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

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http://everythingsxm.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

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

This is issue #959 of Jeff Berger's / JMB Communications' *St. Maarten and St. Martin (SXM) Weekly News*, published every Monday all year long (Tuesdays during some holiday weeks). You're receiving this because you subscribed or are a JMB Website Supporters member.

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

-- *Tropical Storm Edouard*

-- *Dutch Side Government Resigns; Why It's No Big Deal*

-- [**Beat The 10/1 Price Increase on The Biggest, Best SXM Discount Package; Get 200 Discounts Across SXM -- Lowest Prices End 9/30 \(Applies to New, Renewal, and Reinstated JMB Memberships\)**](#)

-- *What To Do About Overcrowded SXM Hospitals (Story 12)*

-- *Mullet Bay Beach Umbrella/Chair Shack Destroyed by Fire; Arson Suspected*

-- *JMB Website Supporters Current Discount Vouchers Will Soon Be Voided -- Here's Why And What To Do*

-- *Which Credit Cards to Use in SXM -- And Why*

-- *No-Fee ATMs*

-- *Discounts on Hotel Stays*

-- *Blue Mall Adds Many New Stores -- Here are The Newest*

-- *Why "Be The Change" Endowment Deserves Your Help*

-- *Short Film "Consumed" Shot in SXM*

-- [**Only \\$59/month Gets You Five Years of Global Medical Evacuation Protection from SkyMed \(plus a bonus of five years of JMB Website Supporters membership - bonus ends 9/30\)**](#)

-- *Plus many more new stories*

29 new stories this week

Scroll down for our complete Table of Contents

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 200+ 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 (Three):

RENTAL 7/20/2014 12/20/2014 Week 30 - 50 Simpson Bay Resort - Formally the Marina Residences Ocean front Simpson Bay Marina residences. Rent the villa, the one bedroom, the junior suite together or separately. Amazing sunset from the deck. Fully equipped kitchen in Villa. The 1 bedroom sleeps 4, the junior suite sleeps 2. Close to shopping, restaurants and the casino. Wi-fi included. Email for photos. Located on the second floor, easy access to parking and elevators. Timeshare tax not included. May rent daily as well depending on availability. \$1700 Villa/\$1200 1 bedroom/\$950 junior suite Deb - 443-221-8984 debrapattick46@gmail.com

RENTAL 1/31/15 to 2/7/15 (week 5) Simpson Bay Resort Marina 207, a sleep-four studio overlooking both the Marina pool and Pelican beach (a short walk to Marina Residences, next door). Many beaches, great restaurants, piano bar (The Red Piano), more nightlife, casinos, a Deli, and other shops and nearby. A clothing optional beach is about two miles away. Unit features stove, microwave, cable TV, WiFi is on site, sleeps four, very convenient. \$1099. This unit is also for sale at just \$2499! Timeshare tax (\$50) is renter's responsibility. Please contact Susan at (508) 747-8281 or email susan@jmbcommunications.com

RENTAL 02/07/2015 02/14/2015 Week 6 The Villas @ Simpson Bay Resort & Marina Jr.Suite 504B (Lock-out) 2 full beds, small kitchen - dorm size refrigerator, microwave, toaster, coffee maker, NO STOVE; spacious bathroom/separate double vanity area. Balcony overlooks Simpson Bay & Pool. Restaurants, Casino, Tennis Courts, pools, deli, shops, Marina, beach, free kayaks, beach equipment, Beach Bar, Fitness Center. \$1,000 Josephine 914-761-7451 scope4@frankenspeed.com

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week (Now Two):

SALE January 9 2015 to February 6 2015, weeks 2 through 5, Royal Palm Beach Resort (Diamond international) Unit #8422 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom ocean front with a 4th floor view of Simpson Bay. Newly updated, has a washer and dryer in the unit in a locker for your personal use Full kitchen and open patio. Will sell 1 weeks separately \$3500 per week, All 4 weeks @ \$3000 per week or Best Offer Unit is a Friday to Friday, Lease ends 2050. Thomas 715-370-3879 twagner@pti-1.com

SALE: January 17 to January 24, 2015 (week 3) Sapphire Beach Club on Cupecoy Beach, sleep-four unit faces Cupecoy Beach and the

