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#1060 --- Monday, 8/22/2016 -- News From St. Maarten / St. Martin

\*\*\*Timesharing Special Edition\*\*\*



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

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

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Weekly News is part of JMB's St. Maarten / St. Martin website: [www.everythingsxm.com](http://www.everythingsxm.com)

Add [jeff1620@jmbcommunications.com](mailto:jeff1620@jmbcommunications.com) to your address book to be sure you receive this newsletter every week.

**IMPORTANT:** "Jeff1620" is a send-only email address. For Contact info, see [#Contact Us](#) at the end of this newsletter.

**Important Note:**

This is Jeff Berger's / JMB Communications' **St. Maarten and St. Martin (SXM) Weekly News**, published every Monday (Tuesdays during some holiday weeks). **You are receiving St. Maarten and St. Martin "SXM" 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 well over 270,000 readers around the world...**

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

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[http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free\\_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml](http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml)

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

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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:

*In This Week's SXM Weekly News:*

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**-- Sapphire SMF: Advice to Sapphire Timeshare Owners on Whether To Pay**

**-- Timeshare Law Consideration Stalled by Lack of Quorum (Lack of Interest?)**

**-- Huge Update Underway at Simpson Bay Resort's Marina Plaza**

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30 news stories this week

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## Timeshare Rental and Sale of the Week

Each week JMB randomly picks timeshare condominiums for rent and for sale in SXM from the huge selection at [http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/timeshare\\_rent\\_sale/index.shtml](http://everythingsexm.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, for no ad charge or commission, join JMB Website Supporters. Visit [http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml) for info. Membership now delivers a growing list of 260+ St. Maarten and St. Martin-focused travel benefits -- and your membership subscription helps keep these weekly SXM newsletters coming.

### **SXM Timeshare Rental of The Week:**

Returns next week.

### **SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:**

Returns next week.

### **Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:**

See them all at [http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/timeshare\\_rent\\_sale/index.shtml](http://everythingsexm.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](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://everythingsexm.com/sxm/free\\_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml](http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml)

**Archives prior to April 12 2014 (old format):**

<http://everythingsexm.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](http://www.linkedin.com)

Get a growing list of 260+ Money-Saving SXM-focused travel discount benefits through JMB Website Supporters:

[http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml)

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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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29. Where to Find Past Issues of SXM Weekly News
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**Section Five:** For Members Only (Revised 12/31/14)

- A. Where to Get Member Info: [www.everythingsxm.com/secret](http://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](http://www.everythingsxm.com).
- C. How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads: Links are on the Secret Website (see a, above.)

**Section Six:** 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://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://everythingxsm.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 260+ benefits... and more coming soon.

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**All JMB Newsletters Read \*From JMB\***  
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This newsletter and mail from JMB Website Supporters to members 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. Tropical System Could Affect SXM Midweek

Forget about tropical storm Fiona, which briefly made headlines last week when it was named. As of Friday morning, that storm was headed harmlessly Northwest toward the central Atlantic.

The storm behind Fiona might be of more concern for the islands. It is expected to gain strength and move steadily westward or west northwestward for the next several days toward the islands. Forecasts issued late last Thursday anticipated that the system could be at tropical storm strength when it reaches the islands, probably toward midweek. At this point, there is no precise predictive data indicating where exactly the storm may go if it does strike the leeward islands.

For much more information on this, go to [www.everythingSXM.com](http://www.everythingSXM.com) and click Weather on the home page. Our Weather page has satellite images, radar loops, and lots of storm related information. For more detailed insight into storms, see story #3 about Crown Weather.

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#### 2. Take Advantage of Your Free Membership in the SkyMed Travel Club

We're now giving JMB Website Supporters members and *SXM Weekly News* readers access to a private, "members only" travel wholesale club that offers incredible prices not only on airfares but on packages not just to the Caribbean, but worldwide.

Retail travel sites — the ones whose names you know very well — are heavily regulated. But private travel clubs like this, which normally charge members prices for membership/admission, are regulated differently and consequently, can offer much better pricing.

The organization providing these travel benefits has been traveling under the radar for 25 years and is only now making its travel reservations prowess publicly known. It's SkyMed Travel Club and it is entirely separate from the SkyMed "takes you home" medical evacuation service we've been recommending to you since shortly after the millennium.

