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Vol. 2, #1123 --- 10/30/2017
News From St. Maarten / St. Martin



[This Week's Stories](#)

[Airfare, Airlines & Weather News](#)

[Everything SXM Home Page](#)

[Island News](#)

[Lodging News](#)

[Members SECRET Website Login](#)

[Member News](#)

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

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

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Weekly News is part of JMB's St. Maarten / St. Martin website: www.everythingsxm.com

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to be sure you receive this newsletter every week.

IMPORTANT: "Jeff1620" is a send-only email address.
For Contact info, see [#Contact Us](#)
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Important Note:

This is Jeff Berger's / JMB Communications' **St. Maarten & St. Martin / SXM Weekly News**, published every Monday (Tuesdays during most holiday weeks). **You are receiving St. Maarten & St. Martin "SXM" Weekly News because you subscribed to it and/or are a JMB Website Supporters member. Unsubscribe info is at the end of this newsletter. Stay with us for all the latest tourist-oriented news from St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM all year long. Now read by 300,000 people around the world...**

Get Important SXM News as it Happens & Lots of Pictures Too from our Facebook and Twitter Pages:



Protect your vacation and business travel with SkyMed Emergency Medical Evacuation Membership



Download PDFs of Recent Editions ---- Attention iPad, iPhone, Note, and Android Users

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

You can also download PDFs 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.

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

Enter your email address at the top and click SUBMIT. When you receive the confirming email, click the confirming link and you're in.

TOP STORIES IN THIS ISSUE

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

In This Week's SXM Weekly News:

- **Atrium Levies Huge Assessment on Timeshare Owners, Wants \$ Yesterday**
- **Dutch Side Gov't Refuses Kingdom's Help**
- **Dutch Side Orders Two Salvage Barges to Leave The Country**
- **Kingdom of The Netherlands Tells Dutch Side: Do It Our Way Or Else**
- **Will The Westin Dawn Beach Reopen?**
- **Front Street Hoopla Again: Cobblestones Going Away**
- **New Bonus From SkyMed Gives You Free Extra Years of JMB**
- **Now: Just \$59/month* for SkyMed's Best Medevac Protection**
- **Show Your Colors: Get Our SXM Euro Ovals**
- **Most Airlines Increasing Service to SXM**

-- An American Businessperson's Observations of Post-Irma SXM

Last Call: Get 300 Discounts & More from JMB Membership -- but it all Ends This Wednesday Nov. 1

23 news stories this week

Scroll down for our complete [Table of Contents](#)

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, for no ad charge or commission, join JMB Website Supporters. Visit http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml for info. Membership now delivers a growing list of about 300 St. Maarten and St. Martin-focused travel benefits -- and your membership subscription helps keep these weekly SXM newsletters coming.

SXM Timeshare Rental of The Week:

Rental listings here have been temporarily suspended; many rentals are on our site, as always.

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

SALE 9/15/2018 9/22/2018 week 37 Simpson Bay Resort & Marina studio that sleeps 2- a/c, wifi is free and accessible throughout the room and resort. location is easy access to beach, deli, casino, pools, water sports and restaurants. less than 10 minutes from the airport. \$2,000 or b/o Peter, 732-895-0578 hooch123@optonline.net

Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:

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

Villa Rentals Now Offered On Our Site Too:

St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties, and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW): [Click to access our recommended real estate agents.](#)

This Week's Stories

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

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



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/6297726366/>

"Like" Our Facebook St. Maarten Timesharing Group

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

Search the **SXM Weekly News** Archives:

Current Archives (Since 4/2014) in PDF Format:

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 group of about 300 SXM-focused island discounts and other SXM-related benefits through JMB Website Supporters membership:

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

Section One: Getting There: Flights, Airlines, Airports, Cruises, Weather [Go To This Section](#)

1. Most Airlines Increasing Service to SXM
2. Get Up-To-Date Tropical Weather Outlooks, Watches, & Warnings
3. Four Sources of Current Weather Info
4. Guaranteed Worldwide - Lowest Rates for Hotel Rooms & Car Rentals

Section Two: Accommodations (*Hotels, Resorts, Timeshares, Villas, Etc.*) [Go To This Section](#)

5. Our New Private Villas for Rent Page Goes Live Today, 10/30
6. SXM Timeshare Condos for Rent for 2018 Available on Our Site
7. JMB Members: You Can Now Submit 2019 Timeshare Rentals
8. Atrium Levies Huge Assessment, Wants \$ Yesterday