Caribbean sea. Includes a Jacuzzi whirlpool hot tub on the balcony, king size bed, full a/c, cable TV, DVD player, refrigerator with ice maker, marble bath, beautiful furnishings throughout. Resort has shops, restaurants, min-mart, plus a large pool, whirlpool, and bar -- all on the ocean. Close to Atlantis Casino, many great restaurants including Temptation, plus Mullet Bay Beach, the Cupecoy clothing-optional beach, Baie Longue, and Baie Rouge on the French Side, and did I say incredible restaurants? Asking only \$4499 to buy (negotiable). We also have weeks four and five available to rent or buy at nearby resorts; will discount if you buy or rent two weeks or more. Photos available. Phone Jeff at (508) 747-8281 or email Susan susan@jmbcommunications.com

Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:

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

This Week's Stories

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

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



<https://www.facebook.com/EverythingStMaarten>

"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://everythingsxm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

Archives prior to April 12 2014 (old format):

<http://everythingsxm.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 200+ Money-Saving SXM-focused travel discount benefits through JMB Website Supporters:

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

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Rent Out or Sell Your SXM Timeshare

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- C. Members: Why Check Airfares Daily?
- D. Members: Password Recovery Info
- E. How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads

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How To Get a GROWING LIST of 200+ 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 12/17/13]

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. Tropical Storm Edouard Forms Well East of SXM -- Will Not Affect Islands or US

The quite excellent news is that tropical storm Edouard is forming well east of St. Maarten, but it will never affect any part of the Caribbean or the United States. The storm will, forecasters say, meander harmlessly around the central Atlantic.

See next story.

2. Hurricane Season: So Far, So Good

So far this hurricane season, St. Maarten has been hit by little more than heavy rains and occasional squally weather. When you click Weather on www.everythingStMaarten.com and look at the African continent, as of Saturday night you saw a tremendous amount of bad weather moving East to West toward the tropical Atlantic breeding grounds for major hurricanes.

Whether in fact anything will happen with these systems, of course, nobody knows, but September is usually a busy time for hurricane development. As we write this late on Friday, lots of activity looks likely over the next several weeks.

As always, we'll keep you posted. Important alerts are always posted on our [Facebook page](#). And critical alerts, telling you when major weather events are about to happen, are always e-mailed to [JMB Website Supporters members](#) as quickly as we can.

3. Very Important To Reconfirm All Fall Flights

This bears repeating: every fall, airlines serving the Caribbean tend to make lots of changes in flight times, equipment, and pricing. This drives our airfare researchers bonkers because often, if low-price tickets are offered, they're available very briefly and in very limited numbers.

The more significant problem is that airlines may make schedule changes without always telling customers. That's why, this time of year particularly, we always urge all passengers with confirmed reservations to be sure to contact your airline several days before your flight to reconfirm flight days and times. You should also check the day ahead to make sure nothing else has changed.

4. Which Airlines Have The Best / Worst On-Time Records?

The US Department of Transportation said last week that among the 14 largest US airlines, 75.6% of flights during July arrived on time, an improvement from July of 2013. The top three airlines in terms of on-time arrivals were Hawaiian Airlines, Delta Air Lines, and Alaska Airlines.

Hawaiian's on-time departure percentage was 93.3%, which is largely attributable to the fact that most of its flights occur in Hawaii, far from the overcrowded airports in major US mainland cities where flights are often delayed.

The worst airline in terms of on-time performance among the 14 listed by the Department of Transportation was JetBlue, whose percentage was 65.8%. The reason for JetBlue's poor performance is that a plurality of its flights are flown from JFK in New York, one of the busiest airports on the planet and one subject to delays for weather and congestion (and sometimes construction) year-round. The second worst airline in terms of on-time performance was Southwest, followed by American Airlines.

SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares

5. RIU, Anse Marcel, Opens Adults-Only Property at Former Aruba Westin

The former Radisson Blu hotel in Anse Marcel became a RIU Palace hotel earlier this year.

Largely unknown to most Americans, RIU is making a push into the Caribbean market. They've just taken over the former Westin hotel in Aruba and are rebranding it a RIU Palace adults only property. They have not done this with the Radisson property in St. Martin, nor have we seen any indication that they plan to.

RIU, a family-owned chain founded in Spain in 1953, is a name that certainly could become much more familiar around the Caribbean.

6. Looking For a Place To Stay?

St. Maarten offers a wide array of hotels, timeshares, guesthouses, beach resorts, plus hundreds of villas across the island. Stay with one or two other couples, and you'll find that villas, particularly when shared, are not as expensive as you think.