The SkyMed Travel Club offers exceptional pricing on everything and almost invariably beats everyone else's pricing. We have been testing it for the past few weeks and have found the pricing to be extraordinary — even on the wildly popular river cruises that are a tourism phenomenon throughout Europe and are quickly gaining popularity here in the US.

And normally, this organization charges you \$99 to join plus \$99 annual renewals. But for our JMB Website Supporters members, and during a brief open enrollment period for everyone else, the cost to join is zero as will be the cost for renewals. Exclusively through us, you get access to a world-class global ticketing mechanism without paying one cent to get in the door.

This is a new benefit for JMB members. During this Open Enrollment, everyone can join by going to [www.SkyMedtravelclub.com](http://www.SkyMedtravelclub.com), clicking the sign up link on the top right corner of the homepage, and providing the requested information. It's very important to complete the first sign up item (SkyMed Membership Number or Representative ID) by entering the code 391330 — entering that code is what ensures that you pay nothing to be a member of the SkyMed Travel Club. If you fail to enter that code, you will not gain free entry to the club's phenomenal pricing.

Do join — you will not be disappointed once you've booked travel through them.

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### 3. Where To Get Current *Detailed* SXM Weather Info

Current St. Maarten weather is always available from the weather page of our website. Just go to the masthead of [www.everythingSXM.com](http://www.everythingSXM.com) and click Weather for current weather information, satellite loops, radar, and hurricane information. Our page was heavily updated in August, 2016.

Our go-to source for accurate and dependable hurricane information related to St. Maarten and both the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the US, as well as the Caribbean, has long been [www.crownweather.com](http://www.crownweather.com), headed by Rob Lightbown. This excellent site has an enormous amount of weather information updated around the clock.

The site contains watches, warnings, and numerous satellite images, animated radar loops, hurricane forecast models, and much more. The cost per year is tiny and the value is enormous, especially if you live in an area vulnerable to hurricane strikes. We urge you to check it out.

## **SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares**

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### 4. Sapphire Court Decision: Bruno Sitbon To Gain Ownership; What's Next

Sapphire Beach Resort on Cupecoy Beach is about to get brand new ownership, as we reported in a Special Edition of *SXM Weekly News* last week. Here is a recap:

In a landmark decision where no appeal is possible, a Dutch St. Maarten court has ruled that the purchase and sale agreement between Bruno Sitbon and Philippe and Jean Verdier is legal and must be honored.

Sitbon had brought suit last winter to force the Verdiers to honor the purchase and sale agreement after the Verdiers had said it was void and had seized Sitbon's purchase down payment, claiming that Sitbon had reneged on the P&S deal.

In making its decision, the court agreed with Sitbon that the Verdiers never supplied the financials required by the P&S, so the Verdiers had no legal right to seize the down payment or reject the deal. Meanwhile, the Sitbons had complied with every requirement for completing the sale. The only lacking item was the financials from the Verdiers.

The court ordered the parties to consummate the sale. The court will meet again on this in about a month, and formal closing is expected sometime this Fall. We would not at all be surprised to see some legal jockeying by the Verdiers in an attempt to delay this, but to us, now, a formal change of ownership seems inevitable.

Meanwhile, the Verdiers have billed Sapphire timeshare owners for roughly \$1000 per week in the form of a supplemental maintenance fee (SMF) in addition to their forthcoming Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF). Whether you should pay the SMF is addressed in the next article.

Mr. Sitbon had spent a great deal of time and his own money upgrading the resort infrastructure in anticipation of buying Sapphire. Although his English is poor and some timeshare owners were exasperated with his ability to express himself when they asked questions, he has been widely lauded for his progress. He frequently butted heads with the Verdiers.

When we interviewed Mr. Sitbon last winter he told us of some preliminary plans he has for the resort. He said it was not being well managed by the Verdiers and much deferred maintenance had to be completed. Annual maintenance fees at Sapphire are less than those at many other SXM timeshare resorts.

Although his short and long-term plans are uncertain, Mr. Sitbon has talked in the past about relocating timeshare

owners into equivalent units in the newer towers, numbers two and three, and converting building number one into units for hotel use. He has also talked about the desirability of erecting a casino in the building's basement. Both of these steps are designed to increase revenues both during the low and high season while maintaining all commitments to timeshare owners.

A number of other steps are also being contemplated to improve the consumer appeal of the resort, which is now about 20 years old. We will be publishing more about all this in future editions of *SXM Weekly News*.

