay the longest in the yard and do the dishes. I knew that trick, so I would slowly move to the gate. I'd be in the middle, knowing I could always get out safely.

Yet as I get older, Christmas means connection to me. A celebration to connect with dear ones, friends, neighbors and also to connect with the world. With those who need us because



they live in terrible circumstances. They need our support, attention, care and universal love, which can be given in many different ways. They need us to stand up for them because they have no voice, no rights, no food, no care.

What can we mean to our fellow sisters/brothers; how can we give them a chance in their daily life?

Food is essential for survival. On Bonaire we can buy food and we can plant it. We shouldn't take our access to food for granted. We should know how blessed we are here to have food on the table every day. Many people on the planet are suffering from hunger but I often see people throw away good food or let vegetables die and fruit rot in the garden. That is a waste and a shame. Let us respect food we get from Mother Earth and count our blessings to have the choice of whatever food we want. What can you and I contribute to people who do not have enough food? How can we participate in sustainable urban agriculture? How can we connect?

Connection, that is my mantra. People

connect through gardening and through food.

One of my friends leads a group of women fugitives from all over the world who now live in Holland. It's her job to guide these women living in their new surroundings. She has developed many activities for these women to help them become grounded and connect.

One of the ways she helps them connect is through food and cooking. Each nationality had to prepare a popular dish of their culture with the whole group. They then eat it together as they would in their culture. The final goal was to collect all the recipes in a fantastic multicultural cooking book and it is now for sale. One of the recipes from the books is displayed here. Do you want to give it a try for Christmas? You might have some of the ingredients like yucca and plantain in your garden. It's such a delicious exotic rice meal and it could be made for Christmas or New Year's Eve.

Yes, it's Christmas. Let's celebrate worldwide the Christmas message which is peace, love and connection. Enjoy the

last days of this year happily with your dear ones and friends.

Merry Christmas. Cheer on 2025.

Recipe from Burundi: Pirao Rice

Ingredients rice: 2 cups basmati rice • 2 cups beef pieces • 2 cups cassava (yuka) diced • 4 bay leaves • 1 tbsp garam masala • salt to taste • 2 cups onion chopped • 1 cup celery • 1 cup frozen peas • 1/3+ cup grated ginger • cube beef stock • 1 tsp pulao biryani (garlic/ginger) • 1/3 cup sunflower oil • 6 garlic cloves finely chopped • 1/2 cups carrots diced • 3 plantains

Ingredients vegetable mix: 2 cups mashed cassava leaves • 1 eggplant peeled and diced • 1/3 cup palm oil • 1 leek sliced in rings • 1 tbsp seasoning mix complete (Badia)

Preparation Rice Pirao: Boil 2 cups of water. Add ginger, meat, bay leaves, salt, and the stock cube. Simmer for 10 minutes. Pour the stock through the sieve and keep it aside. Set aside the meat. Discard the bay leaf and ginger. Heat 100 ml sunflower oil in a large frying pan. Fry the meat, onions and garlic for 5 minutes on medium heat. Add the garam masala and pulao biryani (garlic/ginger). Fry for another 1 to 2 minutes.

Wash rice until the water is clear. Add rice, peas and carrots to meat and mix well. Then add the cassava, the broth and onion. Stir. Dilute the stock with water to make 4 cups. Place the lid on the pan with aluminum foil around it if necessary and let the whole stew gently for half an hour. Serve the dish with celery sprigs.

Preparation vegetable mix: All ingredients go together in the medium pan. Cook gently for 60 minutes. Serve this vegetable mix separately with the rice. Cut 3 plantains into 1 cm diagonal slices and fry in sunflower oil. The fried plantain slices are presented nicely on a platter.



Angliet grew up in the Surinam jungle, moved to the Netherlands, trained as a teacher, then in Alternative Healing. Everywhere she has lived, she has planted a garden and grown her own food.

