



This Week's Stories

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

Weekly Tourist-Oriented News & Comments from SXM

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Part of www.everythingstmaarten.com

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You are receiving St. Maarten and St. Martin Weekly News because you subscribed to it and/or are a JMB Website Supporters member. Unsubscribe info is at the end of this newsletter. Stay with us for all the latest tourist-oriented news from St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM all year long. We now have over 224,000 readers around the world...

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This format is easily readable on most mobile devices; scroll down for this week's news.
You can also download a PDF of recent editions here:

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

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

Get Your Own Free Weekly Copy of SXM Weekly News:

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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 #980 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:

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- ***The Story Behind RCI's Suspension of Sapphire Beach Resort***
- ***The Metamorphosis of Simpson Bay Resort Moves Toward Realization***
- ***The Nightmare Trip of Barry & Marcia***
- ***Caravanserai Timeshare Owners: How To Communicate With Government***
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- ***"Demolition" Coming to Bliss Nightclub***

28 new 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://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 Rental of The Week:

RENTAL 2/6/2015 2/13/2015 Week 6 Royal Palm Beach 2 bedroom 2 bath unit, unit is assigned at check in \$1,699.00 Bryan 610-715-5436 brytheguy2001@yahoo.com

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

SALE 12/26/2014 1/2/2015 Week 52 Royal Palm Diamond Resort Will Accept Credit Card. Xmas at home, New Years in Paradise. Top Floor, Great Ocean view 2 bedroom, 2 bath with sleep sofa in living room. Watch mega Yachts right outside your door. \$6000 for a quick sale. Sue 4106104717 applefamily1@comcast.net Posted 12/18/13.

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 210+ 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

Meet Our Sponsors (Updated 9/7/13)

Section Four: For Members Only (Revised 12/31/14)

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

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

How To Get a **GROWING LIST of 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://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 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. Weather Update

Getting more like SXM winter here every day. Winds have been decreasing, weather is hot and humid, and any showers are a rare event. Looking for weather relief? You know exactly where to go.

2. How To Get The Lowest-Cost Airfares, Hotels, Cruises, and Tour Packages Worldwide (Repeat)

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 once you've booked through them.

SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Inns, Timeshares

3. The Story Behind RCI's Suspension of Sapphire Beach Resort

This follows up the article you may have read in last week's *SXM Weekly News*. [We spent some time at Sapphire early last week and found out more about the suspension by RCI of Sapphire Resort. Here is what we know:](#)

- The suspension was ordered by RCI in response to numerous complaints it says it received about maintenance at Sapphire.
- Under the terms of the suspension Sapphire timeshare owners cannot use RCI to bank or exchange any weeks until the suspension is lifted.
- The resort has been told it has three months-plus to fix what timeshare owners have been complaining about.
- RCI will come to the resort in May for a thorough inspection. If the resort passes, reinstatement of RCI trading appears likely. If it doesn't, we expect it will be told what it must still do, and will then likely be re-inspected later.

Key people inside Sapphire told us that their own timeshare owners are "very angry" because they can not now bank weeks or make any exchanges. We were told that all timeshare owners have now been notified of the suspension of Sapphire by RCI. Timeshare owners at other resorts who have confirmed reservations to stay at Sapphire have been notified that their reservations into Sapphire are revoked while this suspension remains in force.

Bottom line, it appears highly unlikely that the suspension will be lifted before May at the earliest.

4. The Metamorphosis of Simpson Bay Resort Moves Toward Realization

Several years ago, "long in the tooth" was mild compared to other criticisms levelled at Simpson Bay.

My how times have changed. The heavy renovations now underway are closing in on completion, and the rooms are gorgeous. Prices are going up for timeshares across the resort, whether you're renting or buying. Everything is getting rave reviews, resort-wide -- a 180-degree change from the recent past.