You'll find a number of villas we recommend right here: http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/where_to_stay/index.shtml.

Please also see the next two stories.

7. Here's Where to Find SXM Condo Rentals / Sales

As we mentioned in recent weeks, the 2014 – 2015 high season looks like it's going to be quite busy. A number of folks are just starting now to look for places to stay. If you're among them, our advice is to get cracking because a lot of reservations are already in place across the island

through the winter. If you're particularly looking for extended stays, inquire now; don't wait another few weeks as the cold weather and snow become entrenched -- you don't want to be disappointed this winter.

If you go to www.everythingStMaarten.com, we have hundreds of timeshare weeks and other vacation properties listed for rent or for sale right on our site. They're directly from timeshare owners and they pay us no commission, so you get the best price. Also, since we only allow posts from our paying [JMB Website Supporters](#) members, there's no mystery as to who these individuals are. We never accept any ads from nonmembers or any member who does not own the property they're advertising.

The page is updated every few days, so check it often.

8. Other Sources of Villa Rentals

Over the years, we've visited a number of villas across the island. We have long recommended both Bobby Valins, the Villa Lady, and our friend Marilyn Pulito as excellent sources of seaside villas.

Take a look at Bobby's site for more information: <http://www.rentstmaartenvillas.com/> . Marilyn is an equally great source with a huge selection covering many islands and she is a JMB Sponsor. See her site [here](#). Tell them we suggested you call.

9. How To Get Discounts on SXM Hotel Stays

As most longtime readers are well aware, we offer a spectrum of discounts including accommodations discounts through our JMB Website Supporters program. Launched in 2002, the program currently offers about 200 discounts for almost everything you can do or buy on the island. If you can imagine it, it's highly likely we offer discount for it, and that includes discounts on SXM hotel stays.

Beat the October 1 price increase on new JMB memberships — see the ad elsewhere in this issue and get discounts on "everything St. Maarten/St. Martin" in time for your next trip.

Why spend more than you have to?

SECTION 3: Island

It's Almost Over: Low Prices End 9/30 -- *Beat The Price Increase*

Own The Biggest, Best SXM Discount Package at the Lowest Price; Get 200 Discounts Across SXM Now

The cost of JMB Website Supporters new, renewal, and reinstated memberships increases October 1. Even our lowest-priced memberships, those with the longest terms, will be increasing to catch up to rising costs.

Beat the price increase by joining, renewing, or reinstating your JMB Website Supporters membership today. You'll receive about 200 discounts across the island including sizable jewelry gift cards, half-off members-only lagoon sunset cruises, discounts at dozens of restaurants, plus many activities, art, shopping, and other discounts on both sides of the island.

Other discount programs come and go, but JMB Website Supporters grows and grows.

And it's just \$59 for one year but much less per year when you buy multiyear memberships. Low prices for renewals and reinstatements, too.

Learn more here: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml . *Your JMB membership keeps these newsletters coming every week.*

10. Dutch Side Prime Minister & Cabinet Resign

Although the Dutch side Prime Minister, Sarah Wescot Williams, and her cabinet have resigned, there is not a power vacuum in island government. The governor of the island must accept their resignation, which he will do effective when the new coalition government is ready to be sworn in.

This is the way the parliamentary form of government works on the island.

As we mentioned before, the new coalition is a bit fragile. If just one member of the three party coalition decides to move over to the UP party, that party would have a majority and the coalition government would fall. A new government by the popular political figure Theo Heyliger could then be formed.

As always, we'll keep you posted concerning what's happening (of significance to tourists) in the governments of both sides of the island.

11. Mullet Bay Beach Umbrella/Chair Shack Destroyed by Fire; Arson Suspected

Next to the barbecue area on Mullet Bay beach there is a small shack that contains beach umbrellas and chairs for rent.

At least, that was the case until last week, when the shack was destroyed by fire in the early evening. Firefighters arrived too late, since the shack was pretty much destroyed when they got there.

Fire officials at the scene said they believed the fire was set, and told the owner to contact police.

12. Both Hospitals Often Full; Major Hospital Renovation / Expansion on Dutch Side "Long Overdue"

An article in the St. Maarten *Daily Herald* pointed out something we didn't know: that both hospitals on the island are often full, not a good thing when the island is so well populated and when its population swells by many thousands every high season.

