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#1030 --- Monday, 2/1/2016 -- News From St. Maarten / St. Martin



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St. Maarten and St. Martin "SXM" Weekly News

*St. Maarten & St. Martin's Most Relied-Upon Source
for Tourist-Oriented News & Information*

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Important Note:

You are receiving St. Maarten and St. Martin Weekly News because you subscribed to it and/or are a JMB Website Supporters member. Unsubscribe info is at

the end of this newsletter. Stay with us for all the latest tourist-oriented news from St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM all year long. We now have over 260,000 readers around the world...

Get Important SXM News as it Happens & Lots of Pictures Too from our Facebook and Twitter Pages:



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Download PDFs of Recent Editions ---- Attention iPad, iPhone, Note, and Android Users

This narrow format is easily readable on all mobile devices. Scroll down for this week's news.

You can also download PDFs of recent editions here:

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

On that page, the link beginning with the highest number is the most recent edition.

Get Your Own Free Weekly Copy of SXM Weekly News:

<http://www.everythingsxm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi?>

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TOP STORIES IN THIS ISSUE

Scroll Down for Full Table of Contents; this edition features many new stories about your favorite island:

This is Jeff Berger's / JMB Communications' *St. Maarten and St. Martin (SXM) Weekly News*, published every Monday (Tuesdays during some holiday weeks).

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- *Timesharing's Decline in SXM Has Long-Lasting Effects on Island's Economy***
- *... As Bad Decisions Concerning Cruise Ship Passengers Come Home to Roost***
- *Three Boats Catch Fire in Lagoon; Extensive Damage But No Serious Injuries***
- *Pregnant Women Cautioned About Zika Virus***
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- *Restaurant of the Week: Canoa***
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[24](#) news stories this week

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Timeshare Rentals and Sales of the Week

Each week JMB randomly picks timeshare condominiums for rent and for sale in SXM from the huge selection at http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml and features them here.

To rent out or sell timeshares you own in SXM or anywhere else, worldwide, at no charge, join JMB Website Supporters. Visit http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml for info. Membership now delivers a growing list of 237+ St. Maarten and St. Martin-focused travel benefits, and your subscription also helps keep these weekly SXM newsletters coming.

SXM Timeshare Rentals of The Week:

Not in archives.

SXM Timeshare Sales of The Week:

Not in archives.

Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:

See them all at http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml

St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties, and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW): [Click to access our recommended real estate agents](#)

This Week's Stories

Stories are numbered; scroll down for stories of interest. This week's Table of Contents follows these links:

"Like" Our "Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin" Facebook Site:



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/6297726366/>

"Like" Our Facebook SXM Timesharing Group People for Timeshare Owner Consumer Protection in St. Maarten

http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_205834172765083

Search the **SXM Weekly News** Archives:

Current Archives (Since 4/2014) in PDF Format (New):

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

Archives prior to April 12 2014 (old format):

<http://everythingxsm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi?flavor=archive:list=sxmweeklynews>

Check Out Our Linked-In "St. Maarten and St. Martin Travelers" Group (Free; Timeshare Focus):

www.linkedin.com

Get a growing list of 210+ Money-Saving SXM-focused travel discount benefits through JMB Website Supporters:

http://www.everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

Section One: Getting There: Airlines, Airports, Cruises, & Weather [Go To This Section](#)

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2. How To Deal With Flight Delays / Cancellations
3. Where to Find Current Weather Observations & Forecasts

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St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties, and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW): [Click to access our recommended real estate agents](#)

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- A. Where to Get Member Info: www.everythingsxm.com/secret
- B. Password Recovery Info: Your username is the email address you have registered with JMB Website Supporters. If you forget your password, click "forgot password" in the orange login box near the masthead at www.everythingsxm.com.
- C. How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads: Links are on the Secret Website (see a, above.)

Section Five: Where To Find Background Information for Travelers (**For New Readers**)
(Revised 12/31/14)

How To Get a GROWING LIST of 230+ Money-Saving St. Maarten- and St. Martin-Focused Travel Benefits

Visit <http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret> , the *secret* site for JMB Website Supporters members only, for low fares to SXM from cities across the USA, Canada, and Western Europe, plus a total of a growing list of 200+ additional major travel benefits, including reduced-cost access to

Not a member yet? See http://everythingxm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml . Cost: \$59 for one year, or \$99 total for five full years. Other durations available. Join us today...

Now a growing list of 200+ benefits... and more coming soon.

