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

Weekly Tourist-Oriented News & Comments from SXM

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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 #963 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:

-- Your Chance To Beat The Price Increase on JMB Website Supporters New Memberships, Renewals, & Reinstatements Extended -- But Only Briefly

-- Hurricane Gonzalo Lashes SXM, Causing Widespread Damage; Heavy Coverage Begins in Section 3

-- Caravanserai / Alegria Situation Worsens as RCI Exchanges End (Into or Out of The Resort)

-- Theo Heyliger To Become New SXM Prime Minister; Government Expected to be More Tourist Oriented

-- [Only \\$59/month Gets You Short-Term Family Medical Evacuation Protection from SkyMed](#)

-- Plus many more new stories

23 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://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, at no charge, join JMB Website Supporters. Visit http://everythingsexm.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 10/18/2014 4/18/2015 42-15 Westin Dawn Beach Club Large 3 bedroom condo with 2 bathrooms, full deck facing ocean, washer/dryer, full kitchen, living room has couch that opens into bed. Could sleep 8. Approx 2000 Sq. Ft. Not available weeks 51,52. All rooms have flat screen TV's electronic hook ups. 3500/wk April 11-Dec 20. \$ 4200 / wk Jan 3-April 11, 2015 6509693199 rbelstock@gmail.com

RENTAL 12/20/2014 2/14/2015 Weeks 50,51,52,1,2,3,4,5,6 Cupecoy Beach Club One bedroom unit available in private condo community. No cooking facilities. Gardenside unit has 2 queen beds, full bath, and balcony. Equipped with microwave, toaster oven, coffeepot, and small refrigerator. Security 24/7. CBC has a pool with swim-up bar, private beach, sun deck, and gym. Across from the Atlantis Casino a many fine restaurants. Walking distance to the AUC medical school. Ideal for AUC parents and visiting professors. Adjacent to the golf course and Mullet Bay Beach. Local buses stop frequently at entrance gate. Maid service available. \$1400.00/week Susan (614) 507-6785 scfinefrock@yahoo.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

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week (Now Two):

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

SALE 2/7/2015 3/7/2015 Weeks 6, 7, 8 & 9 The Villas @ Simpson Bay Resort & Marina 2-bedroom suite, 5th fl. king bed/master bedroom, 2 Murphy beds/living room, full kitchen, dining/living room, spacious bathroom, separate double vanity area. 2nd bedroom (Lock-out) (Separate entrance) able to rent out. 2 full beds, small kitchen - dorm size refrigerator, microwave, toaster, coffee maker, NO STOVE; spacious bathroom/separate double vanity area. 2 Balconies overlooking Simpson Bay & Pool. Resort - Restaurants, Casino, tennis courts, pools, deli, shops, Marina, beach, free kayaks, beach equipment, Beach Bar, Fitness Center. Plenty of Restaurants - walking distance. \$23,000 for each Week Jo 914-761-7451 scope4@frankenspeed.com

Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:

See them all at http://everythingxsm.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://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

Archives prior to April 12 2014 (old format):

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

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

www.linkedin.com

Get a growing list of 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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-- Low Membership Prices Extended For The Last Time -- Help Us Help You By Joining, Renewing, or Reinstating Today
-- Completely New Travel Benefit Gives JMB Members & Weekly News Readers Free Access To Lowest-Cost Airfares -- And Much More

[Go Nowhere Without SkyMed MedEvac Protection -- About \\$1.25/day Protects You For a Full-Year](#)

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Scroll down for indexes to sections IV and V, and scroll further to get a growing list of 200+ St. Maarten and St. Martin-focused travel discounts.

Rent Out or Sell Your SXM Timeshare

Meet Our Sponsors (Updated 9/7/13)

Section Four: For Members Only (Revised 12/17/13)

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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. Hurricane Gonzalo Hits SXM (Our Original Story, Written Monday Morning)

[There's an interesting contrast between this story, written early Monday, and the lead story in Section 3, written after the storm swirled northwest. As you'll see when you read the latter, a lot changed in a few hours.-Ed.]