Last Friday, we posted a photo album "Simpson Bay Resort Renovations" on our main SXM Facebook site, <https://www.facebook.com/EverythingStMaarten> Look -- it's a sleep-four studio but it's bigger and better than you'd expect.

To rent or buy a Simpson Bay timeshare directly from its owner, see www.everythingsxm.com and click Timeshare Rentals & Sales. If you own a SXM timeshare and want to rent it out or sell it, join JMB Website Supporters and you can run the ad at no additional cost and with no commission. See Section III for info.

5. What Are The Best SXM Timeshare Resorts?

By "best" we mean best managed, best maintained, best focus on guest satisfaction, etc. -- all the measures you'd apply.

Our opinion of the current best, in no special order: a) Royal Islander (both versions); b) Bel Air Beach; c) La Vista (both flavors); d) Simpson Bay Resort; e) Divi Little Bay; f) Mary's Boon; g) Summit Resort; h) Mullet Bay Towers; i) Oyster Bay Beach; j) Ocean Club. Although it's possible we missed a few good resorts, we have intentionally excluded a few others from this list. Those excluded: Sapphire Beach Resort; Alegria/Caravanserai (no matter how gorgeous it might become, it is no longer a timeshare and attitude is [almost] everything); all Diamond Resorts [because of their profiteering]; Atrium (sued by timeshare owners several years ago).

We will continue to cover timesharing here very closely, as always.

6. More on Jeff Berger's Appearance on Oral Gibbes TV Show in SXM (Focus, Timesharing)

We'll post the entire interview Jeff did with SXM TV personality Oral Gibbes regarding SXM timesharing as soon as it becomes available.

7. Caravanserai Timeshare Owners: How To Communicate With Government

As we've noted before, a deluge of Letters to the Editor has the attention of government. Here is where you can (and should) add your voice to the chorus of St. Maarten timeshare owners expressing themselves about Caravanserai: If you're a St. Maarten timeshare owner, particularly at Caravanserai, make your views known. It matters -- far more than you think.

Today newspaper: todaymanagersxm25@gmail.com

Daily Herald newspaper: editorial@thedailyherald.com

Feel free to share this information with other St. Maarten timeshare owners: <https://www.facebook.com/Caravanseraitimeshare> .

8. Jeff To Interview Tourism Minister Claret Connor Late This Week

His responsibilities go well beyond tourism, but Minister Claret Connor has hospitality in his blood and should make for an excellent interview. We'll see him next Friday February 6. Lots about the interview to come... we'll ask the questions to which you want solid answers.

9. Under Pressure, Westin Relents on Dawn Beach Access

All beaches in SXM are public, but businesses on beaches have at times made access an obstacle course.

Newspaper reports in SXM say that a number of beachgoers headed toward Dawn Beach via the Westin were harassed by hotel employees. We know that government officials were not happy to hear this.

Now Westin directs beach day-trippers to special parking and expedited beach access. Hotel guests only can use their pool, hot tub, and chairs of course, but visitors according to a Westin employee we spoke to have their own sections of beach which they can use as they see fit....

SECTION 3: Island

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

10. Get Low Prices Now on 225+ SXM Discounts & Benefits: Get The Biggest, Best St. Maarten/St. Martin Discount Package -- 1 yr. \$59; 3 yrs., \$95; 5 yrs., \$125

Get The Best SXM Discount Package: Get about 225 discounts across the island including sizable jewelry gift cards, half-off members-only lagoon sunset cruises, discounts at dozens and dozen of restaurants, plus many activities, art, shopping, and other discounts on both sides of the island.

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](#).

Story 11:

SkyMed Now On Sale: Don't Gamble When You Travel - Take SkyMed Medical Evacuation Protection With You

SkyMed takes you home in a hurry on an ICU-equivalent medical evacuation jet when you or your spouse / partner become critically ill or injured while traveling. Without membership, you must pay for the evacuation in cash, in advance -- if you can set it up -- and the cost can easily be \$50,000 or more -- sometimes far 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.