As we reported, there are plans for a major renovation and expansion of the St. Maarten medical center. In addition, there continues to be talk about an American clinic which may be located near the Royal Palm complex on Kim Sha beach in Simpson Bay.

The problem is that none of these facilities will accept any American or Canadian healthcare plans, including government plans, for payment if you become ill or injured on the island. That's one of the reasons we have long suggested SkyMed medical evacuation plans for visiting Americans and Canadians.

If you travel infrequently, these plans will cost under nine dollars a day per person, maximum \$18 per day. Even their best plan, the SkyMed Ultimate, costs only \$59 per month for its five-year term.

There are three huge advantages to SkyMed plans versus any others.

First, SkyMed takes you home when you become critically ill or injured when traveling. In their fine print, virtually all of the other plans promise to take you home or to the nearest appropriate facility at their discretion, which means you could wind up in San Juan — which makes no

sense at all if you're from Seattle, Springfield, Saugerties, or Saskatchewan. SkyMed takes you home — what else matters?

Second, if you have a SkyMed annual or Ultimate plan, that plan will never become more expensive simply because your health declines or your age advances. SkyMed doesn't play those games. Once you're a member, you're a member as long as you continue to pay your membership fee regardless of what happens to your health or advancing age.

Third, Jeff Berger has been selling SkyMed to readers of this newsletter and to JMB Website Supporters members for about 12 years. He has sold somewhere in the vicinity of 2000 memberships and a few dozen of the people who have bought have required emergency medical evacuation home, which is a significant number. Without SkyMed, those people would have been required to pay upwards of \$45,000 in advance, in cash, in order to get medical evacuation in an emergency, if they could do so. No \$45,000 cash in advance — no emergency medical evacuation jet home.

SkyMed pays for everything related to your evacuation. All members have to do is make one toll-free telephone call to SkyMed and SkyMed makes all the arrangements and takes care of and pays for all the details of the evacuation.

If you still don't have SkyMed, [see the article](#) about it and don't wait any longer. It's time to protect yourself and get the peace of mind that having SkyMed will bring you.

13. 1000 Visitors Expected For FCCA Cruise Conference & Trade Show in October

The Florida Caribbean Cruise Association, FCCA, has a great deal to do with most of the cruise ships you see all year long at the Wathey Cruise and Cargo Facility in downtown Philipsburg.

The FCCA cruise conference and tradeshow will be held in St. Maarten next month and it will draw about 1000 visitors to the island.

Most of the biggest hotels and a number of timeshares will be accommodating these visitors during a month when the island is usually quite quiet, a very good thing for the island economy, for all its workers, and for all these visitors who are so important to the island economy. The island could use more major conference visitors.

14. Blue Mall Adds Many New Stores -- Check It Out for the Holidays

The Blue Mall opened in St. Maarten officially last fall, with a lot of hoopla and very few stores.

Many Americans wondered aloud if it would succeed given its odd layout, its location far from Philipsburg, its relatively high prices compared to

malls at home, and its paucity of retail establishments.

But the developers of the Blue Mall seem to be quite well-heeled and are in this for the long haul, or so it appears. We wrote about their growth last week -- here are specifics:

Among the new retailers coming to Blue Mall in the near-term are Crocs; Steve Madden; Anne Klein; Nine West; and others. The mall notes that these join a number of other stores, including Dunhill, Swarovski, Adidas, Everlast, Swatch, Yogen Fruz, and a number that are less familiar to North Americans.

Give it a try on your next visit; there's more there now than you expect, with still more coming.

15. JMB Website Supporters Current Discount Vouchers Will Soon Be Voided -- Here's Why And What To Do

JMB Website Supporters membership has been increasing, thanks to an improving economy and a huge array of discounts across the island.

All members joining JMB are given membership cards entitling them to discounts and other benefits. A number of our discounts require vouchers which are only usable to those showing a valid current JMB membership card.

During the next few months, we are going to be replacing all of our current discount vouchers with new ones that remind our retail partners and our members of the membership card requirement. Effective later this year, vouchers will not be accepted without JMB Website Supporters membership cards. Some of our partners are still lenient about this but we'll will be seeing them on the island soon just to make sure they know of the requirement that membership cards must be shown to avoid fraud.

All of the new vouchers will show that they must be presented along with the membership card and photo ID to ensure that only JMB members receive our discounts.

JMB Website Supporters is one of the oldest and by far the largest of all the island's discount programs. The price of membership soon increases, so buy a new membership, renew your current membership, or reinstate your former membership now to beat the price increase.