Climate change strategies outlined at townhall meeting



Chairman Reynolds 'Nolly' Oleana addresses the crowd Photo Julie Morgan

In an island wide meeting on Climate Change December 18th, Bonaireans were invited to hear about the work of the Bonaire Climate Table. Chairman Reynolds 'Nolly' Oleana, and commissioner Angelica Cicilia highlighted the project's plans for the crowd.

Last August the Bonaire Climate Table Project began with the intention of creating a climate plan and strategy for Bonaire. The strategy is to make Bonaire climate resilient by implementing measures that both reduce the effects of the changes and adjust to their consequences.

In addressing the crowd, Commissioner Angelica Cicilia said, "Climate change is something we can no longer ignore. We can try to ignore it, but it will not disappear."

Chairman Reynolds 'Nolly' Oleana is working to create social acceptance by communicating to Islanders in a way that is both transparent and easily understood.

The project will deal with issues that are important for all Bonaire: water, agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, nature and the environment, people, culture, recreating energy, mobility, living and working. Representatives of the Public Entity of Bonaire, the Dutch Government and local agencies will work together to build the plan.

Cicilia said, "The reality of today is that the challenges are already very big. Think of our waste problems, our drainage problems... Think of the heat that makes us increasingly dependent on our air conditioners. But also think about

our exorbitant consumption behavior. Everything is linked. And partly due to our behavior, the health of our coral is deteriorating. As a result, our tourism is also under pressure. The quality of our soil conditions is deteriorating. Our soil can hardly absorb or store water... we are increasingly suffering from flooded roads and floods. We can no longer pretend that nothing is wrong. This is a call to all Bonaireans and everyone who loves Bonaire, Help Bonaire!"

February 2025 - A kickoff conference
March 2025 to May 2025 - Climate Table Talks

June/July 2025 - Feedback Session
September 2025 - Townhall meeting
First Quarter 2026 - Climate Plan

Story / Photos Julie Morgan



Bonaire's sky park what was the Christmas Star?

thanks to Royal Museums Greenwich See full article at: <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/what-was-christmas-star>

Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him. Matthew 2:1-2

The Royal Museums Greenwich outlines five answers for the question: Is there an astronomical basis for the Star of Bethlehem?

Explanation 1: the Christmas star was a nova or supernova explosion. This idea was hinted at by 17th century astronomer, Johannes Kepler, and has had many supporters since. However, there is no Western record of such an event. Chinese records only have one possible mention

of a nova or supernova over the potential time for Jesus's birth. There is also no known supernova remnant, which we would expect to find if there had been a supernova at this time.

Explanation 2: the Christmas star was a comet. This explanation dates back to early Christian theologian Origen in AD 248. Again, Chinese records give no good support apart from the potential 5 BC nova/comet. One advantage of the comet theory is that comets move across the sky which fits the interpretation of the Gospel that the star 'moved' as it directed the Magi. Most classical depictions of the nativity show the 'star' as a comet.

Explanation 3: the Christmas star was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. Kepler is also associated with the idea that it was the close conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn that created the 'star'. In fact, three conjunctions took place where the two planets were close to one another in the sky, but they weren't close enough that they'd appear as one object.

Explanation 4: the Christmas star was a stationary point of Jupiter. Jupiter, in its apparent path across the sky, is generally seen to move from east to west across the starry background.

Due to the relative movements of the Earth and the planets, this motion ap-

pears to slow and then stop as the planet reaches what is called a 'stationary point'. The planet then appears to move from east to west for some days before again stopping and resuming its west to east movement.

At the possible time of the birth of Christ in the Bible, one of the stationary points could have occurred when Jupiter was directly overhead at Bethlehem at the same time of night for several nights.

Explanation 5: the Christmas star was a conjunction of Jupiter, Regulus and Venus. One other possibility includes a set of conjunctions of the planets Jupiter and Venus, and the bright star Regulus.

Creating Optimal Health

by Irene da Cunda Costa

Social network and health

In general, what comes first to mind when we talk about healthy habits to improve our quality of life and longevity are things like sleeping well, exercising regularly, a healthy diet avoiding snacks, maintaining a moderate weight, avoiding cigarette smoking and heavy drinking. Recently, the importance of friendship, close relationships and social networks has come into focus as a main factor in maintaining and improving overall health.