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## 5. Sapphire Timeshare Owners Fuming at the Verdiere And The Dutch-Side Government

Timeshare owners at Sapphire resort, like many other timeshare owners at other resorts on the island, are unhappy not only with the developers of their resort but also with the Dutch side government. Though it has been talking about enacting timeshare owner consumer protection legislation for years, it has yet to do anything, leaving many timeshare owners saying they are frustrated, angry, and unprotected.

"The Dutch Side government didn't do anything when Ray Sidhom bought Caravanserai, changed its name, and unilaterally voided all timeshare owner contracts, leaving timeshare owners with nothing to show for many thousands of dollars in investments," one former Caravanserai timeshare owner recently told us. Many others have said essentially the same thing: in fact, millions of dollars in investments were lost at that resort alone, though a small group of litigating timeshare owners may get a favorable ruling from a St. Maarten court this month.

A timeshare owner named "RZH" from the US recently wrote to the Verdiere bitterly complaining about the special assessment. Here is what she wrote, edited for brevity:

"... Basically you are asking us to finance renovations which are long overdue. There is a reason RCI stopped doing business with SBC. Glad to hear they've given you a minor improvement - The reviews online continue to be terrible - the most recent ones are 1 out of 5. When we bought at SBC it was a five star resort - now it is nothing. We have had several assessments only to see the resort become worse and worse. There have been many promises but no delivery.... This is a beach resort - there are barely enough chairs at the pool and that has been the (case) for years. There are 7 umbrellas at best. Appliances are broken.... Mold is endemic. There has been little if any maintenance in the infrastructure for years. Yes, maintenance fees are higher at other resorts but the differences are HUGE.

"At Flamingo beach, the units are immaculately maintained, they have a beach, more than enough beach chairs, they refurbish the furnishings every few years, there is no mold, they are a five star resort. ... We have been patient and listened to ... SBC promises and plans for years, with NO RESULTS. History indicates management is not entitled to trust based on past performance. We've heard for years how you're going to sell defaulted units yet the census is lower than ever. A model apartment is nice to show - what is the condition of any random unit. You know there have been times when we had to go out and buy our own toilet paper. With all the great amenities you list for SBC in comparison with other timeshares, you indicate that we have 48 services and the next higher timeshare only has 24 and yet, the expense for housekeeping and laundry has gone from \$270,436 in 2011 to \$198,503 in 2015. Either there is a disconnect, a lie, or you should have the manager of housekeeping manage the entire resort!

"A closer look shows that all expenses have gone DOWN with the exception of administrative costs (only a \$20,000 increase).

" How can you possibly justify a daily utility charge? You indicate the evolution of oil prices is not predictable and you anticipate a "potential raise" of costs. HEADLINE: oil prices have fallen precipitously in the last year. \$9.50 a day for a one bedroom to pay for utilities is \$66.50 a week. Where are the savings from the last years' reductions of oil prices and, by your own records, the costs SBC is paying? This is just another assessment. This is independent of usage. Where is the ... owner's responsibility for furnishing utilities?

"Finally, the issue of the ownership of SBC has still not been decided. There are potential new owners. How can you ignore that?

"Mr. Verdier made a fortune when he sold these units. There are, by my calculation 240 units taking an average of just \$12,000.00 a unit, that was revenue of almost \$3,000,000.00. Most units were more than \$12,000.00 We paid \$15,000.00, and that was in dollars in the 1990's. Was there no reserve for maintenance or did his pockets just overflow with money? When he sells the property, he will get money. The [timeshare] owners (we are really just long term tenants) will get NOTHING, and now you are asking us to finance his [Verdier's] improvements so he can get a better price. Enough is enough...."

More articles below.

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## Need a Great Website or Other Marketing, Advertising, PR, Publicity, or Promotional Services?

Use [JMB Communications](#), the seasoned marketing company behind Everything SXM.

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### 6. Sapphire SMF: Advice to Sapphire Timeshare Owners on Whether To Pay

When we first saw the complete package surrounding the Supplemental Maintenance Fee billed by the Verdier family to Sapphire resort timeshare owners, we thought the SMF was inappropriate since the ownership of the resort will be changing sometime in the coming months by court order.