We're doing our best to keep JMB Website Supporters the best SXM discount program and to ensure our benefits and discounts are obtainable exclusively by JMB members.

16. Theo Heyliger's Guana Bay Home Is Burglarized

Theo Heyliger, the island's most popular political figure, has always said that he is no different from anyone else, and he faces the same trials and tribulations as any other citizen of the Dutch side of the island.

Last week, his Guana Bay home was burglarized when, fortunately, no one was home. His grandmother is usually on the property but was not there at the time of the burglary.

St. Maarten is paradise, not utopia, as our friend Kathy Hetzel has always said. We're sure that his property was very well protected.

But for whatever reason, there does seem to be a slight increase in crime each fall, perhaps because the economy slows at this time of year. We wrote last week about the Sargasso seaweed and all of our readers know that this is the height of hurricane season. Despite the fact that hurricanes are very infrequent and Sargasso seaweed only affects one coast of the island, tourist traffic in the fall is still low.

Because of that apparent slight crime increase each fall, this issue includes a couple of special articles concerning crime and how you can prevent it. Please see articles 21 and 22 in this edition.

17. Why "Be The Change" Endowment Deserves Your Help

Erika Cannegieter, about whom we wrote over the last couple of weeks, formed the Be the Change Foundation as a central place enabling everyone to donate to all of the island's most worthy charities. Indeed, it is somewhat analogous to the United Fund with one huge difference: virtually every penny donated gets to the charities, not to some top-heavy administrative overhead.

At age 36, Erika recently passed away. The Be the Change Foundation is her legacy, and our friend Jeff Sochrin and others are working to create a \$25,000 endowment to further the charitable activities of the Be the Change Foundation.

We urge you to give to the foundation. Here is where you can get more information: <http://www.bethechangesxm.com/>

And here is where you can donate: <http://www.gofundme.com/EndowBetheChangeSXM>

18. Hollywood Actor Lamman Rucker Visits SXM Zoo, Helps Kick Off Fundraising

As we reported over the last couple of weeks, the St. Maarten zoo needs your help to stave off bankruptcy and remain as a viable resource for island parents, children, and visitors.

Here is more about what Lamman Rucker did, and how you can help: <http://tinyurl.com/lsmbb4p>

More on an event 9/13 you might want to attend if you're on SXM now:

The St. Maarten Zoological and Botanical Garden Foundation has partnered with actor, educator and activist Lamman Rucker to host the "Save Our Zoo" Gala Premiere Dinner, Movie and Dance at the Belair Community Center on Sept. 13, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

All proceeds from the formal event will go toward maintaining the St. Maarten Zoo and its facilities. Tickets are \$150 and include a "meet and greet" with Lamman Rucker and a premier showing of his upcoming film, Black Coffee, dinner and musical entertainment by Control Band. A silent auction will also take place throughout the evening as well as surprise raffle drawings.

In recent months, the St. Maarten Zoological and Botanical Garden Foundation has had challenges raising money to sustain the St. Maarten Zoo, the only zoo on the island. The zoo, which is not subsidized by the government, could face closure if enough funds are not generated to repair the facilities and cover its expenses.

"The zoo is an important part of St. Maarten both as a tourism attraction and an educational resource," said Hon. Minister Ted Richardson, Minister of Tourism "It is our hope that the gala event will generate enough support to allow the zoo to continue providing an interactive atmosphere to learn about animals and their habitats," he added.

Lamman Rucker, star of Meet the Browns, Why Did I Get Married and Why Did I Get Married Too, has taken a special interest in the zoo and will be in St. Maarten to help generate support. "I am thrilled to be a part of this project and am looking forward to attending the 'Save Our Zoo' Gala," said Rucker. "I urge everyone to come out and support this worthy cause," he added.

Tickets to the "Save Our Zoo" Gala Premiere Dinner, Movie and Dance can be purchased at Van Dorp in Madame Estate, Van Dorp in Simpson Bay, Bebe N Kids Bush Road, Bebe N Kids Bellevue, St. Maarten Veterinary Clinic, Animal Hospital of Sint-Maarten, Island Pet Shop, Maleona's, and from all zoo board members. For those who are unable to attend the event, donations can be sent directly to the St. Maarten Zoological and Botanical Garden Foundation.

For more information about the "Save Our Zoo" Gala Premiere Dinner, Movie and Dance, contact Amy Arrindell at 721-522-1149 or via email at amyarrindell@gmail.com.