In previous issues I shared information about the Blue Zones which are regions where people tend to live significantly longer and healthier. These five regions are, Ikaria in Greece, Okinawa in Japan, Sardinia in Italy, Nicoya in Costa Rica and Loma Linda in California. Although the lifestyle and diet in these five regions are very different, they share some commonalities. Some of them have to do

with social connectivity. They all have strong family ties and actively participate in their community and social network which provides emotional support reducing feelings of loneliness. The areas are faith-based communities, performing services and activities that offer a sense of belonging. Spending time with loved ones is a priority and they often live in multi-generational households, fostering deep connections.

From an evolutionary perspective, as early humans adapted to living in bigger groups, everything from food supply to protection from predators would have depended on their relationships. Loneliness for a social mammal would mean vulnerability to predators and starvation. As a result, the brain and body may have evolved to interpret social isolation as a serious threat. This could be the reason we feel such anguish when we are lonely and disconnected setting off a cascade of physiological reactions. If we spend decades in loneliness and isolation, these changes can drastically raise the risk of illness and early death.

Many studies support that when people enjoy connection and social support,

their bodies will suppress processes such as inflammation. As a result, they will have a much better baseline of health that renders them less susceptible to disease. Your social network may influence your health as much as your exercise routine.

Strong emotional connection can be found in friends and family. True relationships, whether familiar ties or friendship are built on trust, authenticity, shared experiences, respect, loyalty, empathy and mutual support. This kind of connection reduces stress by offering emotional support when needed. Engaging in conversations and games improves cognitive function and has physical benefits as good social network correlates with lower cardiac risks.

But also, a broader social network helps improve quality of life. The relationship between social and community ties and mortality was assessed using the 1965 Human Population Laboratory survey of a random sample of 6,928 adults in Alameda County, California and a subsequent nine-year mortality follow-up. The findings show that people who lacked social and community ties were more likely to die in the follow-up period than those

with more extensive contacts.

If you need to build up social network first you must commit time and purpose so as to show up regularly for interactions like clubs or community groups, prioritize quality over quantity, focusing on nurturing deep meaningful connections and be an active listener. When you approach people in order to foster deeper connections, be open minded, practice active listening by focusing on what the other person is sharing and asking questions when appropriate, showing honest interest, empathy and compassion.

Remember: if we want to live a long and healthy life, it is good to start prioritizing the people around us.

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.



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. Sobremesa is closed for the holidays - reopens Jan 7, 2 p.m. View or buy art from Bonaire's local artists. Opening hours are Tue-Fri 2 - 5 p.m. and Sat 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Abraham Boulevard 10.

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

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

Bonaire by Night Shopping night every month


Divers Drink & Dance Yhanni's Arepas. Wednesdays 5 p.m.

Diver Safety. 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 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. Kaminda Sorobon, Blue Building: Tues. & Thurs 6-8 p.m. Sat. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. \$1 per hour. Ask for Henk or Richard. Sports Hall Jorge Nicolaas, Kaya Amsterdam: Sun. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. \$2 per hour. Ask for Henk or Danny. **Beginners:** Sports Hall Jorge Nicolaas, Kaya Amsterdam: Sun. 9 - 10 a.m.. \$2 per hour. Ask for Esther. **Coming soon:** Indoor hall at Jong Bonaire every Wed. and Fri. from 5:30 to 9 p.m. - t recommended for beginners but all welcome to play.

Tennis In January and February adults will play a doubles tennis competition on Eddie's courts. Everyone (18+) is welcome to join. Register with the association: email info@bonairetennisassociation.com or app with 599 782 4569.

 **Echo Conservation Tours** - Weekdays at 8 a.m. or 5 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. To reserve email at info@echobonaire.org

 **Manta Monday at 7:30 p.m.** Nicole Pelletier of the Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation. Email: nicole.pelletier@mantatrust.org ; [Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation facebook](#)..