And now the best SkyMed plan is deeply discounted for our members.

There are a number of SkyMed plans available:

Short-term plans are the least expensive in 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 join -- and they are far less per day on an annual basis.

And when you renew SkyMed annual or Ultimate plans, your membership continues uninterrupted and is renewable indefinitely without further medical requalification regardless of your age or health. There are also never any increases in membership fees (premiums) related solely to your age or health: everyone pays the same low rates.

Six Big Reasons To Buy SkyMed Now: The first five -- we are giving away vacations to destinations worldwide to the next five people who buy new five-year SkyMed Ultimate memberships from us between now and February 28 (just extended.) You get a one week vacation (airfare not included) at your choice of many resorts worldwide and pay only the cost of maintenance *for one day*. That's a deal and a half. (Email us at jmbweb@jmbcommunications.com immediately after buying the new five-year Ultimate from us to tell us.) There's another reason to buy a new 5-year Ultimate: a 5-year free extension of your JMB membership. More on that is below.

The Sixth Reason: Buy any new SkyMed membership other than short term now and even pre-existing conditions are covered once the 90-day waiting period (for pre-existing conditions coverage) has passed.

Here's that steep discount. For five years of "Ultimate" SkyMed global protection, you'd prepay the five-year rate of \$699/year. But JMB Website Supporters members get \$1000 off -- they pay just \$499/year when prepaid in full, or \$2495. If you'd rather pay monthly, it's \$59, \$49, or \$39/month depending on what you need /want. Get yourself protected against the high cost of medical evacuation and you will have great peace of mind.

Call SkyMed any weekday Mountain time at 1-800-475-9633 and ask for Nan or Jim. Tell them you're a JMB Website Supporters member to get the best rates. If you're not a JMB member, join; it's now on sale at Holiday / Black Friday prices (usually 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 the best SkyMed plans is deeply discounted for JMB members. SkyMed will ask for your JMB membership number.

For one-year or other duration SkyMed memberships, buy online at www.skymed.com/jmbspecial (JMB members only) or www.skymed.com/jmbxsm (everyone else). Do it today... It's great peace-of-mind when you travel.

Five-year Free JMB Membership Extension With New Five-Year 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 both the SkyMed JMB-members-only discount and 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 extended; ends January 31, 2014. The five-year JMB membership extension will be terminated if you cancel your SkyMed Ultimate membership before its five-year term expires. Vacation offer expires when we run out of vacations; limited quantity available. Join SkyMed now...anything can happen anywhere you go.

12. Where to Go for Superbowl

Most readers will receive this edition by Saturday. So... lots of choices (check the newspapers). Top choice for years has been SPN next door to Pineapple Pete, Simpson Bay, the island's only real sports bar. Great pizza, burgers, chicken, and more. Go and cheer on your team, you'll be with lots of like-minded people.

13. JMB Introduces "Ad-Only" New Memberships for \$39 (See details)

We're pleased to offer a new JMB membership we're calling "ad only" for \$39/year. It's for people interested only in placing ads on our Timeshare Rentals / Sales page on www.everythingsxm.com.

Here are its features and also what it does not include:

1. Enables ad-only JMB members who are owners of SXM timeshares (only SXM timeshares) to submit 80-word ads to us by email for inclusion on our current timeshare ad page. After joining, they will get details on how to submit ads.
2. Ads cannot be over 80 words and the maximum number of ads per 12-month period is five. (Regular JMB members submit ads via an online system; max size for them is 125 words [150 for Platinum-status members] and regular members can run 10 ads per year [Platinum members, 15].)
3. Ad-only members get no Membership Card, no Secret Site access, and no other benefits at all.
4. Ad-only memberships sell for \$39 per year, a flat rate, and are never offered at sale prices. Ads are not accepted if your membership is within 30 days of expiration *unless you renew or upgrade your membership before expiration*.
5. Upgrade to a full JMB membership (with Secret Site access, 225+ discounts, and your Membership Card) within 30 days of joining as an ad-only member and we will credit the full cost of your ad-only membership toward the cost of the upgrade. You will also get the full

advertised duration of your upgraded membership. Questions? Email support@jmbcommunications.com with the subject "ad-only memberships."