19. Use "Fun Miles" To Visit The Zoo

Fun miles is an island loyalty program with dozens of sponsors. Patronize any of the sponsors, and you accumulate fun miles which can be redeemed for a number of interesting prizes.

Now, you can use fun miles to visit the St. Maarten zoo. The entry fee is normally only \$10 for adults and \$5 for children, but if you use your fun miles, it only takes 900 miles for an adult admission or 450 miles for a children's admission.

We recommend visiting the zoo at least once during your next trip to the island. It is not a typical zoo — it features many tropical animals you've no doubt never seen. Give it a try and you'll also be helping a very important cause.

20. Short Film "Consumed" Shot Largely in SXM

The trailer of the film will show you a number of SXM locations you'll recognize: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ldEecSCtUU>

And here are details about the film itself: <http://bit.ly/YEhplG>

21. Reminder: No Valuables in Your Car Trunk or On The Beach

We always see people leave valuables in both places. If we see it, so do bad guys. Just don't do it, and don't leave valuables on the seats in your car, either.

22. How To Protect Your Valuables In Your Room

It's not sufficient to simply hide things; experienced crooks know the "best" hiding places. Lock them in a safe in your room or have lobby personnel put them in a central safe and give you a specific receipt for whatever valuables you check.

If you have a computer, use a Kensington four-digit lock (three-digit locks have a dismal failure record). All laptops come with Kensington lock sockets.

23. Cupecoy Monolith Continues to Degrade

The once giant monolith -- that enormous pair of vertical boulders in the water at the center of Cupecoy Beach, long sought after as a photographer's must-shoot in SXM -- is crumbling. The latest pictures of it show a smallish pile of rocks where the monolith once stood.

We've asked our Facebook "peeps" to post old and new pictures of it. Join in here: <https://www.facebook.com/EverythingStMaarten>

24. To Charge or Not To Charge -- And What To Charge With

Before charging in SXM, check with your bankcard provider -- they most likely charge you a foreign transaction/exchange fee for island purchases. (Capital One doesn't, a reader tells us).

Many users are making smaller purchases with cash. Don't carry lots of cash but remember: BofA has an agreement with the Bank of Nova Scotia (Scotia Bank) under which neither charges the other's customers for using ATMs. Keep that in mind, it can save you some bucks. And Scotia Bank has been increasing its number of SXM ATMs in recent years....

25. ATMs to Use on SXM

Scotia Bank; see story # 24. They have a good record so far of not being skimmed.

26. Nissan Leaf, Island's First All-Electric Car, Takes To The Road in SXM

It's the island's first and only all-electric car, bought by a couple for their daughter. They were concerned with the environment.

In SXM, where pricey oil is used to generate electricity, the cost of electricity per kilowatt hour is roughly triple what it is in the US and Canada. The bad news about using electric cars in St. Maarten is electricity is phenomenally expensive and it is backed by an oil burning electric generation plant.

The following two articles regard energy and will be of interest.

27. What To Do When The Lights Go Out

GEBE, The Dutch side electric and water company, for years was a source of ridicule because its power was undependable and its customer service was hardly responsive.

Electric service on the island over the last couple of years has improved significantly, though it is still far from perfect by North American standards. But the progress has been very real. And GEBE is looking into better sources of energy.

If you're on the island this time of year, it's wise to have candles handy and some flashlights in the event a tropical system knocks out power for a period of time.

If the place where you're staying in winter doesn't have automatic generators, it's also wise to have some kind of supplemental illumination in your room, if only a small LED lantern. You can buy them at Kooyman or at Ace Hardware on the island, though mini LED battery-operated lamps are more widely available and more reasonably priced in the US.

Again, power generation on the island is much more reliable than it was, but it's still not perfect

28. SXM "Green" National Energy Policy Earns a Positive Reaction in the Netherlands

This interesting story is from the *SXM Today* newspaper: <http://bit.ly/1pdqWpd>

Global Medical Evacuation Peace-of-Mind \$59/month From SkyMed, the Best In The Business

Having your own medical evacuation membership enables you to get home in a hurry when you or your spouse / partner become critically ill or injured away from home. Without membership, you must pay for the evacuation in cash, in advance -- if you can set it up -- and the cost can easily be \$45,000 or more, sometimes lots more.