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

 **Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB).** Free presentations at Yellow Submarine, every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month, 8 p.m. See facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/bonaireturtles/>

2024 Cruise Ship Schedule			
DATE	TIME	CRUISE SHIP	PIER
Tues. December 24	1400-2100	ROTTERDAM 2668 guests	South
Wed. December 25	0730-2200	CARNIVAL HORIZON 4683 guests	South
Thurs. December 26	0700-1730	CELEBRITY REFLECTION 3064 guests	South
Sat. December 28	0800-1700	CELEBRITY ECLIPSE 3013 guests	South
Sun. December 29	0600-1330	SEVEN SEAS NAVIGATOR 530 guests	North
Mon. December 30	0630-1800	BRITANNIA 3674 guests	South
	0730-2359	SEABOURN OVATION 638 guests	North
Tues. December 31	1400-2200	CARNIVAL VISTA 4683 guests	South

2025 Cruise Ship Schedule			
Wed. January 1	0700-1800	AIDAMAR 2686 guests	NorthS
Thurs. January 2	0600-2000	MARELLA DISCOVERY 2074 guests	North
	1000-2200	EXPLORA I 922 guests	South
Fri. January 3	0700-1300	MARELLA DISCOVERY 2074 guests	North
Sat. January 4	0700-1500	EURODAM 2731 guests	North
Sun. January 5	0600-1800	CELEBRITY ECLIPSE 3013 guests	South
Mon. January 6	0800-1800	AIDAPERLA 3286 guests	South
Tues. January 7	0600-1800	CELEBRITY REFLECTION 3046 guests	South
Wed. January 8	0830-2359	CARNIVAL HORIZON 4683 guests	South
Fri. January 10	7300-2200	AMADEA 604 guests	North

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/terramarmuseumbonaire/>

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

Taxi Service Online: Bonaire-taxi.com is available for bookings. Tourists can easily reserve their taxi via the website or the dedicated app. Phone/whatsapp: +599 786 1786 Website: www.bonaire-taxi.com

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

Friday, Dec. 6 to Friday, Feb. 28	Artistic Journey Exhibit - Delno Tromp & Gabrielle Wilson Terramar Museum, Kaya Isla Riba 3, Kralendijk
Wed. Dec. 25	Christmas Day. A legal holiday. Much closes including Washington Slagbaai National Park and supermarkets. Because a cruise ship is in port, the OLB has ruled that shops in the city center and at Wilhelminapark focused on the sale of tourist articles may be open on Christmas Day (between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.)
Thursday, Dec. 26	Boxing Day. A legal holiday. Much closes.
Thursday, Dec. 28	Nos Zjilea Cultural Event 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei, Rincon. Enjoy the music, dancing, crafts, amazing food and drink.
Tuesday, Dec. 31	Oliebollen FREE bike ride Start 3:30 p.m. Fun Ride 25k (15.5 mi). Elite Challenge 40k (24.85 mi) (see page 17) New Year's Eve Fireworks. The Island celebrates with fireworks. Some hotels throw special parties.

2025

Tuesday, Jan. 28	FREE REEF Fish ID course 7 p.m. TransWorld Radio. Learn to identify local fish species. Explore what it means to be a citizen scientist. Gather with fellow ocean lovers! All are welcome!
Saturday, Jan. 25	Annual Parrot (Lora) Roost Count. 6 to 8 a.m. The first roost count of 2025. Volunteers are essential to help count Bonaire's parrots. Echo holds a training session in advance to explain the count and to determine who will go to which site during the official count. Contact Echo at info@echobonaire.org .
Sunday, Feb. 2	Ride, Walk/Run, or Swim for Roses. Fundraiser starts at Isidel Beach Park 6:30 a.m. Tickets are available online and at Bon Bida, Freewieler and Rincon gas station. For information, visit www.ridefortheroses.org .