Contact Us:

[Revised 2/24/15]

All member discounts and benefits are explained in detail on the members-only *secret* website, <http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret> . If you're a JMB Website Supporters member and have a question not answered there, please contact us at support@jmbcommunications.com

NON-members who wish to contact us should write to jmbweb@jmbcommunications.com with the subject *Free Newsletter Recipient,* but due to the huge volume of mail received, we may not be able to respond individually.

Our main St. Maarten / St. Martin website: www.everythingsxm.com .

All JMB Newsletters Read *From JMB*

This newsletter and mail from JMB Website Supporters to members (including *Low Airfare Bulletins*) read *From JMB* in the subject area so you won't misinterpret them as spam.

THIS WEEK'S STORIES:

Stories are numbered; scroll down for stories of interest.

SECTION 1: Getting There: Airlines, Airports, Cruises, & Weather

1. Blizzard Strands Thousands Going To/From the East Coast

For many, getting stuck in St. Maarten due to bad weather at home isn't fun. Vacation days are used; kids miss school; appointments are missed; unbudgeted money gets spent. But back home, for folks waiting to fly to SXM, it can be worse: days of delays getting flights; time wasted; vacation days lost; unlimited frustration; and in many cases, timeshare days down the drain.

It happened to thousands last week in the northeast and elsewhere. Never fun. See next story.

2. How To Deal With Flight Delays / Cancellations

If you took the unusual step of buying from a travel agent, go there and complete your changes. If you bought online, try making changes there. If you bought from your airline by phone, chances are the phones will be jammed. Trying to call at odd hours may help except in the most severe situations, like a Hurricane Sandy-type event, when the back-in-service dates aren't quickly predictable.

Grin and bear it; Mother Nature is in charge, as always.

3. Where to Find Current Weather Observations & Forecasts

Go to www.everythingsxm.com and you'll find the forecast; click for details. You can also click "Weather" on our site for lots of satellite images and radar loops.

If you wonder what the weather is like at Orient Beach, go to cluborient.com and look at the web cam.... On some days you may just see Jeff.

SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares

4. Timesharing's Decline in SXM Has Long-Lasting Effects on Island's

Economy...

Dutch St. Maarten has no timeshare owner consumer protection laws. So when timeshare resorts "screw" timeshare owners (to use a word said on-air by the island's most popular TV talk show host, Oral Gibbes), not only does the government usually fail to act, but also the timeshare developer receives no real punishment.

It has happened at many resorts. The most egregious examples are Pelican Resort (when it went bankrupt); Caravanserai Resort (when it was bought at bankruptcy auction and Ray Sidhom, the new owner, emailed timeshare owners telling them that their contracts were null, void, and worthless; Sapphire Resort, where timeshare owners allege that developers Jean and Philippe Verdier do not maintain the resort properly; Atrium Resort, where new owners levied huge fees after taking over; Simpson Bay Resort, where thousands of timeshare owners left when the resort levied huge Supplemental Maintenance Fees to pay for renovations that its owner, Royal Resorts, decided to do at timeshare owners' expense; and Royal Palm Resort, where new owner Diamond Resorts, not exactly the most revered of timeshare operators (Google them), raised Annual Maintenance Fees to absurd levels allegedly not allowed in timeshare owners' contracts.

In untold thousands of cases, timeshare owners have sold their weeks for pennies on the dollar -- literally. Consequently, many thousands of those "distressed" weeks appear to have been bought by people who previously couldn't afford timeshares at all. And many of those people bring food with them from home, cook in their rooms, seldom if ever eat out, and buy little if anything on the island.

You see evidence of this everywhere.

Most restaurateurs we've talked to -- and most Front Street merchants -- tell us business this year is down 20-25% from 2014. Why? We are totally convinced it can be traced in part back to the total failure of the Dutch Side government to enact meaningful timeshare owner consumer protection legislation, which has caused many tens of thousands of timeshare owners to walk away from their timeshare weeks -- and from the island itself.

"You shouldn't punish merchants as well," some merchants have asserted. But fleeing timeshare owners said, "You did nothing to help us." The island appears to have mortally wounded the goose that lays the golden egg.

5. ... As Bad Decisions Concentrating on Cruise Ship Passengers Come Home to Roost

Before the Great Recession, cruise lines were doing great and ordered lots of new ships. During the Great Recession, cruise lines were desperate to put warm bodies on ships and offered record low fares. Result: big ships loaded with passengers sailed into SXM, bringing upwards of 18,000 passengers some days. Bottom line: the low demographic of many of these passengers delivered hordes of window-shoppers to town, keeping stayover tourists (remember them? They're timeshare owners...) out of town because of the congestion. So... few sales.