Just days after many meteorologists had said that the Cape Verde hurricane season had ended rather uneventfully, the tropical Atlantic heated up and today, a strong tropical storm named Gonzalo is hitting the island. In fact, a hurricane watch was issued since the storm is very close to hurricane strength as of this writing, shortly after noon on Monday.

The government issued a stream of news releases during the morning closing schools and advising businesses to close by noon because of strong winds and heavy rain expected. Schools were closed for the day and the post office department was to be shut down shortly after noon.

Some electricity interruption should be expected during the storm on both sides of the island, and flight interruptions at Princess Juliana international Airport are highly likely.

St. Maarten's buildings and its infrastructure are geared for hurricanes, which can be part of life on the island every fall. Gonzalo is to the south

of St. Maarten moving West to Northwest and is expected to head for the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Unless a storm intensifies far beyond current expectations, the storms potential 80 mile-per-hour gusts and heavy rains are expected to cause nothing other than minor wind damage and some street flooding.

We will be posting continuous updates on our St. Maarten page on Facebook; to access it, please click this link:



[Now... for what happened later ... see story 11A in Section 3.-Ed.]

2. Could *Two Storms Affect SXM?*

Although there is currently tropical activity in the Atlantic, St. Martin's main focus today is on Gonzalo.

However, between the island and the Cape Verde islands, there is another tropical disturbance which is trying to get its act together. It's having a difficult time in the National Hurricane Center does not expect anything significant to happen in the next few days.

Nonetheless, the disturbance is still there and as long as it exists, there is the potential for something more to develop. Please see the Facebook link in the prior story to check our Facebook page, where we will post continuous updates.

3. Southwest to Fly to Caribbean from Houston Hobby as Well as BWI

When Southwest Airlines merged with AirTran, it was clear that Southwest would be expanding internationally since AirTran already flew outside the US.

We previously reported that Southwest would be flying to the Caribbean from BWI Airport. Now, Southwest has announced that it will also be flying to Caribbean and South American destinations from its new terminal at Houston Hobby Airport. That was sooner than expected.

What does this mean for Southwest flights to St. Maarten? Nobody knows and the airline isn't saying, but it wouldn't surprise us to see Southwest flights landing at Princess Juliana airport from BWI within the next year. As always, *SXM Weekly News* will keep you posted.

4. How To Get The Lowest Prices on Cruises & Package Tours Worldwide

As we recently reported, membership in the SkyMed Travel Club can enable you to obtain the lowest prices on airfare packages and cruises — since the SkyMed Travel Club is a private membership organization and not one of those heavily regulated big public travel sites. It is operated under the SkyMed corporate umbrella by highly seasoned travel professionals who are available by phone to help its members.

For most people, the cost of membership is \$99 to join and \$99 per year. For a limited time, however, we invite our members and our *SXM Weekly News* readers to join for free and be entitled to free renewal memberships.

Once you're on their website, you'll see an online rack of dozens of travel brochures for deals around the world at prices you will not find elsewhere. Moreover, this site has the lowest airfares we've found. They match the lowest you'll find elsewhere or, quite often in our experience, they beat them.

We urge all of our readers to become SkyMed Travel Club members — for free, now. Go to www.SkyMedtravelclub.com and click the sign-up link in the top right corner of the homepage. One question asks you for your SkyMed Membership or a Rep number; just enter 391330 in that space, which will guarantee you a free membership. That's the only special thing special you need to do when filling out the brief sign-up form. This free offer will go away soon, so we urge you to advantage of it now.

5. How To Get The Lowest Prices on Airfares; Guidance on What's "Best"; Plus 200+ SXM Discounts

The previous story also tells you about how to get the lowest prices on airfares — which are offered on the private SkyMed Travel Club website.

Our secret website has long offered very low fares to our JMB members through our low airfare grid. The grid covers 100 cities across the country and in Canada and tells you what you should pay for airfare. Despite the date on the form, it is frequently updated and will soon be updated again — with lower fares, thanks to decreased jet fuel prices.