Nonetheless, the resort is currently owned by Philippe and Jean Verdier. What should timeshare owners do? Since we aren't St. Maarten attorneys, we personally can't and don't give legal advice. That said, there are a couple of attorneys on the island who have a lot of timesharing experience and we asked both for comments for readers.

We haven't yet heard from Monique Hofman of Ber-Mon Law. But last week we heard from Christian De Jong of BZSE Law, the attorney for the Sitbon family who has been involved in their litigation against Sapphire.

His comments:

"As I am not aware of all the facts surrounding this sudden US\$ 1,000.00 supplemental maintenance fee it is rather difficult for me to form an opinion of the legality thereof. In general however, I can inform you that I was also involved in a case whereby another timeshare resort here in SXM suddenly raised their maintenance fees to an enormous amount. The Court in First Instance found such in violation of the principles of reasonableness and fairness and therefore prohibited this resort of raising the fees. The same could be the case in the Sapphire-scenario. Also, in general, the owners of Sapphire (Verdier) must of course give an explanation for raising the maintenance fees and account for the destination of these fees. The timeshare owners are entitled to a proper justification of this extra charge.

"As I understood, maintenance is not being undertaken ... at this resort, while the maintenance fees are already hefty, so have the Verdiers give an explanation/accounting for this sudden supplemental increase through the time share owner's meeting.

"...I would say that Verdier not only [must justify -Ed.] this in a clear way that can be objectively verified, but also [give -Ed.] the timeshare owners the opportunity to exchange their views about this extra fee."

Although JMB won't give advice, we will say that were we timeshare owners at Sapphire, on this basis we would pay the fee *but seek legal counsel with as many other timeshare owners as possible*. Reason: Sapphire is replacing appliances and making other changes, though all of that should have been done long ago, in our opinion. Since Sapphire is threatening to cancel contracts of non-payers, we would pay to secure our investment. We would ask the lawyer we retain to tell us whether the SMF is justified and if they feel it is not, ask the court to enjoin Sapphire from pursuing it, if he / she feels that is wise. The big question is whether all that is possible given the Verdiers' tough short-term deadline.

Please let us know what you do. Remember this is a Supplemental Maintenance Fee, not the regular Annual Maintenance Fee for 2017 which will be billed later. Two different things....

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### 7. Timeshare Law Consideration Stalled by Lack of Quorum (Lack of Interest?)



There was supposed to be a hearing last week about draft timeshare owner consumer protection legislation but it ended when attendees noted that a quorum was not present. Timeshare owners shouldn't take that personally, however; members of Parliament in St. Maarten sometimes don't show up. More is [here](#).

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## 8. Huge Update Underway at Marina Plaza, Simpson Bay Resort

The one-time ugly duckling of the St. Maarten timesharing business, Pelican Resort Club, underwent an incredible metamorphosis over the last several years. Today, as Simpson Bay Resort, it's a showplace.

Now, the Marina Plaza, its seaside center of activity, is undergoing a metamorphosis of its own. Here's [that story](#).

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### **SECTION 3: Member**

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## 9 . Introducing The New "Section Three" -- Member Discounts Benefits News & Updates

This new section of *SXM Weekly News*, which will appear here virtually every week, will provide detailed information about current JMB Website Supporters discounts and benefits both for current members and for people thinking about joining JMB. *In addition, it will be the introduction point for new benefits beyond the 260+ already available to all JMB Website Supporters members.* We think you'll find many surprises here that will be of great interest and value to all JMB members.

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## 10. Member Benefits Update:

Over the last few weeks, this section has covered sailing, deep-sea fishing, and yacht charters; dining; car rentals; and jewelers. It will return in September covering another category of JMB member benefits / discounts.

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### **SECTION 4: Island Help**

[Please Help Us](#)

[Keep SXM Weekly News Coming:](#)

Join JMB Website Supporters & Get Big Savings On 260+ Island Discounts & Many Other Key Benefits **and Support**  
***SXM Weekly News:***

***Join, Renew, or Reinstate Your JMB Website Supporters Membership Today -- And Beat The September Price Increase!***

Get Low Fares & Island-Wide Discounts Now:

New JMB memberships -- **One year, \$59; Three Years, \$95; Five years, \$125 (other durations available)**  
[http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml)

Renewal JMB memberships -- **Low-cost renewals -- the longer the renewal, the lower the price per year:**