6. We have not yet set up a "buy now" button on our PayPal page for ad-only memberships. You can "buy now" by sending \$39 via PayPal to jeff@jmbcommunications.com with a PayPal note "ad-only new membership." Allow five business days for us to get back to you. You can also pay by check; send the check payable to JMB Communications to JMB, P. O. Box 1812, Plymouth, MA 02362-1812. In the memo area write "ad only membership."

7. Do not submit ads until you are enrolled and told how to submit ads. Out-of-format ads will be rejected and are delayed until corrected, at which time they go in the queue for posting during our next update.

Doesn't Your Business/Practice Deserve a Website That Works?

www.websitesthatworkusa.com

Marketing-Centric / Client-Focused

"Websites that Work," part of JMB Communications, offers substantial discounts to JMB Website Supporters members.

14. Our "Dining Page" on Everythingsxm.com is Heavily Updated

Totally up to date with added info about new restaurants and old favorites. Learn the latest here:
<http://everythingsxm.com/sxm/restaurants/index.shtml>

15. Restaurant Comings & Goings: Maito Is Latest Addition To Simpson Bay Restaurant Scene

Just opened in a space that years ago had Peg Leg Pub, then the Palms, Dean's, and others. Spot has been a revolving door for years. All we know is the name is Maito and the food is Italian. Have not been there.

16. Valentine's Day Jewelry Gifts from SXM

We emailed our JMB members last week offering them very special members-only offers from both Caribbean Gems and Zhaveri Jewelers. We email specials to members -- and giveaways like restaurant dinners for two -- several times a year. If you're not a member, you're missing out on 225+ discounts and much, much more. Join today, See the top of this section for details.

17. The Nightmare SXM Trip of Barry & Marcia

Texas residents Barry and Marcia visited SXM several years ago, and will never forget that trip.... Here is their story, edited for space. We urge you to read it fully and pass it on to friends . . . it could just save a life.

June 28th, Flew in from DFW for 21 days. Marcia and I were staying at a hotel on the beach in Cupecoy.

July 4th, went to party at Baywatch but it rained.

July 5th, Day 7 out of 21, I [Barry] started feeling under the weather.

July 6th, Went to Doctor. X-rays showed extreme case of pneumonia.

July 7th, Was worse and Marcia called the doctor and he came to our room and told us to go to the emergency room. I was put in ICU.

July 8th, Condition worsened.

July 9th, 1:00am I was put on the ventilator and kidneys and liver started shutting down. Marcia started looking for a way to get me home, but getting it approved through our insurance was out of the question on a Friday. I don't know how she managed it, but \$21,000 later an air

ambulance out of North Carolina headed to SXM and arrived at 11:00pm. The airfield closes at midnight, so after a wild ambulance ride to the airport, pulled up to plane at 11:35, loaded, and took off. Since I was in a sedated induced coma I knew nothing about it. Marcia had to hold my head to keep it from banging against the side of the ambulance on the ride to the airport.

Early July 10th, Landed at Miami, pilot runs in and checks us all through customs and we proceed to their hanger to refuel.

5:30am arrive at DFW and get in ambulance to hospital. An hour later, doctor tells Marcia I have a 30 to 50% change of living over the next 24 hours but I start improving.

Tuesday July 13th, They do an open lung biopsy to try and determine the diagnosis. I did test positive for Legionnaires Disease. I was possibly infected in the hotel room, either thru AC ventilation or water in hot tub [or by drinking contaminated water elsewhere –Ed.]. I most likely caught it due to my resistance being low from the problems I'd been having since February. The in house lab couldn't determine what else so they sent the biopsy to the Mayo Clinic and it came back some Interstitial Lung Disease (just a general term that could mean a number of diseases.)