St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties, and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW): [Click to access our recommended real estate agents](#)

Section Three: JMB Member Discounts & Benefits [Go To This Section](#)

9. "Section Three" -- Member Discounts / Benefits News & Updates

Section Four: Island News, Info, & Features [Go To This Section](#)

10. Dutch Side Gov't Refuses Kingdom's Help
11. Dutch Side Orders Two Salvage Barges to Leave The Country
12. Chamber Releases Upbeat Promo Video
13. From Visitors, Positive Feedback
14. Will The Westin Dawn Beach Reopen?
15. Front Street Hoopla Again: Cobblestones Going Away
16. New Bonus From SkyMed Gives You Free Extra Years of JMB
17. Now: Just \$59/month* for SkyMed's Best Medevac Protection
18. About 300 SXM Discounts Are Yours in Our "Dog Days" Sale, Must End Nov. 1
19. Get Our SXM Euro Ovals
20. Still Time: Enter Our SXM Summertime Vacation Giveaway
21. Where to Find Past Issues of SXM Weekly News
22. Today Newspaper Morphs into Online Version
23. An American Businessperson's Observations on Post-Irma SXM

Section Five: For Members Only (Revised 8/2017)

- 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 Six: Where To Find Background Information for Travelers (*For New Readers*)
(Revised 8/2017)

How To Get a **GROWING LIST of 300+** 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 growing list of 300+ additional major travel benefits.

Not a member yet? See http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml. Cost: \$59 for one year, or \$99 total for three full years. Other durations available. Join us today...

All JMB Newsletters Read *From JMB*

This newsletter and mail from JMB Website Supporters to members read *From JMB* in the subject area so you won't misinterpret them as spam.

THIS WEEK'S STORIES:

Stories are numbered; scroll down for stories of interest.

SECTION 1: Getting There: Flights, Airlines, Airports, Cruises, & Weather

1. Most Airlines Increasing Service to SXM

Seeing demand that's perhaps higher than they had expected, both American Airlines and Jet Blue have announced that service to SXM will be increasing during the next couple of months.

Jet Blue, flying to SXM from JFK twice weekly, will return to daily service starting in January.

American, which was one of the first airlines to return to SXM from Miami, has also said it will be increasing service.

Air France already flies passengers to and from SXM via connections in Guadeloupe. Delta and United have not yet announced any notable increases.

When we hear about further changes, we'll post them at once on our [Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin Facebook Site](#).

2. Get Up-To-Date Tropical Outlooks, Watches, & Warnings

Major updates to the Weather section of our everythingSXM.com website were completed over the last few weeks.

In addition to many new real-time tropical weather graphics — including satellite images and new loops — our weather site has now been updated with the National Hurricane Center's latest tropical outlook; tropical weather discussion (for true weather geeks); and the latest forecasts, watches, and warnings for all active storms, plus new track models. .

You can access all this information free, as always: just go to everythingxsm.com and click "Weather" in the masthead.

If you are prospectively in the path of any future approaching storm, we urge you to visit crownweather.com and to sign up for their incredibly inexpensive detailed forecasting service. It's by far the best on the web and it can prove highly useful to you, your family, and your business.

As we've said before, if you are in the path of an approaching storm, never use any website for life or death advice: always rely on directives from local authorities.

3. Four Sources of Current SXM Weather Info (Revised 10/8)

You'll find detailed observations and forecasts by visiting our main SXM website, www.everythingsxm.com, and clicking either of the weather observations at the top of the page.

The four sources of current weather info, beyond the two above, are:

1) [Crown Weather Services](#) whose very inexpensive subscription service is, we feel, the best in the business.

- 2) Our "Weather" page at www.everythingsxm.com -- it has current satellite images and radar loops and now all the latest NHC weather forecasts, outlooks, and advisories as well.
- 3) Our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#), which publishes the latest advisories, watches, and warnings when SXM is threatened by any storms.
- 4) On or off the island, listen to Island 92 -- 91.9FM or see www.island92.com. They report island warnings at once and know exactly what's going on. You can listen on the web anytime through live streaming. They were knocked off the air by Irma but are now back.

Get a quick, current satellite look at the Atlantic basin anytime: <http://www.goes.noaa.gov/GIFS/ATWV.JPG> .

