

## **Special Edition - SXM Weekly News**

Tuesday, March 15, 2016 #1036

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### **1. About The French Side Demonstrations**

You may already have heard about the protests staged on the French Side of the island last week. We told you they were being planned several weeks ago here in *SXM Weekly News*.

The protests were staged by the owners of the French Side bars and restaurants whose rented buildings were torn down and replaced by the French Side government last Summer and Fall. The owners protested their rents being quintupled to 2500 Euros/month. They also protested that the buildings weren't built to French Side code and offered many examples to prove their point. The project was supposed to be completed by November but now, four months later, a number of units are still not occupied. The owners said the government wasn't listening to them, that it publicly belittled them and their concerns, and that -- adding insult to injury -- it required *them* to pay for the connection of electricity and water to the government-owned buildings, a major cost.

Moreover, the bars, restaurants, and shops have now lost the ability to earn income from "their" rented properties given the above extensive issues. They requested a reduction in rents to a reasonable level (high season in SXM is only three or four months) and only got it down to about 2200 Euros/month.

Protests are legal and accepted and are part of the French culture. So when protesters -- the same people who are unhappy with the government over the Orient Beach mess -- blocked French Side roads, preventing anyone from entering or leaving the French Side last week, gendarmes did nothing. In the US, such actions would have resulted in the protestors being dragged away after being subdued and handcuffed.

The problem obviously is that the protestors wanted to be heard -- and they were. But in the process, they shut down commerce across the French Side, making it very difficult or impossible for employees and business owners to get to work, making transit from French to Dutch Side or vice versa virtually impossible, and hurting already ailing French Side businesses. Tourists staying on the French Side who needed to get to the Dutch Side airport to leave SXM were stopped by the protest like everyone else. A lot of tourists were very angry.

"This is great for us," one Dutch Side beach bar owner said. "We were packed all day long both days and we sold a ton of beer and lunches." But French Side businesses were kicked in the gut by these "protests." And tourists, who simply want a peaceful vacation, had their plans ruined by protestors -- and ever since they've spread the word about their negative experiences.

As if all this weren't bad enough, young hooligans arrived and decided to throw rocks at gendarmes, who are part of the French military. The gendarmes replied with tear gas in a hurry and suddenly, the demonstrations were over.

But the damage -- financial and reputational -- to French Side businesses had been done. Grand Case restaurants heard from patrons with reservations who were turned back at the border. Though the French Side demonstrations are over for now, tourists are still angry about what they called the arrogance of the French Side protestors and the gendarmerie for not reacting sooner.

We agree. But of all the parts at play here, the government is the most guilty party. It was the government that built these structures that from all reasonable indications are out of code. It was the government that would not talk, negotiate, or fix any of the protestors' problems. In fact, early this week French Side President Aline Hanson made a statement which threw gasoline on the fire, saying that the government is right and the protestors are wrong even before both sides meet to "negotiate." (We published the statement on our *Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site*.)

But the protestors themselves handled this in a remarkably stupid, arrogant, and callous manner. If they wanted to shut something down, why didn't they simply surround the seat of government instead of victimizing thousands of innocent people and costing untold tens of thousands of Euros in lost business to scores of French Side businesses? And French tradition notwithstanding, this act may have been legal but it was also childish, senseless, and disruptive. The gendarmes have the capability to act and did nothing.

Though the government may still do something to help the protestors

now, the protestors themselves will hopefully be the biggest losers here. By this overwhelmingly self-absorbed act, they've single-handedly made themselves look astoundingly puerile and rather idiotic. It will be interesting to see if anyone wants to patronize people who acted in such defiance of common sense and compassion, no matter how reasonable their motivation or how long they have tolerated perpetual deaf ears from the Collectivite before acting. -jmb

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**2. Ten-Vacation Giveaway Deadline Extended  
Until Friday March 18, 2016; Drawing Is  
Still Monday, March 21; How To Enter**

More than 80,000 entrants want to be part of our list of 70 finalists, all of whom are picked at random. To enter the giveaway you must be a subscriber to *SXM Weekly News*. We will verify all randomly picked entries to be sure of that. The 70 finalists *will not be notified in advance*.

Here are the prizes and info on how to enter & how to win. Pass-along recipients of *Weekly News* are not eligible to enter. Read down to enter.

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 (Naturist)
- 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 aboard the Classic Schooner Passaat
- One-week car rental (Hyundai i10 or equivalent) from Leisure Car Rental
- 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:

Entry period ends at midnight on March 18, 2016. We'll draw the vacation winners live on the air on Island 92 radio on March 21 starting at 9:15 a.m. Atlantic Standard Time (same as EDT.) 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. You must give us a phone number you can answer regardless of where you are when we call.

Enter here:

[http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/getting\\_here/entry-form-for-our-seven-vacation-giveaway.shtml](http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/getting_here/entry-form-for-our-seven-vacation-giveaway.shtml)

Full rules are on that page. You *\*MUST\** be a subscriber to *SXM Weekly News* to be eligible to win any prizes. If you receive Weekly News from another subscriber and not directly, you ARE NOT eligible to win anything. Subscribe at [www.everythingsexm.com](http://www.everythingsexm.com) by clicking "Free Newsletters".

### **The Drawing:**

It starts March 21 at 9:15 a.m. Atlantic time. We know that's early but to give away 10 vacations by 11 a.m. Atlantic Time we must start early. Answer your phone when we call... if you don't answer (the call will be from Island 92's US line or SXM line), we hang up and you lose. You must answer your phone to win. Listen live at [www.island92.com](http://www.island92.com).

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### **3. What To Do About Zika**

Now some researchers are suggesting a link between Zika and myelitis, a serious spinal cord disorder.

Our best advice at this point is for you to ask your doctor.

Bear in mind that only aedes agypti mosquitoes (they are all black with white "racing stripes" at their knees and some white spots) that have bitten an infected person are carriers of the disease. We have seen only one such mosquito in SXM, in December, 2013, when I killed it after being bitten. It wasn't infected.

We did not hesitate to come to SXM. Again, ask your doctor.

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#### 4. Why We Promote SkyMed

You already know SkyMed Takes You Home® when you become critically ill or injured. *What you do not know is that more than three dozen of our readers / members who have joined SkyMed through us have had to use their emergency medical evacuation services, at a total savings of several hundred thousand dollars.* That's people just like you who wanted peace of mind but thought they'd never actually need to use the service.

You can't buy fire insurance after your home catches fire. By the same token, get SkyMed before you need it. See [www.getskymed.com](http://www.getskymed.com). For member discounts on memberships in excess of one year, email [jeff@getskymed.com](mailto:jeff@getskymed.com) and use the subject "SkyMed." Leave your phone number and we'll call and answer your questions. Just don't put it off... ask anyone who has used it!

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#### 5. Our Next Regular Edition is Tuesday 3/22

Our 10 vacation giveaway is March 21. Our next regular *SXM Weekly News* will be a double issue on March 22, which tells you who the winners are of our 10-vacation giveaway. See story 2.

JMB Communications

Contact info is in every regular edition of *SXM Weekly News*.

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