I was in a sedated coma until Saturday July 17th. I woke up in restraints with tubes coming out of my mouth. I was in ICU and it was between visiting hours so I was alone in the room so not knowing what had gone on over the last 10 days I thought I was in some kind of jail. That afternoon they took the tubes out of my side and mouth and moved me to a regular room.

Monday they had me walking around with the help of a walker and dragging an oxygen bottle. They released me Thursday the 22nd with 24 hour oxygen, a strong antibiotic, and a 28 day heavy steroid program. The steroids has induced diabetes (temporally most likely), so now I have to check my blood sugar three times a day and have had to take insulin shots after each test.

I have been doing all my exercises and riding my exercise bike like I'm supposed to so I'm getting stronger every day. I go back to the lung doctor the 31st, and should be able to get off the oxygen at least during the day.

[End of Barry & Marcia story. See next story for much more on this subject.]

18. Medical Care Away from Home

Tim, whose qualifications you'll read about in a moment, read of Barry's experience (see previous story) and has these comments. He says, "Bear in mind that my perspective is that of a traveler (business and pleasure); as an ICU director; and as a trauma surgeon."

Here is Tim's advice. We strongly suggest you forward this story to anyone you know who ever ventures more than 100 miles from home:

1. First and foremost, best wishes to Barry and congratulations to Marcia. She did everything exactly right and, from their reports, may well have saved his life.
2. Travel has gotten less expensive and easier in recent years. Travelers have become older and somewhat more adventuresome. The combination is important, because it predicts that a health/illness related event is more probable today than it was in the past. I am overseas four or five times a year on lecture tour or on (SXM!) holiday. I ALWAYS have a travel-related health policy that provides for repatriation (transport back to the USA). For frequent travelers like myself, the best way to do this is with an annual policy that costs a few hundred dollars a year. For the occasional traveler, this can be done as trip-specific insurance. Others have pointed to websites that offer comparisons. For what it's worth, I have used the Travelex policy for years. Parenthetically, they offer delayed luggage insurance and they actually do pay the claims. (This might not be credible for a trip to Club O [the naturist resort –Ed.], but it was when I had to lecture in Philly and my bags ended up in Phoenix...)
3. Travelers owe it to themselves to be familiar with health problems that are endemic at their destinations. This shouldn't put a damper on their holiday, but it can be life-saving. For example, if you travel to SXM [or anywhere in the Caribbean – Ed.] and have never heard the term "ciguatera toxin", take a moment to Google it and read one of the summaries, perhaps on eMedicine. [From Jeff: I was stricken with Ciguatera toxin in SXM after having an absolutely delicious Red Snapper at a restaurant in Philipsburg in 1996. Good info on Ciguatera is at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciguatera>.]
4. If you have a medical condition and are traveling transoceanic, remember to take a list of your medications and keep it on your person, and take some of your essential medications with you. About every third or fourth transoceanic flight, there is an overhead page "If there is a doctor on board this flight, please ring your call button...". The crew is quick to tell me that they can be in "radio contact with Mayo (or Hopkins, or...)" which is just fine but pretty useless when the aircraft is 3000 km from anything resembling real medical care. The on board supplies that are carried on transoceanic flights are pretty thin.
5. If you do happen to get sick, really sick, while traveling, hope that you have a "Marcia" with you who can act as your advocate. The U. S. embassy, consulate or even military base can help. Here is a perfect reason to get a passport and not horse around with a birth certificate. Those of you who have a US passport, open to the first page and follow along: "The Secretary of State of the United States of America hereby requests all whom it may concern to permit the citizen/national of the United States of America named herein to pass without delay or hindrance AND IN CASE OF NEED TO GIVE ALL LAWFUL AID and protection" (emphasis added). Medical aid is certainly lawful, and citizens have been known to turn up at military bases requesting same. I am not suggesting that as a first choice, but as a last-ditch approach. There is nothing on the birth certificate about all lawful aid, etc. Anyone out there still trying to travel on just a birth certificate? [From Jeff: We have always strongly recommended overseas travel with a passport. Now, of course, they're required.]