The low airfare grid tells you *what to look for* when you buy tickets — it's the best advice we know of. The low airfare grid is one of more than 200 discounts and other benefits available to our JMB Website Supporters that will directly impact, in a good way, what you spend every day on the island. If you're not a member, you're spending too much money on the island. See the ad at the beginning of section 3 for much more on JMB Website Supporters Membership.

SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares

6. Caravanserai / Alegria Situation Worsens as RCI Exchanges End (Into or Out of The Resort)

The previous edition of St. Maarten Weekly News was a Caravanserai special edition which covered the emerging situation at the Alegria timeshare resort, formerly Caravanserai.

A number of owners, but not all, have received an e-mail saying that their timeshare contracts are null and void. We published the e-mail and the attachment here last week, here: http://everythingxsm.com/xsm/free_newsletters/xsmweeklynews.shtml

Although efforts are underway on the island to solve this, in the short term things became more difficult for timeshare owners in the last few days.

First, the new owners say they do not want a timeshare resort -- they want a hotel w/ timeshare-like condominiums inside. Alegria discontinued the relationship that Caravanserai had with RCI, Resort Condominiums International. Therefore, any future trades that were made by Caravanserai timeshare owners with other resorts through RCI are, from everything we've seen, void. If you had any such trades arranged, you should call RCI at once.

Second, since Alegria is not a member of RCI, it will not honor any reservations made through RCI for trades into the resort. In fact, guests who had traded into Caravanserai and who were there when the takeover occurred were in their words "thrown out" -- relocated to other resorts, principally St. Maarten Sea Palace on Front Street, Philipsburg, a very nice place on the beach, recently upgraded.

More follows.

7. SMTA Timeshare Association Involved in Meetings to Fix Caravanserai Mess

The SMTA, the St. Maarten Timeshare Association, has stepped into the Caravanserai debacle as an advocate for timeshare owners.

We spoke at length with SMTA secretary Jim Rosen, who has held that position for a number of years. He believes that negotiations between the SMTA, the new ownership of Alegria, and members of the new government on the Dutch side should help to produce an agreement which is satisfactory to all. Others are less sanguine about the possibility. There is no question that members of government and practically everyone else thinks that the move by Alegria is anticonsumer, anti-tourist, etc. It does nothing toward what should be Alegria's initial objective, which should be to cement its relationships with its inherited timeshare owners.

Hopefully this situation can be solved amicably without further injury to any of the parties concerned. If not, it will wind up in court, which will cost timeshare owners money and will damage Alegria's ability to succeed in SXM. We hope that calm heads prevail and that this problem is solved quickly to the benefit of all concerned. We know that's possible.

More: <http://www.todaysxm.com/2014/10/07/timeshare-association-comes-to-the-rescue-at-caravanserai/>

8. Best Condo Resorts on SXM

Because of all the issues at Caravanserai / Alegria, we decided to do some best-of articles in case Alegria owners and others who were planning to trade into Alegria decide to go elsewhere.

We're going to exclude Alegria from this listing because of the issues there. Not all of the units in the resorts we're mentioning here are condos; some are hotel rooms. We are also going to include as condos some units which are suites and which contain everything you would need to live there long-term, were you in the market to do so (stove, refrigerator, etc.)

The first resort we'll list here is the Princess Heights boutique resort in Dawn beach, which you will find also listed in our story about luxury resorts. Many units are condominium units — and all of their units consistently get high grades from visitors, renters, and owners. Highly recommended.

We are not listing these in any special order by the way.

Second on our list is Oyster Bay Beach Resort on Dawn beach, which may well be the best timeshare on the island. It is adjacent to the northern end of Dawn beach, near some very fine restaurants and pizza emporiums, and keeps getting great reviews from its timeshare owners. On the other hand, don't expect availability to be great — particularly in high season.