You can help keep Bonaire clean

Saturdays	One Hour Cleanup Power. Weekly coastal clean up every Sat., 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Location on FB: https://www.facebook.com/OneHourCleanupPower/
Friday, Dec. 27	Christmas Cleanup. End of day cleanup 5 - sunset. Followed by a party at Vrijmibo Beach
Sunday, Jan. 12	Clean Coast Bonaire. 4-6 p.m. Boka Onima. Donate your time. Work as a citizen scientist to collect marine litter & data. . https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=clean%20coast%20bonaire

Church Services

Roman Catholic Churches Bonaire

- **Parish La Birgen di Coromoto (ANTRIOL):** Holy Masses: Mon-6:30 a.m.; Tues & Thur -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,Thur, 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

It's time for the Oliebollen Ride



End the year with a final free bike ride full of fun for everyone topped off with yummy oliebollen and a toast to 2024. The ride is on December 31 and begins sharply at 3:30 so arrive early to register. Riders can choose between the Fun Ride for all ages and types of bikes with the 25k (15.5 mi) course. The Elite Challenge is 40k (24.85 mi) for the more serious cyclists. The idea is to have fun and end the year doing what you love – cycling.

For more information contact De Freewieler.

La Birgen di Coromoto
Catholic Christmas Services
 December 24 - Christmas Eve
 English mass 8 p.m.
 Papiamentu mass 10 p.m.
 December 25 - Christmas Day
 Papiamentu mass 10 a.m.
 December 26 - 2nd Christmas
 Papiamentu mass 9 a.m.
 December 31 - New Year's Eve
 Papiamentu mass 7 p.m.
 January 1 - New Year's Day
 Papiamentu mass 10 a.m.
 Kaya Corona 126 - Antriol

Reef Glimpses: Sand Tilefish continued from page 13

“Plumieri” is the same species name as our spotted scorpionfish, *Scorpaena plumieri*. Wikipedia told me it's also the species name of a goby, and was named in honor of Charles Plumier, a French botanist who studied Caribbean island plants in the late 1600's. It's understandable that the frangipani, officially called Plumeria, was named after Plumier, but I've found no clue whatsoever as to why a *plant* specialist would have at least three *fish* named in his honor. So, that's one mystery involving sand tilefish.

My favorite story involving sand tilefish also involved pearly razorfish. The pearlies are the biggest of the razorfish, and they live in areas of sand and rubble, exactly the same kind of habitat sand tilefish prefer. A scientist, studying a colony of pearlies in the same area as a sand tilefish rubble mound, apparently didn't notice the tilefish and concluded that pearly razorfish had created the rubble mound. The scientist published his

“findings,” an inaccuracy which followed razorfish research for years.

What other secrets are sand tilefish keeping?

Dee Scarr has been nurturing marine life on Bonaire since 1981.



When divers expressed confusion about stony corals and how to protect them, Scarr began the Action in Behalf of Coral (ABC) Project, producing -- with the support of Touch the Sea divers and biological illustrator Gary Carlson -- and distributing the Living with a Razor-Sharp Skeleton sticker. (See our online archive for: The Bonaire Reporter, Issue 21, Oct. 30 – Nov. 13, 2024)

Bonaire's players competed in 2024 Tennis Championships

The Bonaire Tennis Championship 2024 took place December 7-8. Matches in singles and doubles were played all weekend on the courts of Eddie's in Hato and on the tennis courts of Sabadeco. Ladies and gentlemen played against each other in the same schedules.

In the singles, Win Chung Xuan eventually won in the final against Daniel Godefroid. The doubles final was very exciting and Jevon May and Win Chung Xuan won against Robert Martis and Peter Drijver.

The tennis association is happy to have champions again this year and is full of plans for the future.

In the months of January and February 2025, adults will play a doubles tennis competition on the courts of Eddie's. Everyone (18+) is welcome to join.

Register with the association: email info@bonairetennisassociation.com or app with 599 782 4569.

Paul Ruijs, Bonaire Tennis Association



Tennis player, Casius, goes for the ball in the tennis association's 2024 championships. Photo via tennis association

End of year news from Rotary Club Bonaire

140 compete in Rotarally 2024

The Rotarally is a tradition on Bonaire. For more than 20 years the Rotary Club Bonaire has organized the car rally to raise funds for social causes.