Most jewelers we talked to said business was down big time last year, 20-25%. SXM has concentrated on attracting more cruise ship passengers and it got exactly what it wished for, but that demographic does not buy. The Harbor, a government business, saw a rental opportunity near the port so it rented properties to a few businesses there. Shoppers visit those shops, then get lured to the airport or Orient Beach instead of Front Street. Result: major drops in retail sales downtown, which translates into drops of turnover tax those businesses pay the Dutch Side government. All of this is a major reason the government keeps claiming poverty -- poverty it caused by focusing on attracting hordes of cruise passengers who don't buy anything, instead of supporting timeshare owners who have historically spent a lot on each trip.

Despite its problems, the government needs to solve this quickly. It has an elephant knocking on the door and that elephant will soon enter the room. It's name: Cuba.

Things are not going to get any easier.

6. Where To Pick Up a Timeshare For a Fraction of Retail (and Why)

Why? Simple: Most timeshare properties on SXM are fine, well-run businesses that do right by their timeshare

owners. Nonetheless, if you want a SXM timeshare condo for a fraction of what the resort would charge, buy directly from the timeshare owner -- not the resort. Go to our www.everythingsxm.com and click Timeshare Rentals / Sales and you'll find hundreds of them. Most are for sale for far less than the timeshare owner paid, and way less than you'd pay the resort.

We also accept ads only from our JMB Website Supporters members, people who are not strangers to us. It pays to be careful when you buy.

SECTION 3: Island

7. BoGo Sale for Valentine's Day Now Beginning: Buy One, Gift One Free JMB Memberships-- Nearly 260 St. Maarten / St. Martin Island Discounts & Other Benefits

It begins first thing Monday morning February 1 (today). When you buy a new BOGO membership, BOGO renew your current membership, or BOGO reinstate a former JMB membership you get a new one year membership *for someone special living at a different address*. Click the links below on Monday morning February 1 for details. When you do this you look good; your friends benefit; and it costs you nothing extra.

What You Get:

- A growing list of nearly 260 discounts for restaurants, shopping, hotels, car rentals, activities, jewelry, art, and tons more
- Benefits including free ads to rent out or sell timeshare or other condos you own in SXM and worldwide
- Low Fare Guidelines to help you know what fares are worth buying -- and which are just too high
- Big Discounts on SkyMed, the world's premier provider of medical evacuation services for Americans, Canadians, and ex-pats virtually anywhere you travel, including Cuba (see stories in this section).
- A free one-year "BOGO" membership for a friend or relative not living with you
- Buy Now: Use Your Discounts & Benefits on Your Next Trip

New memberships:

http://everythingxm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml (BOGO begins 2/1)

Renewal memberships:

www.everythingsxm.com/secret Go to the *Membership Renewal Center* (BOGO begins 2/1)

Membership Reinstatements:

<http://everythingxm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml> (BOGO begins 2/1)

7a. Valentines Day Jewelry Specials Coming to JMB Website Supporters Members

Hand-picked Valentines Day special jewelry offers at Black Friday-like extraordinary price points will be emailed late this weekend (1/31) directly to all JMB Website Supporters members. Offers will be coming from Caribbean Gems, Zhaveri Jewelers, and Oro Diamonte. All offers will require you to provide your JMB Membership Card info (membership number and expiration date). Valid current cards only can be accepted. All offers are subject to reasonable limitations. Supplies are ample but offers are first come, first served. Watch your email.

8. Lots & Lots of New Discounts Launched for JMB Members

Among the newest discounts now live on the Secret Site:

Dollar/Thrifty Car Rental goes live today, Monday, February 1. Many JMB members have asked us to partner with a major national car rental company and we've done exactly that. Dollar/Thrifty is the island's largest car rental operator with over 600 cars of all descriptions -- and they give JMB Website Supporters members 15% off all rentals. Our info under Car Rentals in the Discounts Master Index on the members-only "Secret Website" tells you (as of 2/1) where and how to reserve. Your current, valid JMB Website Supporters Membership Card is required when arriving to rent your car: no card, no discount.

3Amigos, Moomba, and Soprano's Piano Bar, three bar/restaurants in Maho, have all joined us with substantial discounts. Now live.

Sushiitto goes live shortly; great teppanyakki and sushi at Princess Port de Plaisance. And Korry's Mens Wear in Toronto, Ontario, our first discount in Canada, also goes live shortly for our many members in or near Toronto.

Many more new discounts and benefits are coming soon....