Third, check out Baker's Suites in Simpson Bay. New from the ground up only a year ago, it is beautifully appointed, very well-managed, immaculate, in every room has a full refrigerator and stove. Its location in the heart of Simpson Bay means it's close to many outstanding restaurants and many island beaches, as well as to the airport.

Fourth, check out the newest section of Simpson Bay Resort, open several years ago. Serious upgrades and now being made resort-wide, and if the unit you are renting is not in the newest building, it may still be outstanding.

Fifth, check out Mary's Boon Beach Plantation which has undergone a renaissance with owners Mark and Karla Cleveland. It is quickly being restored to the excellence it knew for many years — and its location on Simpson Bay beach is quite beautiful.

Sixth, although almost all the units are efficiencies, Summit Resort Hotel in Cupecoy offers free Internet, widescreen TVs, fantastic views, and a staff that truly knows its stuff.

Seventh, Divi little Bay is another timeshare property that gets rave reviews from its owners, as does Royal Islander near the airport — so we recommend both.

Eighth, La Vista and La Vista Beach are beautiful, tranquil spots in a small, very well managed resort. Great little restaurant, too.

Ninth and last, Hotel L'Esplanade in Grand Case cannot be beat. It is gorgeous inside and out, extremely well-managed, and reasonably priced — and the euro to dollar ratio is easier to take now than it has been in years. Highly recommended.

9. Best Large Hotels on SXM

Some of the hotels listed above also fit into this category. There's also the question about much money you want to spend. If money is no object, then you may very well want to splurge for La Samanna, which is widely regarded as the finest resort on the island and the one most likely to be visited by the rich and famous. Nothing is spared here — the food is extraordinary, the accommodations sublime, and the beach immaculate. Service is impeccable. Of course, you pay for it; but if that's not a big deal, this is your place.

The Westin St. Maarten resort and casino, located at the southern end of Dawn beach, is another large, outstanding property.

Featuring many restaurants, a casino just off the lobby, and a few shops, the Westin is probably the best of the name-brand hotels on the island. Since it is largely self-contained, you don't necessarily need a car, but we always recommend one — you will not want to forgo the outstanding restaurants both in the Dawn beach area and beyond. And, of course, the beaches.

You should also consider Princess Heights, Divi little Bay, Oyster Bay beach resort, L'Esplanade, and some of the larger timeshares mentioned in the previous article.

10. Best Suites Hotels on SXM

Some of the condo properties we mentioned in one of the previous articles in this section will be suitable for people seeking suites hotels — but if it's a pure suites Hotel you're looking for, there are really only two:

First, the Princess Heights property, mentioned earlier, is perched high on a hill overlooking Dawn beach and the tropical Atlantic, with St. Barths on the horizon. Bring binoculars, and you'll be able to see cruise ships in the harbor of St. Barths, and watch high-speed ferries with passengers from one of the marinas in oyster pond travel to Gustavia. We highly recommend Princess Heights. When you visit, please say hello to Emil Lee for us — he's the chief honcho.

Second, do check out Baker's Suites in Simpson Bay. It opened less than a year ago and is completely new from the ground up, as we also noted above. Outstanding property — and it's in the middle of one of the most vibrant areas in the island.

11. Best Luxury Hotels on SXM

There are truly two: first, La Samanna,, mentioned in story nine; and, second, Princess Heights, mentioned in story 10 and previously. Check them out.

SECTION 3: Island

[Just \\$59/month Gets You Global SkyMed Medevac Protection: Go Nowhere Without It](#)

JMB Membership Price Increase Is Now Only Days Away; Get The Lowest Prices On The Biggest, Best SXM Discount Package: Get 200+ Discounts Across SXM Now

We've extended our current low prices briefly and for the last time. The cost of JMB Website Supporters new, renewal, and reinstated memberships increases Nov. 1. Even our lowest-priced memberships, those with the longest terms, will be increasing to meet 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 (new memberships) but **much less per year** when you buy multiyear memberships. Low prices for renewals and reinstatements, too.