Rotarally winners unwind at Te Amo Photo Rotary Club

This year on Sunday, December 8th 140 participants in 49 cars drove up to the start at sports complex Jorge Nicolaas determined to solve the challenging 4-stage puzzle ride. None of the legs were easy, but most teams were back at Te Amo around three o'clock, where the bar and kitchen were now open.

“It was great fun to participate again!” was the reaction of many participants. “Next year again!” And: “After all these years on the island, the rally takes me to places I've never been before.”

Prizes were awarded to the winning teams. Overall winner: team Larry's Angels. Track 1: 1st prize: team Luka; 2nd prize: team Three Generations; 3rd prize: team Harbourtown. Tracks 2-4: 1st prize: team Larry's Angels; 2nd prize: team Three Generations; 3rd prize: team Harbourtown. Rotary Release

Jan Okhuijsen receives prestigious Paul Harris Award



Jan Okhuijsen

Amid loud applause at the Rotary Club's Christmas dinner, Rotary treasurer Simone van Hengstum surprised Jan Okhuijsen with a Paul Harris Award, one of the highest honours within Rotary International.

Rotary Secretary Wietze Koopman praised Okhuijsen's dedication, achievements and commitment:

“Our Rotary Club has existed for 43 years, and in those years most members have been chairman at least once. But twice as president, there were only three ... because that position demands a lot from you. But Jan, was willing, immediately following his second year as chairman, to do it for the third time this year... Because Jan feels responsible. It is often stressful, sleepless nights... You are a Rotaryman at heart.” Rotary Release

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Dear Friends,
I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I look forward to seeing or speaking to you in 2025!
All the best,
Jean & Roxie 🐾🐾



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Animal Shelter News

Fireworks season is coming - Help your pets stay calm

While fireworks may be fun for us, they can be terrifying for our pets. Now is the time to prepare your furry friends for this stressful season with **Florence Ditlow's Pet Stress Remedy**.

Using it is easy: just add a few drops to your pet's water bowl or apply a few drops to one paw daily. The longer you use it, the more effective it will be! This all-natural remedy has been helping pets on Bonaire stay calm for 18 years and is lovingly made by Florence, a retired nurse.

Where to get it?

- Animal Shelter Bonaire
- Pakus di Pruga
- DA
- Just 4 Pets
- Shelter booth at the cruise market on cruise ship days

All proceeds from Pet Stress Remedy go to Animal Shelter Bonaire to help care for the animals!

Additional tips for fireworks season

- Microchip your pets or check that their chip information is up-to-date with

your vet and the Shelter. This is crucial if they get scared and run away.

- For pets with extreme anxiety, consult your veterinarian about prescription tranquilizers. Never give your pet medication that hasn't been prescribed, as it could be harmful or even fatal.

Start preparing today to keep your pet calm, safe, and stress-free this fireworks season!

Marissa Lamers

Pets of the Week



Turkey

Hi, I'm Turkey!

I'm a sweet 4-month-old girl pup, and I've only been at the Shelter for a little while, but I'm already the favorite of everyone here.

I'm still waiting for my forever home, but I know it won't be long because, well... just look at me, I'm a real cutie!

I want to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season, and my wish is simple: a loving home where I can be happy and loved.

Could that be with you?

Photo/story: Marissa Lamers

Hello.

This is Champi the cat. This sweet little guy is almost three years old. He was brought to the shelter after his owners separated. And since then he has been looking for a new home filled with love and care. Champi is very affectionate and loves attention. He has a curious and friendly personality.

That makes him the perfect companion for anyone looking for a cuddle buddy.

Champi also has two beautifully different eye colors.

Start new year with champagne and Champi at your side!

Photo/story: Bo Attevelt



Champi

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

Make Bonaire Accessible

by Ria Evers-Dokter

Almost 2025

Everybody knows it is coming; Christmas and the end of the year 2024. People suddenly realize it is only a few more days until the year is over.

I always love the last weeks of the year. It is getting a little cooler and darker much earlier. And every week there are more streets decorated with the prettiest lights twinkling in gardens and windows.