6. Some parts of the world have terrific medical care. Others are a lot weaker. If you're traveling and aren't sure, surf. If the medical care is plus/minus and the patient is sick and getting sicker, medical evacuation is key. We use it all the time in the USA to get patients from smaller, less well equipped hospitals to major trauma centers and teaching hospitals. It DOES make a difference as Barry and Marcia found out.

7. Aircraft are packed with people from all four corners of the globe. It doesn't take long to transmit infectious agents worldwide. That shouldn't prevent people from flying. However, if you do get a serious illness, let the airlines that you have been flying on know what has happened. The recent history of the SARS epidemic (Far East to Toronto) is a fitting reminder of how fast contagious illness can move by air.

8. Legionnaire's Disease was unrecognized until 1976 and acquired its name from an outbreak in Philadelphia at a convention of the American Legion. The convention was held in a venerable hotel (I had stayed there as a child) and was seemingly spread as an aerosol through the ventilation system. It continues to crop up periodically in hotels and hospitals especially. Fortunately, it is sensitive to two commonly available classes of drugs: the quinolones (like Ciprofloxacin) and macrolides (like Azithromycin). The latter is available in a blister pack called a Z-Pac. If you're traveling outside routinely available medical care, having a Z-Pac in your travel kit (along with the ibuprofen, the Imodium, the diphenhydramine [Benedryl]) can be reassuring and maybe even lifesaving.

9. If you are going to some really exotic place, make sure you tell your physician well in advance AND check the web for recommended immunizations well in advance. Travel medicine is a lot more specialized than it was even a couple of decades ago, and the best way to get out of trouble is to stay out of trouble.

10. Maybe most importantly, travel with confidence but make a plan ahead of time for what you're going to do if someone's health unravels. As Barry and Marcia's story illustrates, it can happen in a hurry.

19. An Immediate Choice for Medical Evacuation

SkyMed is the best and it is NOT expensive. See www.skymed.com/jmbspecial for our members-only discounted SkyMed prices. Your JMB membership will be verified. Normal low SkyMed prices are here: www.skymed.com/jmb .

Without SkyMed, you must pay for your medevac jet in cash in advance -- easily \$45,000 or more. Get SkyMed before you need it. See story 11 for details or click the links above.

20. Jeff Fights For Timeshare Owner Consumer Protection in SXM

Everythingstmaarten.com and JMB Communications CEO Jeff Berger sent the following letter to the editor to both Dutch Side papers last Thursday:

For the last four months, I have been silently watching the island government be assaulted in letters to the editor in Dutch Side newspapers both regarding the Caravanserai debacle and government's failure to enact timeshare owner consumer protection legislation.

It seemed reasonable to me to give the new government a reasonable opportunity to act forcefully and courageously on both of these critical issues, but now -- as the debate degenerates into a discussion of whether the law should be in English or Dutch -- it has become apparent to many that the island government does not "get it" and I have no choice but to speak out about this.

What follows are several brief, clear points that all apply here.

First: by definition, Timeshare Owner Consumer Protection legislation should be designed to protect timeshare owners from abusive practices carried out by timeshare developers. Therefore, timeshare developers should never be allowed to participate in drafting such legislation. (You would never allow a fox to design a hen house, and by the same token you CANNOT allow developers to draft CONSUMER PROTECTION legislation. It doesn't work.)

Second: Although it has a well-deserved reputation as a noble institution which tries to watch out for timeshare owners, nonetheless the St. Maarten Timeshare Association is an association of resorts, not of timeshare owners. It, also, should have zero involvement in crafting Timeshare Owner Consumer Protection legislation.