New memberships: Learn more here: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml . *Your JMB membership keeps these newsletters coming every week and gives you tons of discounts across SXM.*

Reinstate a former membership: <http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

Renew your current JMB membership at the Membership Renewal Center on the members-only [Secret Website](#).

11a. Hurricane Gonzalo Lashes SXM, Causing Widespread Damage; The Full Story

As dawn broke on Monday morning, St. Maarten wasn't expecting much of a storm. A tropical storm was coming, forecasters said, and would bring winds of perhaps 50 to 60 mi./h, heavy rains, and rough surf. The island has been through this kind of stuff many times in the past, and it was minor compared to some of the big ones -- Luis Lenny, etc.

But by late morning, it was becoming obvious that hurricane Gonzalo had other ideas. As the storm churned northwestward by Guadeloupe, warm Caribbean waters energized it and it intensified, becoming a hurricane early in the afternoon. It continued to gain strength through the afternoon.

The Dutch side government had canceled school first thing in the morning but by late morning, government workers were told they were going to be dismissed and businesses were urged to close after noon. The wind grew more intense, the ocean became very rough, and heavy showers turned into deluges.

Power went out last night over much of the island and is starting to be restored today. Trees were down everywhere as were signs, and there was quite a lot of flooding on streets across the island. Many homeowners reported flooding inside their homes by torrential wind driven rains. At least one home saw its roof blow away and there was one report today (Tuesday) of a fatality.

Boat owners were hammered in the storm. Many dozens of boats tore loose from their moorings in Marigot, oyster pond, and Simpson Bay lagoon. A large boat near Boca Marina tore loose and obliterated Neil Roebert's Celine catamaran, for years an island favorite for Tintamarre trips, our Sunday members-only sunset cruises, and pub crawls. It was largely reduced to rubble.

The Butterfly Farm was essentially blown away, and the St. Maarten Zoo sustained heavy damage. An animal shelter lost its roof.

Orient beach was especially hard-hit, with a number of structures sustaining heavy damage.

Although there were no early dollar estimates of the extent of the damage, it will easily be millions of dollars.

We have posted many pictures on <https://www.facebook.com/jeff.berger1> and we will continue to post more as we receive them. As always, we'll post hard news about the island and its recovery on our main everything St. Maarten Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/EverythingStMaarten>.

12. Theo Heyliger To Be Next Dutch Side Prime Minister; Sarah Wescot-Williams is President of Parliament; Gov't. Likely To Be More Tourist Oriented

Theo Heyliger, grandson of Dr. Claude Wathey, a near legendary figure in St. Maarten politics, is poised to take over as the island's new Prime Minister within the next week or so.

The new government under Mr. Heyliger, including Sarah Wescot-Williams of the Democratic Party as President of Parliament, will have a Heyligeresque UP-party flavor to it and give Mr. Heyliger the ability for the first time as head of government to pursue a strongly jobs and tourist oriented agenda.

Because of Theo's extensive involvement for many years in tourist oriented projects, it's reasonable to expect that his administration will be highly focused on improving the product St. Maarten offers to tourists in every practical respect.

The kind of consumer protection afforded in the United States is not in the culture of St. Maarten or of the Netherlands. Nonetheless, it is quite reasonable to expect progress in consumer protection since that is expected by consumers and is needed to keep the product in high demand.

We'll watch this closely as always, and keep you well-informed.

13. GEBE: Short Circuit Causes Big Dutch Side Blackout

Toward the end of last week, GEBE, the Dutch side electric and water company, had a problem that resulted in a blackout across the entire Dutch side. It lasted several hours. Many people staying in hotels never knew it happened since most hotels have emergency generators.

Roughly a day after the blackout, GEBE said the problem was caused by a short circuit. It never said what caused the short circuit or how it would prevent a recurrence.

Despite the fact that this gave the utility a black eye, their service has been better in recent years.

We'll keep you posted.