All shops offer interesting presents and people fill the aisles to buy gifts, decorations and beautiful outfits. It is as they say, Christmas is really in the air.

To make a choice for a Christmas dinner is really hard, because there is so much to offer. Invitations for parties

and special end-of-year-dinners fill the phones.

Special parties and sing-a-longs are organized for those in special homes for the elderly. Every supermarket has tables where one can deposit food for the Food Banks.

The things I like most are the music and special songs. And because not everyone can go out to concerts, the music is brought to the public where they live and spend their days.

I love most the aurora-masses at five o'clock in the morning. I cannot go by myself, but I sit out on my porch and when the wind is right and it is very quiet, I can hear the music and the singing.

I love to sit on that porch a lot... evaluating the year that went by so fast.

I love the activities that Hofi Kultural offers and I took part in them whenever I

could. It means so much to the elderly to be able to get together, sing, play music and have a good time together. Hofi Kultural also has an active "buddy-plan." I am very blessed with my buddy and with the organization. I am happy that they are in my life. Through my buddy I meet all different kinds of people and befriend them.

Every Wednesday I participate in the gatherings for the elderly that Aksezo organizes. It is so much fun with great activities.

I am very thankful for all the help I get from the Zorg & Welzijn Groep. They take me to every doctor/hospital visit, take me shopping for groceries, organize my medication and provide my "Meals on Wheels." I have come to depend on them for a big part of my life and I am very happy this kind of care is available for all elderly on Bonaire.

And then there is MiVaBo, a founda-

tion that advocates for those with disabilities and fights for accessibility. I am proud to be a co-board member and proud of everything MiVaBo achieves.

And I am very happy and pleased that there are a lot of people who help me in every way they can to make my life easier. Without them life would be so much harder.

To all those people in my life I want to wish Happy Holidays and an amazing New Year in 2025.

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.



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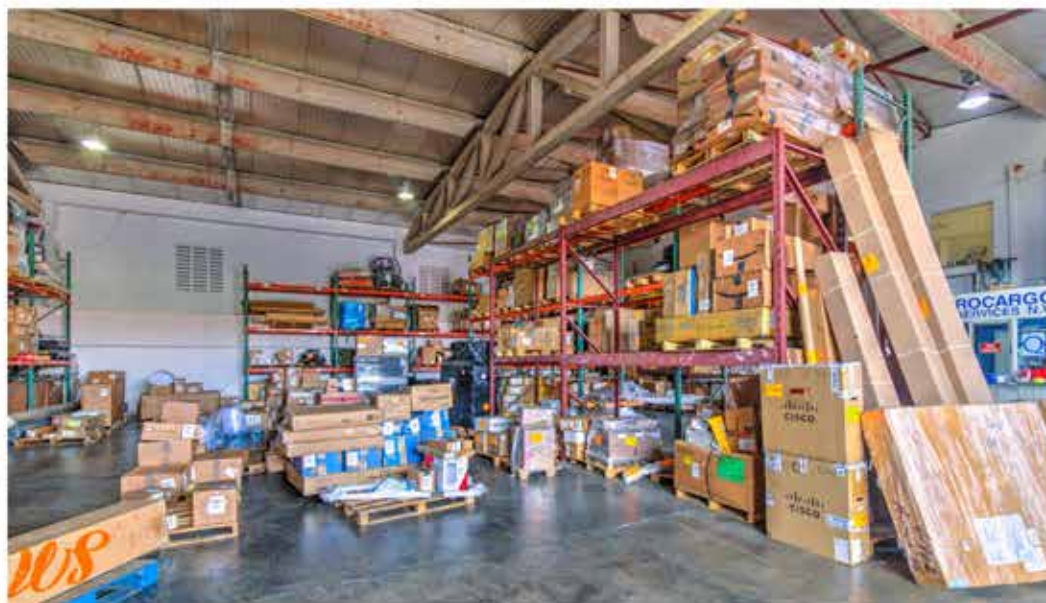


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