9. Three Boats Catch Fire in Lagoon; Extensive Damage But No Serious Injuries

Miraculously, no one was seriously injured late Wednesday afternoon when a boat repair turned into an inferno on a 45-foot catamaran and immediately jumped to a nearby cabin cruiser and a power boat.

The catamaran owner was removing a leaking gas tank when something went wrong and fire erupted. He jumped into the water to escape, and came away with minor leg injuries. We posted pictures from artist Patty Meotti and from Island 92 radio, located across the narrow end of the lagoon, on our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#). Urgent news of interest to tourists is often posted there as it happens.

The SXM Daily Herald also posted a [complete story](#) on its site.

10. Pregnant Women Cautioned About Zika Virus

The good news about Zika is that it is a milder cousin of Dengue Fever and Chikungunya, with some people not noticing symptoms at all and others having mild flu-like symptoms and a rash.

For pregnant women, possibly in particular those in their first trimester, Zika is quite a menace, however. It can cause birth defects including small heads (microencephaly) and infant death. Pregnant women have been cautioned not to travel to areas where the disease is present and on request airlines are cancelling trips and refunding payments for pregnant women who were traveling to areas where the virus is present.

As of a few days ago, there was one confirmed case of Zika on French St. Martin and several suspected cases. There were no known cases on the Dutch Side. Authorities are galvanized by the threat and are putting into motion steps to hit mosquito breeding sites and help prevent any real outbreak. In 2013, when Chikungunya came here, they responded a bit slowly; they don't intend to make that mistake again.

If you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant, it may be wise to avoid any area where Zika is widespread. Brazil is worst hit in this hemisphere. The World Health Organization has much info on Zika for pregnant women here: <http://tinyurl.com/jyebw26> .

Zika is spread by the "vector" aedes aegypti mosquito which is black with white racing-stripe-like markings. We've seen only one ever, in 2013.

11. Topper Throws Reception for Sam Runza and Cugini (Authentic Italian) Is Mobbed

Topper Daboul, one of SXM's most popular restaurateurs and a close friend of Cugini Restaurant owner Sam Runza, threw a reception for Sam a week ago, just days after Sam had returned to SXM from Toronto. In Canada, Sam spent nearly a year fighting cancer -- now he's "home" for another couple of weeks working at the restaurant from 7-9 nightly, looking forward to seeing old friends and new. The Simpson Bay restaurant (located near Fedex and Carousel) has been busy.

The reception, at Topper's Simpson Bay location, was attended by many dozens of Sam's friends, a number of whom donned custom-made "Sam's Club" t-shirts. Sam talked frankly about his fight and said he still believes in

miracles. "Come to Cugini for me," he said. Definitely go to meet one of the warmest people on SXM and of course, for Cugini's outstanding and authentic Italian dining. Everything is made from scratch so relax and enjoy, it does take a bit of time but is well worth it.

12. Indian Merchants Donate \$15,000 To Gamali Benjamin Foundation

Gamali Benjamin was a bicycle police officer working in downtown Philipsburg a number of months ago when he intercepted robbers at a jewelry store. He thwarted the robbery, gunfire erupted, an accused robber was shot, and officer Benjamin was mortally wounded, the first Dutch Side police officer ever to die in the line of duty. No customers or passers-by were injured.

Last week, Indian merchants in SXM donated \$15,000 to the Gamali Benjamin Foundation, intended to help the families of officers lost in the line of duty. Another \$16,000 has been donated by a number of individuals through Go Fund Me. Should you wish to donate, go here: <https://www.gofundme.com/bh2ftrbs>

13. Never Leave Valuables in Your Car or On The Beach

SXM is paradise, not utopia; sometime people confuse the two. It is unwise to leave valuables unsecured anywhere. Your rental car trunk is never the place for handbags, cameras, or any other valuables. Also don't leave computers or iPads on beaches. The salt air is no good for them. We saw one lady put her laptop computer in a bag under her beach chair and go in the water. A few minutes later, before anyone could do anything, a wave swamped it. Be careful out there.... Mother nature doesn't care about computers, but bad guys want yours.

14. Progress Continues at New Orient Beach Bars/Restaurants

More businesses -- shops and restaurants -- continue to open, even though January is history. Not all are open and they may not be for a bit. We'll keep you posted.

If you'd like to comment on what you think of the new bars / restaurants, go to our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#).

15. SXM's Most Popular Clothing-Optional Beaches

Número Uno is Club Orient at Orient beach, visited by hundreds of people daily. Only the portion of beach in front of "Club O" remains clothing optional. You can park in the Club O lot for just \$5, strip in your car if you like, then walk to the beach. Two bars, one full-service restaurant and another smaller beach bar with limited food items. Chair and umbrella rentals.