Third: My understanding of the current proposed legislation is that it was designed by the SMTA and timeshare developers. Timeshare owners with knowledge of consumer protection have told SXM Weekly News that they were were systematically ignored as the drafting was underway. If you pass legislation that was designed by "foxes" you will by implication say to all timeshare owners that you are on the side of developers / the timeshare industry and are not on the side of powerful, meaningful Timeshare Owner Consumer Protection legislation. That would be the final nail in the coffin of SXM timesharing and by extension stay-over tourism in SXM. It would be counterproductive which is exactly the opposite of what the island needs.

Fourth: To work, Timeshare Owner Consumer Protection Legislation creation MUST involve seasoned condominium-familiar intelligent timeshare owners who know what is needed and can help you create and deliver it. The rush to enact legislation is wrong; bad legislation will harm the island. Nobody should support proposed legislation that is so badly flawed and unresponsive to the real needs of timeshare

owners. The history of Caravanserai, Diamond Resorts, Atrium, Sapphire and some others is littered with rubble. Some resorts are run with a strong consumer orientation, but the bad news is that some others ride roughshod over their timeshare owners and over their own contracts, hurting the reputation of all timeshares on SXM and of the island itself. Unless legislation stops this insanity and slams the door on the ability of timeshare resorts to abuse timeshare owners, it is a pointless, counterproductive waste of time which will undermine the financial stability of Dutch St. Maarten. Real legislation will save the industry and enhance tourism. Current proposals are not "real" legislation.

Fifth: From what I can tell, no one outside government has seen any indication that the new government is doing anything yet to help Caravanserai timeshare owners. Perhaps something is happening behind the scenes. Some 2300 have been victimized in your country and they have told us unambiguously that they believe the government does not care. They have lost millions of their hard earned dollars but the government hasn't, to anyone's clear knowledge, made any effort to bring the parties together in a meaningful, powerful move to solve this "debacle". The vast majority of timeshare owners I've heard from blame the "debacle" on the government. Even worse, they tell me they feel business owners have been complicit since -- as far as timeshare owners know -- business owners have not gone to the government in a public demonstration / outcry to fix this. Worst of all for the island, most Caravanserai timeshare owners apparently have no intention of returning here, ever, and are "spreading the word" about SXM. And their "word" is not good for the island's future.

I love SXM. We've been visiting here since 1978 and we'll continue to do so, despite the fact that we still own four weeks of timesharing here that we can't seem to sell. But SXM is at a crossroads. It needs to enact REAL Timeshare Owner Consumer Protection, not a toothless and pointless excuse for it; and it needs to get to work and make Caravanserai timeshare owners WHOLE, not just shake its shoulders about what happened.

This last point should be totally obvious.... Since tens of thousands of Americans and Canadians own timeshares in SXM, the legislation *MUST* be in English -- or at least an exact English translation of the legislation *MUST* be made publicly accessible in lockstep with proposed Dutch legislation so everyone knows what government is contemplating.

Put lipstick on a goat and it's still a goat. Let's do something that's real and works for the good of the island, its businesses, its tourism product, and that -- most of all -- makes SXM timeshare owners proud of what they own and where they own it. They can be the best possible advertising for the island -- or its worst detractors. We all need to be sure they're the former.

Jeff Berger, Editor
SXM Weekly News

21. Figuring Out The Best Place to Buy Gas

US charges dollars per gallon. SXM French Side charges Euros per liter. Dutch Side charges Antillean Guilders per liter. Check both Delta Petroleum (DP) and Cadisco stations; both seem the least unreasonable. All are high by US standards.