14. Dutch Side, French Side in Tug of War Over Captain Oliver's

Capt. Olivers restaurant and Marina in oyster pond has been operating for decades under licenses granted by the Dutch side, where it is located. Suddenly, the French side seems to disagree, as some French side officials apparently came into the establishment and started poking around. Capt. Olivers justifiably takes offense at this and it appears that lawyers are about to get involved.

The restaurant is quite close to the border between the Dutch and French Sides and we don't think anything will happen with this, but you never know so we'll keep an eye on it.

More: <http://www.todayxsm.com/2014/10/08/captain-olivers-demands-action-against-french-side-harassment>

15. On Orient Beach, It's Erosion, Seaweed, and Jellyfish - Complicated by Gonzalo (See story #11a)

Orient beach is arguably the most popular tourist destination on the island. It's topless in its entirety and its southern end is taken up by Club Orient, the largest and probably the most famous naturist resort in the Caribbean.

But now, one would expect only for a brief time, Orient beach has a few issues.

First, it has suffered a fair amount of seasonal erosion. It's not at all unusual, and in fact it seems to happen in late summer and early fall almost on an annual basis. Normally the eroded beach gradually replaces itself as winter begins.

Second, we told you about the Sargasso seaweed affecting the Eastern shore of the island. Orient beach is on the eastern shore, so it has been affected. The seaweed is being carefully removed.

Third, there are jellyfish in the water. This problem usually disappears by winter as well, and this year should be no exception.

Hurricane Gonzalo pummeled Orient as you've seen in pictures we posted at <https://www.facebook.com/jeff.berger1>. Erosion as noted here was made much worse by the storm.

We'll keep you posted on recovery.

16. "Island Paradise" SXM Series Debuts on Travel Channel; Dino, Jennifer Featured

The second episode of the St. Maarten oriented TV series Island Paradise — broadcast Wednesday evenings on the travel channel — may very

well get a fair amount of attention, since it deals with Orient beach, the clothing optional beach described in the previous article, and high rollers, of which St. Maarten sees more than probably any other island.

The premiere episode aired October 8, last Wednesday. It featured to Dino Jagtiani, the most famous chef on the island; Jennifer of Jennifer's vacation villas; and Jeff Boyd, who leases out his yacht by the week.

We wrote Jeff for more information so we can pass it along.

17. Coming for Thanksgiving? The Time To Make Reservations Is Now

Many of the island's busiest restaurants offer of full Thanksgiving day feast, just like you'd find in the US. There are two reasons: first, a number of restaurants here are owned by Americans, and second, Americans are a majority of island tourists and on Thanksgiving, they want turkey.

Probably the three most popular spots for Thanksgiving dining are Toppers and Toppers by the Sea; Pineapple Pete; and Jimbo's. If you plan to be on St. Maarten for Thanksgiving, it would be a very wise idea for you to make early reservations since all these places tend to sell out. Wait a few days though -- phone service and electricity are being restored.

18. JMB Members-Only Sunset Lagoon Cruises Are 50% Off Regular Prices

This was written before Celine was slammed into by a larger boat and sank during the onslaught of Hurricane Gonzalo. Hopefully we'll be able to offer this on another boat from Neil in a few months; stay tuned.-Ed.

It's no secret that Neil Roebert is our favorite SXM captain. His Celine catamaran, which he hand-built in his native South Africa in the mid-1990s and then sailed to SXM, has hosted thousands of travelers to St. Maarten on sunset cruises, pub crawls, and Friday fun sales to Tintamarre, all of which we've had the pleasure of doing several times over.

Neil has always been totally devoted to delivering the best possible product for all his passengers. He has a very capable crew and the food served on board is usually created personally by Neil, who really knows his way around the kitchen.

Members of JMB Website Supporters have long enjoyed Capt. Neil's famous Sunday sunset cruises, offered to our members only at 50% off their regular low-cost....

19. Avantika, New Thai Restaurant Debuts In The Heart of Simpson Bay

We'll have more about this in a few weeks when we return to the island, but for now we just want to remind you that Avantika has opened in Simpson Bay in Puerta Del Sol, opposite Toppers restaurant. We expect it to be quite a place in will let you know when we visit.