Número Dos is Dany's Beach Bar at Cupecoy Beach. Parking, \$5 (or free). The paid parking is closer. Drinks served, chairs for rent, LoLo food (the chicken is great). Undress on the beach, not at your car.

Number Tres is Happy Bay. It's a 10-minute trek from Friar's Bay where you park. Limited services. Bring a blanket.

All three are beautiful and friendly. If you've never tried a clothing optional beach, here's Jeff's story on his first time: <http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/beaches/tryingnaturism.shtml>

16. Where to Watch Super Bowl

Toppers ... The Harbor ... Dinghy Dock and others will have parties and there will be a number of private parties as well. Watch *The Daily Herald* and *Today* for particulars.

17. Where to Go for Valentine's Day

Many restaurants have special menus for Valentine's Day and many others don't. You may well find more people celebrating on Saturday night February 13 just because Saturday may be easier and less crowded.

Watch our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#) for info on restaurant specials for Valentine's Day; we'll start to post some very soon. Make reservations early -- the best hours at the best restaurants fill up fast.

More stories follow.

St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties,
and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW):
[Click to access our recommended real estate agents](#)

18. Restaurant of the Week: Canoa, in the "Culinary Village" in Dawn Beach

We've coined the term "Culinary Village" for the emerging fine dining restaurants located on the road to Oyster Bay Beach Resort in Dawn Beach. It's well deserved: Daniel's By The Sea (the nighttime incarnation of Mr. Busby's Beach Bar); Big Fish, under new management now and a huge island hit serving much more than just fish; and one of our long-time favorites, Canoa, lead the pack here.

Sherman Marten's Canoa blends Continental dining with a Caribbean flair. Creativity and the flavors emanating from that creativity make Canoa a very special place. It's fun to experiment here since you won't find much on the menu made quite the same way elsewhere. And Sherman makes sure the flavors are uniquely delightful. Reservations strongly recommended; this place is usually packed. Canoa has won our Everything St. Maarten Award of Excellence for several years. You won't be disappointed in the ambiance (uniquely Caribbean dining on Oyster Pond) and you will flat out love the food. Go.

See past Restaurant of the Week selections below. Most of the listed restaurants offer discounts to JMB Website Supporters members; see the Secret Site for details. We'll cover another restaurant here next week. Sill not a member? You're spending way too much for practically everything you buy in SXM. Get hundreds of discounts and other benefits: see story 7.

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 12/14/15)

Canoa, www.canoasxm.com (featured 2/1/16)

SkipJack's SXM, <http://www.skipjacks-sxm.com/> (featured 6/15/15)

Cugini (12/7/15)

Trattoria Pizza Pasta, Maho Plaza near Casino Royale (featured 5/11/15)

Daniel's By The Sea, www.dawnbeachsxm.com (featured 11/16/15)

Domino's Pizza <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dominos-Pizza-St-Maarten/95635717338> (featured 8/11/14)

Spiga, www.spiga-sxm.com (featured 12/21/15)

Fusion, www.fusionrestaurant-sxm.com (featured 1/26/15)

The Hideaway, <http://www.lavistaresort.com/restaurant.html> (featured 4/28/14)

Stone Restaurant, www.thestonerestaurant.com (featured 9/2/14)

Le Pressoir, <http://www.lepressoir-sxm.com> (featured 7/6/15)

Temptation, <http://www.rareandtemptation.com/EN/temptation/>

Lal's Curry In A Hurry Indian Restaurant, Airport Road, Simpson Bay (featured 1/19/15)

Mr. Busby's Beach Bar <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 2/23/15)
Island Pizza, <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 1/25/16)
Pineapple Pete, www.pineapplepete.com (featured 2/2/15)
Papagayo, <http://www.cluborient.com/papagayo.php> (featured 5/4/15)
Coconut Grove (formerly SPN Cafe), <http://www.pineapplepete.com/sport.html> (featured 8/18/14)
Dany & John's Cupecoy Beach Bar (on Cupecoy beach; follow the car path from the far side of Ocean Club to get there). (featured 4/27/2015)
FIG, Maho complex at Le Terasse
St. Maarten Yacht Club, at the Dutch Side Drawbridge
Jimbo's, www.jimboscafe.com (featured 4/13/15)
Vesna Taverna, www.vesnataverna.com (featured 11/10/14)
Topper's / Topper's By The Sea <http://www.sxmtoppers.com/> (featured 6/29/15)
Taloula Mango <http://www.taloulamango.com/> (featured 4/20/15)
Bylbos, Simpson Bay
Sushiitto Japanese Restaurant, Port de Plaisance <https://www.facebook.com/sushiitto.sxm> (featured 1/12/15)

19. Questions & Answers About SkyMed Medical Evacuation (Updated 1/8/16)

Here are constantly updated questions and answers about SkyMed, the folks who fly you home on an ICU-equivalent medical evacuation jet when you become critically ill or injured while traveling. *It's a life-saving flight that could easily cost you upwards of \$45,000 in cash in advance without SkyMed. Thousands of you have bought it through us.* To learn more, see www.getskymed.com.