**1 year \$39; 3 years \$69; 7 years \$139**

[www.everythingsxm.com/secret](http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret) Go to the *Membership Renewal Center*

JMB Membership Reinstatements -- **Low-cost reinstatements**

**1 year \$39; 2 years \$49; 5 years \$99**

<http://everythingsxm.com/sxm/reinststate/index.shtml>

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## 11. Now They're Coming: A Slew of New JMB Discounts & Benefits

During September, you'll see us introduce more new discounts than at any time since we started JMB Website Supporters. We have a stack of them -- restaurants, amazing activities, and lots more. When you join, you'll wind up with lots more than the "about 260" discounts we've mentioned lately as we add a slew of new ones. Stay tuned, we'll be describing the new ones both here and on our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#).

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## 12. Join JMB By Phone: Rush Service Available on New Memberships

You can join JMB Website Supporters by phone during normal business hours (EDT) by phoning 508-830-3456. You can also renew or reinstate by calling this number, as well as by using PayPal or check, as we explain [here](#).

Normal turnaround is a few business days. If you need faster turnaround, like two business days, that's available for a modest additional fee when you phone in; the fee is just \$10 in addition to the membership renewal fee.

If you leave us a message and want this expedited service, please be sure to tell us. We are close to enrolling our 28,000th member and would like that person to be you.

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## 13. Construction Starts Next Month on New Dutch Side General Hospital

A replacement is coming for the aging St. Maarten Medical Center, and the Dutch side is erecting it essentially next door to the existing facility.

Construction of the new General Hospital begins in September. This is not the medical tourism project that has been talked about for many years, the "American Clinic." That project hasn't made the transition yet from concept to reality, though we hope that happens soon.

We'll keep you posted on the new hospital, which will take a few years to build. Here's [the story](#).

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## 14. Summer Dog Days in SXM

August dog days are in St. Maarten. Rain will become more likely, not a bad thing because of the ongoing Caribbean drought. The weather is still hot this time of year and when rainstorms come, humidity may be a little higher as well.

September and October are the quietest months on the island for tourism, and they are when some restaurants do their annual closing..

If you're on the island, call your favorite restaurant to see what's what. Some restaurants never close, like Mr. Busby's Beach Bar, Daniel's by the Sea, and Island Pizza, all in Dawn Beach.

## 15. Ti Spa, at L'Esplanade Hotel With Tricia Altenau, Is The Island's Best

If you're looking for a spa that has virtually every service and a record of excellence, Ti spa is it.

Under the leadership of seasoned practitioner Tricia Altenau, this spa, located at the beautiful L'Esplanade Resort Hotel in Grand Case, is in our experience the best on the island.

We first visited Tricia shortly after the millennium and have been going ever since. Just do it. [Tricia's site](#) tells you about all her services and a bit about her as well.

Tricia also offers discounts to JMB Website Supporters members; see the Secret Site for details (members only).

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## 16. Cupecoy Beach: Why We Think It's The Best

Breathtakingly gorgeous, with sandstone cliffs in the background and beautiful sunsets, Cupecoy beach is arguably the most prime spot on the island.

Clothing optional by tradition, it reaches its height of activity in January and February, when the annual migration of Lemondroppers arrives. This welcoming group is friendly, warm, and knows how to relax — but the beach is beautiful anytime.

Dany and John offer chair and umbrella rentals and liquid refreshments, with their active Lolo beachside restaurant providing service to the beach during high season. It's great stuff which you should not miss. (Dutch Side).

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## 17. Zika Update

As you know, there are cases of Zika on both sides of the island — with more reported on the French side than the Dutch.

In the vast majority of cases, Zika is a very mild disease, offering no symptoms at all. However for women in their first three months of pregnancy it can cause microcephaly, a severe birth defect, so if you are or may become pregnant when visiting the island definitely seek your doctor's advice before making plans. If you don't plan to get pregnant, come on down.

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## 18. Seaweed Update

Sargassum comes from the Sargasso Sea well Northeast of the islands. Sometimes storms affect current and the result is Sargassum seaweed on the islands or in the Gulf of Mexico. It happens occasionally.

In recent months, it has been no big deal and in fact, that continues. There is a little seaweed now that beach businesses are routinely removing, in part with government funding. It's no big deal.

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## 19. Bus Transportation in SXM

The big fancy buses you see plying the roads on SXM carry ship passengers on excursions.