22. Why We Love Cupecoy Beach

This traditional clothing optional beach opposite Blue Mall on the Dutch Side is friendly, has chairs/umbrellas/drinks and food, and is visited through mid-February by a lively crowd of old friends and new friends. Close to 2,000 every winter enjoy (free) Lemondropper festivities. If you want to bring a cold, fresh bottle of Absolut Citron (cheap here) it will be welcomed by the group.

23. Club Orient Naturist Resort Chalets For Sale To Be Listed on Our Site

We've made an agreement with Club Orient under which, soon, we'll be listing naturist beach chalets for sale on our site. Naturists among you may well want to buy these... they are not expensive, they're well-maintained, and they're on the largest, most popular naturist resort in the Caribbean. More info to come.

24. Where To Find Timeshares for Rent or Sale on Our SXM Website

Here: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml

25. "Destruction" Coming to Bliss Nightclub

The first of the rumored demolition at Alegria Resort (fmr. Caravansera) apparently starts 2/1. "Bliss" nightclub opens for a final night there for a foam party and is advertising that demolition follows. Stay tuned....

26. Heineken Regatta Looking for Volunteers

Volunteer Fair 2/7 Simpson Bay Yacht Club 930-1130am or call 721-544-2079.

27. Restaurant of the Week: Pineapple Pete

Pineapple Pete -- owned by Pierre Ferland who also owns SPN and Sushiitto -- is perhaps the island's busiest restaurant, and for good reason. A Simpson Bay institution, it serves everything from burgers to pizzas to Lobster Thermidor and sells a lot of all of them. Huge menu, prompt service, delicious piping hot food, and perhaps the most reasonable prices on the entire island. No wonder it's so busy. SPN, next door, is the prime place for Superbowl.

Like many SXM restaurants, Pineapple Pete offers discounts to JMB Website Supporters members; see the Secret Site for details. Tell them you read about it in Jeff Berger's *SXM Weekly News*....More info is below. For JMB membership info, see the beginning of this section.

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 12/24/14)

Canoa, www.canoasxm.com (featured 12/15/14)

SkipJack's SXM, <http://www.skipjacks-sxm.com/> (featured 4/21/14)

Cugini (featured 12/8/14)

Trattoria Pizza Pasta, Maho Plaza near Casino Royale (featured 3/10/14)

Daniel's By The Sea, www.dawnbeachsxm.com (featured 11/17/14)

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

Spiga, www.spiga-sxm.com (featured 11/5/14)

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

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

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

Le Pressoir, <http://www.lepressoir-sxm.com> (featured 12/25/14)

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

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

Mr. Busby's Beach Bar <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 6/28/14)

Island Pizza, <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 6/28/14)

Pineapple Pete, www.pineapplepete.com (featured 2/2/15)

Papagayo, <http://www.cluborient.com/papagayo.php> (featured 5/5/14)

SPN Cafe, <http://www.pineapplepete.com/sport.html> (featured 8/18/14)

Dany & John's Cupecoy Beach Bar (on Cupecoy beach; follow the car path from the far side of Ocean Club to get there).

FIG, Cupecoy opposite Rainbow Beach Club

St. Maarten Yacht Club, at the Dutch Side Drawbridge

Jimbo's, www.jimboscafe.com

Vesna Taverna, www.vesnataverna.com (featured 11/10/14)

Topper's <http://www.sxmtoppers.com/> (featured 12/1/14)

Taloula Mango <http://www.taloulamango.com/>

Bylbos, Simpson Bay

Sushiitto Japanese Restaurant, Port de Plaisance <https://www.facebook.com/sushiitto.sxm> (featured 1/12/15)

We'll write about another SXM restaurant here next week as we continue our weekly SXM restaurant coverage.

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

Want to rent or buy a week?

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

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

SECTION 4: For Members Only (Constantly Updated)

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

SECTION 5: Background Information for Travelers (For New Readers) Updated 12/31/14

Please see our site, www.everythingsxm.com.

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](mailto: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.

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 *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 and to receive Low Airfare Bulletins. We'll be notified automatically.

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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