Q. What's so special about SkyMed? Aren't these companies all the same?

A. *Not by a long shot.* Most other programs take you to "the nearest appropriate facility," *not* home like SkyMed. If you're in SXM, that means *SkyMed competitors* would likely take you to Puerto Rico. Some others also raise prices after you reach a certain age. Or they cancel you on a particular birthday, or cancel your membership when you get sick. *SkyMed does none of that.* Sign up for SkyMed today and when you reach age 109 you pay the same price as everyone else. Once you're a member, there's no age or health discrimination -- as long as you pay your membership fee you're good to go. (Applies to all annual and longer memberships. Short-term memberships, lasting only a few days, require medical requalification when you buy another.)

Q. What other evacuation-related services do you offer besides the evacuation itself?

There are 18 other services, some of which you've never even thought about but all of which are quite important. You'll find them on our downloadable SkyMed Benefits PDF, now on our [SXM Weekly News PDF Archives](#) page.

Q. You mean they don't cancel me if I get really sick?

A. *No, they don't.* Once you're a member, as long as you continue to pay your membership fee your membership continues regardless of your health or age, if you buy an annual or multiyear membership and keep it in force. SkyMed does not throw you out if you get sick. If you allow your membership to lapse, you will need to reapply to determine if you're still medically acceptable -- so just don't let it lapse.

Q. I have a few medical issues and I'm in my 70s. Will SkyMed accept me?

A. In its brief application process, completed online or by phone or in person with a rep, SkyMed asks for your name, DOB, current Rx medications, medical conditions, and hospitalizations in the last six months. It also asks where you want to be transported when you need an emergency medical evacuation. It now also requests your passport number to help expedite customs / immigration should you require an international medical evacuation flight. *The vast, vast majority of applicants are readily accepted.* You do not have to be in "phenomenal" health at all. By the way: if you travel very little and only for short periods, you can apply for SkyMed's short-term memberships. They cover all pre-existing conditions.

Q. We travel for weeks at a time. Do we have to tell SkyMed where we're going?

A. No, you don't. As long as you're home in the US or Canada more than six months per year, you're fine. If you spend more than half of each year away (in aggregate), then you're considered an expatriate (ex-pat) and would need a program custom-tailored for ex-pats because you're away a majority of the time and that means you represent

increased exposure. That program is called X-Pat - the program for American and Canadian expatriates living overseas. Even as an ex-pat living in SXM, you can still be transported back to your city of choice in the USA or Canada.

Q. Does SkyMed cover pre-existing conditions?

A. Yes, right away for short-term memberships and after just a 90 day waiting period for all memberships lasting a year or longer. To make sure you're covered for everything when you travel, including pre-existing conditions, just buy your annual or multi-year Ultimate SkyMed membership more than 90 days ahead of your initial date of travel.

Q. Do you require a physical exam for renewal or when I reach a certain age?

A. No, SkyMed requires neither. Once you join and buy an annual or multiyear membership, we'll renew it every year upon payment of your renewal fee. No physical exam is required regardless of your age or health if you've paid your membership on time. You can be age 109 and still be protected by your SkyMed membership.

Q. What is the maximum age for applying for membership?

A. No maximum.

Q. I seldom travel now. Do you have short-term plans?

A, Yes, at about \$18/day per family or about \$9/day for singles. Since they only last a specified number of days, they end when the term of coverage ends. If you want another short-term plan later, you must apply again and medically requalify. Annual plans cost roughly \$1.30/day for your entire family (parents and minor kids); plans for singles are less. *Annual* and multiyear plans are renewable without medical requalification, assuming they haven't lapsed.

Q. I'm from Canada. May I join SkyMed? I have to get back to my province if I'm seriously ill or my health insurance won't work.

A. Both Americans and Canadians are eligible to join SkyMed. American and Canadian ex-pats living overseas also are eligible.