Only SkyMed guarantees to take you home should you become critically ill or injured throughout the SkyMed universe, which consists of the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, all the nations of the Caribbean including Cuba, plus Belize and Costa Rica. Should you need protection anywhere in the world, you can get that, too. But the point is simply this: don't travel anywhere without making sure you have medical evacuation protection from SkyMed.

There are a number of SkyMed plans available. Short-term plans are the least expensive in terms of initial outlay, but you must be medically requalified every time you want a new short-term plan. By contrast, both SkyMed annual and Ultimate plans require only one medical qualification when you first apply. When you renew SkyMed, your membership continues uninterrupted and is renewable indefinitely without further medical requalification regardless of your age or health.

The cost of SkyMed never increases because of your advancing age, nor is SkyMed ever canceled strictly because of advancing age, which is in sharp contrast to other plans. SkyMed Takes You Home -- what else matters?

Get yourself protected against the high cost of medical evacuation and you will simultaneously find yourself with great peace of mind. Call SkyMed any weekday Pacific time at 1-800-475-9633 and ask for Nan or Jim. Tell them you are a JMB Website Supporters member to get the best rates. If you're not a member, join; it's just \$99 for four years or \$59 for one year. Sign up for JMB here: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml . The cost of SkyMed is as little as \$59 monthly or \$49 monthly if you do not require global coverage (beyond the "SkyMed universe" we described above).

For one-year or other duration memberships, buy online at www.skymed.com/jmbspecial (JMB members only) or www.skymed.com/jmbxsm (everyone else).

Once you've joined SkyMed through us, email support@jmbcommunications.com and tell them you've bought a new SkyMed Ultimate five-year membership. Upon verification, we'll extend your current JMB Website Supporters membership for five full years. Offer open to U. S. and Canadian citizens only. You must join JMB first to be eligible for this JMB membership extension. And you must join SkyMed only as described above and not by any other means to qualify for the JMB membership extension. Offer ends September 30, 2014. The five-year JMB membership extension will be terminated if you cancel your SkyMed membership before its five-year term expires.

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Want to rent or buy a week?

***2014 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 other weekday. Ads are free (no commission) but are accepted from JMB Website Supporters members only.**

Meet Our Sponsors (updated 9/27/13)

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Rent **St. Maarten Villas** is the website of Villalady Bobby Valins, showcasing her villas in Burgeaux Bay and in Grand Case. See her site at www.rentstmaartenvillas.com.

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Emerald Cove Villas provides a one-of-a-kind vacation experience in Oyster Pond. See their website at www.emeraldcoevillas.com . Learn why *Emerald Cove* is the name.

Caribbean Days provides luxury villa accommodations throughout the Caribbean. See www.caribbeandays.com .

Villa Journeys offers JMB readers villa accommodations (and much more) not only throughout the Caribbean, but across the USA and in Europe.
See www.villajourneys.com

Oyster Bay View Villa, overlooking Oyster Pond and Captain Oliver's Marina, delivers great accommodations near Dawn Beach, a quick ride to Orient Beach and the dozens of fine restaurants at Grand Case. See their site at www.oysterbayview.com

Club Fantastico, www.clubfantastico.net, overlooking Orient Beach, gives you fine villa-like accommodations in a totally clothing optional ambiance, inside and out. It's the perfect place for a *no tan lines* vacation.

Summit Resort Hotel, atop a cliff in Cupecoy, is a favorite. See why; check out www.thesummitresort.com

Shopping: (Updated 9/7/2013)

DK Gems on Front Street (*opposite and not far west of the historic Court House*) offers extraordinary eye-popping gems in a rainbow of exquisite settings. Not to be missed on your next trip. See www.dkgemsint.com .

Zhaveri Jewelers on Front Street opposite Little Switzerland (near the historic Courthouse) offers an incredible inventory of the finest gems in the Caribbean. Offering the island's largest selection of elegant jewelry for men, women, and kids. Visit www.zhaveri.com .

Fine Food, Pastries, Wines/Liquors, Yacht Provisioning:

Le Grand Marche has several Dutch Side locations to conveniently serve you -- at the roundabout near the Bush road, next to Port de Plaisance off the Union Road near the French border, or their *Gourmet Marche* store in Simpson Bay. For all the details see

SECTION 4: For Members Only (Constantly Updated)

Please see www.everythingsxm.com/secret .

SECTION 5: Background Information for Travelers (For New Readers) Updated 12/17/13

Returns soon.

CONTACT US

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