N. B.: *Again...Never rely on any website if you're in the path of a storm; always heed warnings from local authorities.*

4. **Guaranteed Lowest Rates** for Hotel Rooms & Car Rentals Around The World

SkyMed Travel offers you a 110% Lowest Rate Guarantee for both hotel and car rental reservations worldwide. You can't lose with this, so read this article, sign up free and make your travel reservations directly through *SkyMed Travel*.

What it Is - How to Join (free for Our Readers & JMB Members):

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

The SkyMed Travel Club offers exceptional pricing on everything and almost invariably beats everyone else's pricing. We have found their pricing excellent across the board and their 110% low rate guarantee on hotels and car rentals is real news.

Normally, SkyMed Travel charges \$99 to join plus \$99 annual renewals. But for our JMB Website Supporters members and now for **Weekly News** readers, the cost to join is zero as will be the cost for renewals. Join the Club by going to <https://www.skymedtravel.com/register>, sign up, and provide the requested information. Complete the first sign up item (SkyMed Membership Number or Representative ID) by entering the code 391330 — doing that ensures that you pay nothing for your SkyMed Travel Club membership. No code, no free entry to the club's phenomenal pricing. ***If you are a SkyMed Member, however, enter your SkyMed Membership Number here to get the absolute greatest possible discounts.***

You won't be disappointed.

Changing Your Email Address?

Now You Can Unsubscribe Your Old Email and Sign Up Your New One for your SXM Weekly News subscription Quickly and Easily at our Site: www.sxmweeklynews.com

SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Resorts, Timeshares, Villas Etc.

5. Our New Private Villas For Rent Page Goes Live Today, 10/30

During the day today, Monday, October 30, 2017 (unless electrical outages due to the big storm forecast for the Northeast interfere), our new Self-Owned Villas for Rent page goes live on everythingxsm.com.

The page lists villas we've long recommended; who to contact at IRETeam, our SXM real estate partner, about renting villas across the island; other companies known to us that offer villa rentals; and villas owned and posted by our JMB Website Supporters members. The location of the new page is [here](#).

Also by tomorrow we will email all JMB Website Supporters members, some of whom own SXM villas or private (non-timeshare) condos, and telling them how to post their SXM villas for rent on the new page. We're using a new input form they can access directly on our members-only "secret" website.

As we've reported here in *SXM Weekly News*, hundreds of villa owners have now returned to their villas to direct any repairs that are required because of Irma. Hundreds of villas are expected to return to the market by mid-December.

If you want to return to SXM this winter, see our new page on or after 10/30 -- it's where you want to go.

6. SXM Timeshare Condos for Rent for 2018 Available on Our Site

If you're tentatively planning to visit SXM this winter, do check out our listing of timeshare rentals available for 2018. Of course, there's a notice at the top of the page concerning the availability of such weeks at island timeshare resorts.

This week, we will begin to accept ads from our JMB Website Supporters members who own villas on the island and wish to rent their private villas to tourists. We'll be detailing this program in a special message to our JMB Website Supporters Island Discount Program members this week, which is when we'll also be updating our ad input form so it can be used for both private villa rentals and timeshare rentals.

As is the case with timeshare ads, JMB will accept advertising only from members of JMB Website Supporters. To join JMB, please click the page curl on all pages of everythingSXM.com — that's where you'll find membership options including information on our US military memberships.

We look forward to the imminent implementation of this program, which will deliver new benefits for our JMB Website Supporters members and new rental options for our readers.

7. JMB Members: You Can Now Submit 2019 SXM Timeshare Rentals to Our Site

Normally we don't open our site to timeshare rentals for the following year until March of the current year. We did that late in March, 2017, for 2018.

But Irma saw to it that this is not a "normal" year. We know many thousands of people who normally rent weeks through our "Timeshare Condos for Rent" page on everythingxsm.com are already looking forward to 2019. So, effective Monday, October 30, we will accept ads for [2019 SXM timeshares for rent](#) from our JMB Website Supporters members. Just log in on the "Secret" website and click Submit an Ad. It's ready to go... (SXM Timeshare condo rental or sale ads only.)

[Not a JMB member? Our JMB membership sale must end 11/1 -- see the beginning of Section 4 and sign up now.](#)

8. Atrium Levies Huge Assessment, Wants \$ Yesterday

From all the reports we've heard, Festiva Atrium Resort was not hammered as badly as some other SXM timeshares. In fact, it has been advertising rooms for rent to people involved in the rebuilding effort for several weeks. The rental price, some timeshare owners say, is higher than what timeshare owners pay in maintenance fees. And timeshare owners are not currently being allowed to use their timeshare weeks.