Q. What types of policies are there?

A. SkyMed Memberships (often called policies by members though they actually are memberships) come in several flavors: short term, for people who travel little and for short durations; "annual" for people who want full-year protection that is guaranteed renewable for life when you pay the membership fee on time regardless of age or health at the time of renewal; and Ultimate multiyear memberships which offer low annual cost, maximum benefits, and global coverage and are also renewable for life regardless of age or health when membership fees are paid on time.

Q. Which membership gives the biggest bang for the buck?

You clearly get the most for the least with our three-year or five-year Ultimate memberships. Coverage is global, guaranteed renewable, and can not be cancelled due to increasing age or declining health - ever. You'll also pay the same fee as all other members -- there's never an increase related to your personal health or advancing age. And annual memberships are upgradeable to Ultimates at any time.

Q. Is there a best time to buy?

A. Yes -- exactly like fire insurance, buy it before you need it! Now is a particularly good time because JMB is offering special benefits and discounts; see next story. Those incentives won't be around forever.

Q. Does SkyMed cover us no matter where we travel?

The basic SkyMed plan covers you in the USA (all 50 states), Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, all the nations of the Caribbean including Cuba, plus Costa Rica and Belize. The Ultimate membership covers you globally - or you can add a global rider to annual memberships (at \$100/year) which adds rest-of-the-world coverage. SkyMed does not cover countries where there are open hostilities -- Iraq, Iran, Syria, Somalia, North Korea, etc.

SkyMed Takes You Home®; What else matters?

For more, see skymed.com/jmbspecial (JMB members) or www.getskymed.com (non-

JMB members) or email Jeff Berger directly at jeff@getskymed.com with the subject SkyMed. If you include your phone number, he'll call you about SkyMed as well, to answer any questions you may have including all pricing options. You can also call SkyMed directly (in Scottsdale AZ, Mountain standard time year round.) Their number is 1-800-475-9633; ask for Nan. If you're a JMB member, say so and have your membership card ready. **All multiyear plans offer major discounts to JMB members.** Please tell them you're calling because you heard about them from Jeff Berger.

20. Got Other SkyMed Questions? Here's Where to Ask

If you have questions about SkyMed not answered above, email jeff@getskymed.com and Jeff will get back to you. Please also include your phone number and best time to call; he'll be in touch.

SkyMed Takes You Home® - what else matters?

21. Our New *Triple* SkyMed Bonus

----- SkyMed On Sale: Lots of Life-Saving Benefits, Low Cost -----

If you've been thinking about buying SkyMed but just haven't done it, this is the time.

SkyMed takes you home when you become critically ill or injured while traveling — home to doctors and hospitals you know and trust. With rare exceptions, your medical insurance from the US or Canada isn't valid in St. Maarten. Credit Card evacuation programs take you to the nearest appropriate facility; what good is that? There is also no trauma center in SXM, and the sophisticated medical care available at leading US and Canadian hospitals is not present in St. Maarten / St. Martin. So if you become critically ill or injured, you really do need to get home to the US or Canada and that's exactly where SkyMed takes you.

Thanks to this sale, that has now become a whole lot easier. Here's why:

First, for every year of SkyMed medical evacuation protection you buy from us during the sale, you get an equivalent year of JMB Website Supporters membership free, on us, which brings you an increasing spectrum of benefits and discounts, soon to number close to 250. If you are already a JMB member, we will extend your membership on us for a number of years equal to your new or upgraded SkyMed membership. If you are not a JMB member and buy SkyMed through us, we will establish a JMB Website Supporters membership for you equal to your new or upgraded SkyMed membership's duration of one year or more. See below for how this works.

Second, for a five-year SkyMed Ultimate, non JMB members pay \$3495 in advance; JMB members pay only \$2495 through us (or only \$59/month) — and remember, because of the bonus we mentioned above, when you sign up we will also give you a five-year JMB membership *enabling you to save that \$1000 on a five year Ultimate membership. That discount is not available to non JMB members.* So... the #2 advantage of buying through us is low cost, no matter how you buy.

For contact info (answers to questions about SkyMed), see the last paragraph of the previous story.

Third: When you sign up for the bonus SkyMed memberships shown above, email support@jmbcommunications.com and tell us. We'll verify the signup and that it is through us, then process your JMB membership extension bonus. But do it soon... this won't last forever. The third benefit: a dream vacation. Email us after you're signed up through us and for a limited time SkyMed will give you a vacation for a small fraction of its usual cost. (Oyster Bay Beach Resort is one of their vacation sites.)