20. Ambulance, Fire Apparatus To Be Stationed at Airport for Simpson Bay

For years, when an ambulance or fire apparatus was required in the Simpson Bay area, it had to come from the Philipsburg vicinity. That costs valuable time and was the source of concern for people not only in Simpson Bay, but also in Maho and Cupecoy.

The government is addressing this and will soon station an ambulance and fire apparatus at the Princess Juliana airport specifically for use in calls to Simpson Bay and Cupecoy — for the first time. That's excellent news that at some point is bound to save lives.

21. Where to Get an All-Over Tan on St. Maarten / St. Martin

There are many places, most of them described in detail on the beaches page of www.everythingStMaarten.com .

Here, we'll simply mentioned two:

First, Cupecoy beach on the Dutch side near the French border. Cupecoy is actually the string of beaches to the west of Mullet Bay beach. Only the westernmost beaches, those near the Shore Pointe condominiums and the adjacent beaches are clothing optional by tradition. Dany and John rent chairs here and also provide food, drink, and make sure there are no "Cliff boy" gawkers.

22. Where To Get Instant Gratification for Your SXM "Itches"

If you're looking for pictures and information about St. Maarten between issues of *St. Maarten / St. Martin Weekly News*, we suggest you check

out our main Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/EverythingStMaarten>

In normal, non-hurricane situations, it shows lots of pictures that will bring you back to the island — and to its beauty, beaches, foods, people, and more.

23. An Important Reminder About Low Airfares

This is the single biggest piece of membership news we've had in the past 12 years: JMB Website Supporters now gives you 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 introductory 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 introduction, everyone can join by going to 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.

Medical Evacuation Peace-of-Mind: \$9/day Per Person or Just \$15/day Per Family Short-Term From SkyMed, the Best In The Business *Long-Term Plans as Little as \$1.25/day*

(\$1.25 is approximate)

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.

Let's repeat that: The cost of SkyMed never increases solely because of your advancing age, nor is SkyMed ever canceled solely for declining health – that's 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://everythingsexm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml . The cost of SkyMed is as little as \$59 monthly or just \$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/jmbsexm (everyone else).

Five-year Free JMB Membership Extension With Ultimate Purchase: 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 October 31, 2014.** The five-year JMB membership extension will be terminated if you cancel your SkyMed Ultimate membership before its five-year term expires.

Rent Out or Sell Your Timeshare (both SXM and Worldwide) -- Page Updated Every Other Weekday

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://everythingsexm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml .

Want to rent or buy a week?

2014 St. Maarten / St. Martin Timeshare Weeks For Rent or Sale are posted at http://everythingsexm.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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SkyMed Takes You Home® if you become critically ill or injured while traveling more than 100 miles from home in the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Caribbean, plus Belize and Costa Rica. Learn more at www.skymed.com/jmbsexm . Highest recommendation by JMB.

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For The Best Prices On Individual and Group Tours to St. Maarten & St. Martin, as well as stays at B&Bs, condos, hotels, and villas, visit our sponsor: **Sandy Molloy at SXM Travel Specialists** --- <http://www.stmartin-stmaartentravelspecialists.com> 704-567-6661

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.

Villas in Paradise is your one-stop source for great St. Maarten Villa Accommodations. See many choices at www.villasinparadise.com or call Marilyn Pulito directly at 508-533-1388.

Emerald Cove Villas provides a one-of-a-kind vacation experience in Oyster Pond. See their website at www.emeraldcovevillas.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 www.legrandmarche.net .

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

JMB Website Supporters members wishing to contact us should visit the secret site, www.everythingsxm.com/secret , for detailed JMB Website Supporters information. JMB members can email us at support[at]jmbcommunications.com. If you have misplaced your password, you

can get a new one by clicking the orange "forgot password" link below the masthead at www.everythingsxm.com assuming your membership is in good standing.

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