There is no such thing as a normal US-type bus plying the roads on SXM. Instead, the island has privately owned vans or minivans which cover a number of routes specified in window signs. Some have a/c, some not.

Some tourists love them, but most tourists rent cars with a much smaller number using taxis. Several car rental companies offer our JMB Website Supporters members discounts; see the beginning of this section for membership info.

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## 20. They're Back: Our Copyrighted SXM Euro-Ovals

Printed with green ink on bright white vinyl, varnished for long life, our copyrighted SXM euro ovals have been adorning cars on SXM and in the US for more than 15 years.

They're back. You can now get two for \$10 or 5 for \$15 mailed first class to your home in the US or Canada. You can pay for them by PayPal or by check. If you pay by PayPal, make sure the money is sent to [jeff@JMBcommunications.com](mailto:jeff@JMBcommunications.com) and in the comments section be sure to tell us what you're buying — two for \$10 or five for \$15, SXM euro ovals, *and include your current correct mailing address*. If you pay by check, we accept US dollar checks only drawn on US banks — sorry, no Canadian checks. You can mail them to SXM euro ovals, care of JMB Communications, PO Box 1812, Plymouth, MA 02362-1812. Make the check payable to JMB Communications.

We have a decent supply but we suggest you order quickly to get them quickly.

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## 21. Send Us Your SXM Euro-Oval Pictures

We would love to see pictures of the back of your car with our everything St. Maarten SXM euro oval plastered there. Feel free to post them on our everything St. Maarten Facebook site — where you can post lots of St. Maarten pictures, preferences, and questions — or, if you prefer, email them to [SusanK@JMBcommunications.com](mailto:SusanK@JMBcommunications.com). We'll then post them on our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#). Thank you.

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## 22. Gas Prices

Although gas prices in SXM have continued to decline, don't expect them to be anywhere near as low as prices in the United States.

\$1.83 per gallon in the US, doesn't compare well with gas on the Dutch side priced at guilders per liter. On the French side, particularly at the Cadisco stations near Orient beach and near the soccer Stadium just North of the French side drawbridge, you pay in dollars per liter with dollars equal to euros, at least for now. Those two stations are among the lowest-cost on the island, French or Dutch, but again they don't come anywhere near \$1.83 per gallon.

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## 23. How To Solve The "Pre-Existing Conditions" Waiting Period on SkyMed Memberships

When you buy SkyMed Medical Evacuation memberships, they *include* coverage for pre-existing conditions after only a 90 day waiting period. If you have pre-existing conditions and want to be sure they're covered when you travel, you simply buy an annual SkyMed membership more than 90 days ahead of when you plan to start traveling.

Of course, SkyMed covers pre-existing conditions in full without a waiting period on its short-term memberships. However, annual memberships offer a number of important advantages over short term including coverage for a full year; coverage that is renewable regardless of your age or changes in your health for as long as you live (even to age 109+) as long as you renew before your membership renewal payment due date; and no "rated" increased fees, related to advancing age or declining health.

Although short-term memberships do not have any waiting period, their serious disadvantage is that they cover you only for the length of the term you buy -- and you must reapply to obtain another short-term membership later. At some point, your health may be such that you won't qualify for another short-term membership, which is why we always recommend people buy annual memberships which are guaranteed renewable at then-current pricing for everyone without renewal-related evidence of insurability provided you have not let your membership lapse.

Why wait? Get SkyMed now: [www.getskymed.com](http://www.getskymed.com). More on SkyMed is in articles later in this newsletter.

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## 24. Restaurant of the Week: Returns in September

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## 25. Got a Spare \$45,000? Anything Can Happen Anywhere, Anytime - So You Might Just Need It

SkyMed *Takes You Home*® to doctors and hospitals you know and trust when you become critically ill or injured while traveling. *Whether it's an accident, a sudden illness, or virtually anything else, SkyMed is your free ticket home aboard an ICU-equivalent emergency medical evacuation jet with an ICU-certified medical attendant on board to make sure everything goes as planned.*

Like clockwork, you'll be taken from the hospital to a waiting aircraft by ambulance at SkyMed's expense; SkyMed pays all costs for the medical evacuation jet and for the ambulance at the destination which takes you to a waiting team at your destination hospital, which already has your medical records and is ready to start helping you.