22. We're Giving Away Ten SXM Vacations... and Tons More

Here's a complete list of everything we're giving away as of now -- the list has grown since you last saw it:

Vacation prizes (almost all are eight days / seven nights):

- [Club Orient](#) Naturist Resort, Orient Beach (Must be taken May, 2016)
- [Mary's Boon Beach Resort](#);
- [Oyster Bay Beach Resort](#);
- [La Vista or La Vista Beach](#)
- [Summit Resort](#)
- [Baker's Suites](#)
- [Club Fantastico](#)
- [Hotel L'Esplanade](#) OR [Le Petit Hotel](#) OR [Blue Pelican](#)
- [Simpson Bay Resort](#)
- El Zafiro Boutique Hotel, Restaurant, and Bar, Simpson Bay (new)

Here are our newest items:

- Sunset Cruise for Two about the [Classic Schooner Passaat](#) (new)
- One-week car rental (Hyundai i10 or equivalent) from [Leisure Car Rental](#) (new)
- Dinner for two at [Mario's Bistro](#), Porto Cupecoy
- Dinner for Two at [Temptation](#), Cupecoy Beach
- Dinner for Two at Big Fish, Oyster Pond
- Dinner for two at [Spiga](#), Grand Case
- Dinner for two at [Le Pressoir](#), Grand Case
- Dinner for two at [Beau Beaus](#) (Oyster Bay Beach Resort)
- Dinner for two at Infinity (OBBR)
- Dinner for two at Sushiiitto
- Dinner for two at [Pineapple Pete](#)
- Dinner for two at [Daniel's by the Sea](#)
- Dinner for two at Lal's Curry In a Hurry
- Dinner for two at [Toppers](#)
- Dinner for two at [Toppers By The Sea](#)
- Dinner for two at [Vesna Taverna](#)
- Dinner for two at [Fusion Restaurant](#), Simpson Bay
- Dinner for two at [iZi Ristorante Italiano](#), Simpson Bay
- NEW Dinner for two at The Palms Restaurant, Simpson Bay
- Massage from [Tricia Altenau of AIA Massage Therapies](#), the island's most sought-after massage therapist

To enter:

We'll draw the vacation winners live on the air on Island 92 radio on March 21. After we give away all 10 vacations, we'll call the winners back randomly. The first person picked gets our selection of some of the prizes above; that will be our first prize winner. The second person called at random will get our Grand Prize, which has our selection of dinners and other prizes.

As always, anyone who doesn't answer loses and will not be called again.

Enter here:

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/getting_here/entry-form-for-our-seven-vacation-giveaway.shtml

Full rules are on that page.

23. Interact With Fellow SXM Visitors on Our Everything SXM Facebook Page

Our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#), which has been around for several years, covers SXM happenings in words and pictures from its thousands of users and enables people to ask questions, get answers, post trip reports, etc. We also post things there between issues of *SXM Weekly News*.

24. Where to Find Past Issues of SXM Weekly News

Look here for our PDF archives: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

Rent Out or Sell Your Timeshare (both SXM and Worldwide) -- Frequently Updated

JMB members can run up to 10 free ads on our website per 12-month period to rent out or sell St. Maarten / St. Martin timeshare weeks they own -- or any timeshares, anywhere worldwide. If you're not a member, learn more about membership here: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml .

Want to rent or buy a week?

2015 St. Maarten / St. Martin Timeshare Weeks For Rent or Sale are posted at http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml Listings are now updated every few weekdays. Ads are free (no commission) but are accepted from JMB Website Supporters members only.

Meet Our Sponsors (updated 9/27/13) Returns Next Issue

SECTION 4: For Members Only (Constantly Updated)

- A. Where to Get Member Info: www.everythingsxm.com/secret
- B. Password Recovery Info: Your username is the email address you have registered with JMB Website Supporters. If you forget your password, click "forgot / change password" in the orange login box near the masthead at www.everythingsxm.com. To change your password, click that same link.
- C. How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads or Update the Price in an Ad: See www.everythingsxm.com/secret

SECTION 5: Background Information for Travelers (For New Readers) Updated 10/18/15

See www.everythingsxm.com.

About Email Address Changes / How To Unsubscribe (Updated 9/7/13)

To unsubscribe, click the Unsubscribe link here: <http://everythingxsm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi> You CAN NOT unsubscribe either by replying to this email or, if you are an AOL user, by clicking the *spam* button on AOL.

To change your email address, visit <http://everythingxsm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi> , select *2015-16 St. Maarten Weekly News* list, and follow the unsubscribe instructions. Then, subscribe your new email address. JMB Website Supporters members no longer need to notify Membership Services of the new email address for continued Secret Site access. We'll be notified automatically.

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<http://www.everythingsxm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi?>

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