*Anything can happen anywhere — but you can always trust SkyMed to take you home when you need it most.*

Without SkyMed, you'll need \$45,000 or more payable in cash in advance to pay for a medical evacuation — if you can make the dozens of calls necessary to set it up in an emergency. SkyMed does all that for you; you simply make one phone call 24/7/365 to get things going. *Enroll today while it's fresh in your mind.* The SkyMed bonus will kick in afterwards, as described below.

See [www.getskymed.com](http://www.getskymed.com) or phone Jeff any weekday at 508-747-8281 or email him at [jeff@getskymed.com](mailto:jeff@getskymed.com) (use the subject "SkyMed inquiry") to learn more and get your questions answered.

If you're not a JMB Website Supporters member and would like to join SkyMed, here's something special for you...

a) Buy a new annual or multi-year family SkyMed membership at \$499 -- it covers you for a full year. You must buy it from us at [www.getskymed.com](http://www.getskymed.com) or by phone, 508-747-8281 (regular office hours EDT).

b) After you receive your membership materials from SkyMed, forward your SkyMed "welcome" email to us at [support@jmbcommunications.com](mailto:support@jmbcommunications.com) plus your street address and home phone number. We'll give you a one-year JMB membership on us (it will take a few days). *Applies only to nonmembers of both JMB and SkyMed. Offer expires August 31, 2016. We'll do the same thing, of course, for current JMB members buying new SkyMed memberships for themselves.*

c) You'll then be able to upgrade your annual SkyMed membership to a three- or five-year Ultimate membership, with global coverage, at our heavily discounted JMB members-only pricing.

To learn more, email [jeff@getskymed.com](mailto:jeff@getskymed.com) and include your phone number; we'll set up a brief phone call and take your application by phone if you like. We'll be happy to answer your SkyMed questions.

Annual SkyMed memberships cover you throughout the "SkyMed Universe" with SkyMed "Takes You Home" emergency medical evacuation services. The "Universe" includes the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean including Cuba. You can add specialized coverage for the rest of the world for \$100/year but it's better to upgrade to a SkyMed Ultimate which includes global services and quite a bit more for the same price, for JMB members only. Jeff will be happy to explain SkyMed or SkyMed Ultimate features and benefits. (Also see the Q&A in this issue.)

For more on JMB memberships, look below.

New JMB memberships -- **One year, \$59; Three Years, \$95; Five years, \$125 (other durations available)**  
[http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about\\_sxm/paypal.shtml](http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml)

Renewal JMB memberships -- **Low-cost renewals -- the longer the renewal, the lower the price per year:**  
**1 year \$39; 3 years \$69; 7 years \$139**  
[www.everythingsxm.com/secret](http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret) Go to the *Membership Renewal Center*

JMB Membership Reinstatements -- **Low-cost reinstatements**  
**1 year \$39; 2 years \$49; 5 years \$99**

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<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

More stories are below.

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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 agent, Arun Jagtiani, featured on HGTV.](#)

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**26. Answers About SkyMed Medical Evacuation (Updated 7/31/16)**

Here are constantly updated questions and answers about SkyMed, the folks who fly you home in 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](http://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 say in their fine print that they 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 low 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 -- which is why we recommend annual or multiyear memberships. *Why risk the hurdle of medical requalification?*)

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

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

**Q. How fast are the evacuations?**

A. That depends on a number of factors. First the patient must be medically stable and ready to fly. Even though emergency medical evacuations are aboard ICU-equivalent medevac jets, the patient's stable health during the trip is of paramount importance. He / she must be medically stable to take that trip. Although arrangements for the electronic transfer of medical records, reserving flight and medical crews and the jet itself, making hospital arrangements at the destination hospital, and setting up ambulances at both ends of trip must all be completed beforehand, nonetheless it generally takes only a matter of hours before you're in the plane on the way to hospitals and doctors you know and trust near home. Bottom line is that SkyMed does it as quickly as it can be done assuring the patient's health and safety during the medical evacuation and the flight home.

**Q. Do they 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, when 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 in the US or Canada 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 in full, immediately. *Just remember that you must medically*

requalify every time you need a new short-term membership, which is why most of our members buy and renew annual or multiyear Ultimate SkyMed memberships instead of short-term. Those memberships cover all pre-existing conditions in full after only 90 days. More on that is below.

**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), out of your home country (USA or Canada) 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. (See the question, "**Does SkyMed cover us no matter where we travel?**" which is below.)

**Q. Does SkyMed cover pre-existing conditions?**

A. Yes, right away for short-term memberships and after just a 90 day waiting period for 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 that SkyMed approves, they'll renew it every year upon on-time payment of your renewal fee. No physical exam is required regardless of your age or health if you've paid your membership renewal 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. There is no maximum. Apply away.

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

A. Yes, at about \$9/day per person or maximum \$18/day per family. 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. That's a key advantage over short-term plans.

**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, not policies) 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. **Ex-Pat and "Silver" memberships also are offered.**

**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, assuming renewals are paid on time. 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. **Multiyear memberships give you more benefits than annual memberships but cost less when paid at inception. They're quite a bargain.**

**Q. Is there a best time to buy?**

A. Yes -- exactly like fire insurance, buy it before you need it! Why gamble? The peace of mind alone is worth every

penny.

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

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

**Q. I already belong to SkyMed but I'm pretty sick now. Will SkyMed drop me?**

Once you've bought an annual or longer SkyMed membership, that membership stays in force as long as you pay renewals on time regardless of how old you get or how sick you get. When you're in, you're in -- declining health is not an issue. And no, you do not have to tell us about changes in your health that occur after you join.

**Q. I'm an American [or Canadian] xPat now living in SXM. Since I live there, can I still be brought "home" to Canada or the US?**

As long as you've purchased our xPat Membership (for people who live in SXM six months or more per year), you absolutely will be taken home, back to the US or Canada, to the hospital of your choice when you become critically ill or injured. Just be sure you've specified your preferred home hospital in your SkyMed application.

**Got Other Questions?**

If you have questions about SkyMed not answered above, email [jeff@getskymed.com](mailto:jeff@getskymed.com) and Jeff will get back to you or phone him at 508-747-8281. Please also include your phone number and best time to call; he'll be in touch. *Please use the subject "SkyMed Inquiry" in your email.*

SkyMed Takes You Home®: What else matters?

For more, see [skymed.com/jmbspecial](http://skymed.com/jmbspecial) (JMB members) or [www.getskymed.com](http://www.getskymed.com) (non-JMB members) or email Jeff directly at [jeff@getskymed.com](mailto: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.

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## 27. Download The Complete List of All SkyMed Features & Benefits

Read it for yourself: it beats every would-be competitor hands-down. Look:

<http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxmweeklynews/SkyMedServices.pdf>

This is an Adobe Acrobat PDF Document. Your system most likely already has a PDF Reader (free) but if not you can get one here: [download Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).

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## 28. Interact With Fellow SXM Visitors on Our Everything SXM Facebook Site

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*.

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## 29. Where to Find Past Issues of SXM Weekly News



Look here for our PDF archives: [http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free\\_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml](http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml). This was scheduled to complete an update by 8/20.

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### 30. Win SXM Vacations and Much More in Our "Five Million Smiles" Giveaway

A complete list of all current prizes appears here next week — but you can enter now, if you are a direct (not pass-along) subscriber to **SXM Weekly News**... Click the link to enter now:

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

Entries from pass-along subscribers will be printed on rice paper and fed to goats. Don't let the island's goats get any fatter: subscribe directly now by clicking "Free Newsletters" at [www.everythingsxm.com](http://www.everythingsxm.com). *Only direct subscribers are eligible to win -- and subscriptions are free.*

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### 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](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](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.

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

#### **SECTION 5: For Members Only (Constantly Updated)**

- A. Where to Get Member Info: [www.everythingsxm.com/secret](http://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](http://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](http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret) .Your username and password are required.

#### **SECTION 6: Background Information for Travelers (For New Readers)** Updated 10/18/15

See [www.everythingsxm.com](http://www.everythingsxm.com).

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#### 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 \*2016 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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#### Get Your Own Free Copy Of St. Maarten and St. Martin Weekly News:

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

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Our email headers also contain subscribe / unsubscribe / address change links.

### Contact Us: [Revised 4/23/16]

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](mailto:support@jmbcommunications.com)**

NON-members who wish to contact us should write to **[jmbweb@jmbcommunications.com](mailto: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](http://www.everythingsxm.com) .

To see the JMB Communications Privacy Policy, visit [http://everythingxm.com/sxm/privacy\\_policy/index.shtml](http://everythingxm.com/sxm/privacy_policy/index.shtml)

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