That has made a number of timeshare owners angry, but what happened last week appears to have infuriated many more. Atrium timeshare owners received an assessment from Atrium for \$750 per week owned, due in full December 1, 2017, with their Annual Maintenance Fees due a month later -- slamming their plans for the holiday.

A number of Atrium timeshare owners have told us they're not happy especially in light of the quick reopening, and are questioning whether the assessments are actually based on precise, hard evidence of need....

Here is the letter that accompanied the assessment bill:

"We want to take this time to thank you for your patience regarding updates about the Atrium Resort & Spa. We hope that this email will answer any questions that you have and will also bring a bit of positive news to our owners.

"We are happy to announce that the resort will be officially re-opened to the public beginning week 48, December 02, 2017. At that time, repairs to the resort should be completed and the beach at the resort will be open, as will the Greenhouse restaurant and the Buccaneer bar. Every day more restaurants, bars and other attractions are reopening and we are happy to report that business is starting up again on the island. For current information and video updates on what is reopening, visit www.st-maarten.com.

"With that being said, we do want to set realistic expectations for anyone planning to visit the island over the next few months.

"On the Dutch side, the process of rebuilding has been unfortunately delayed pending financial aid from the Dutch government. While the Princess Juliana Airport (SXM) has reopened to commercial flights, it is still on an extremely limited basis and will not be operational to its full capacity. For up to date information on airlines operating to and from SXM please visit the airport's Facebook page at facebook.com/sxmairport.

"Additionally, many of our owners' favorite spots on the island will remain closed and some beaches will not be suitable due to dangerous hurricane debris for a long time, particularly those on the French side, which is still severely devastated. Many popular areas including Orient Bay, Grand Case, Maho Beach, and Philipsburg will likely not be ready for visitors by December. The Atrium as well as neighboring Simpson Bay Resort are two of the only properties that will be accepting tourist visitors in the coming months.

"We want to caution owners that while the Resort [Atrium -Ed.] will be open as of December 2, the island itself may not provide the typical island paradise experience that many of you know and love.

"As you know, the Atrium has been using occupiable rooms to house employees whose homes were damaged or destroyed, as well as the Dutch military, contractors, and insurance adjusters who were all there to help assess damage and aid in relief and restoration of the island and its residents.

"As of October 17, all employees were able to move out of the resort and we were happy to provide them with care packages of food and other essentials as well as a monetary contribution.

"We have been overwhelmed by the response from owners expressing concern about our staff and the island. We know that many of you have been vacationing there for as long as 30 years, and the initial reaction for so many of you was offering your help. Relief efforts are being coordinated by the Red Cross and other organizations. We are continuing to take donations for Atrium employees within our family of companies, and we also have a relief fund for St. Maarten and the British Virgin Islands that anyone can contribute to here. We encourage you to contribute to the fund as it is the best way to send relief to St. Maarten residents.

"We have also had many questions from owners about the extent of the damage to the resort. Despite a delay in our shipping container with building supplies due to an overload of relief supplies on the docks here, we are in the process of repairing damages to all rooms that were affected. While all 87 units at the resort sustained some damage, 49 units suffered major damage, including:

- Water intrusion
- Hurricane shutters
- Glass in windows and sliding doors
- Sliding door frames
- Ceiling and/or walls

- Escape ladders and/or covers
- Air conditioning units
- Sheet rock
- Furniture
- Skylights
- Broken tiles

"Some of the resort's common areas were also damaged including the lobby and pool areas, and the electrical system was damaged by water intrusion. It is important to note that the Atrium is self-insured.

" We know that many of our owners have had their annual usage impacted by the hurricanes and the resort's closure, so we are offering those owners whose weeks were impacted an additional vacation week to use at the Atrium between weeks 14 and 50 in 2018. Please contact Owner Services at 855-411-9335 to reserve your extra week.

"We hope that this information provides some clarification and answers to questions you may have had. If you have any further questions, please contact our Owner Services department at 855-411-9335."

If you are a timeshare owner at Festiva Atrium Resort, consider joining the new [Atrium Timeshare Owners page on Facebook](#). We'd also like to hear from you on our [Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin Facebook Site](#).

SECTION 3: JMB Member Discounts & Benefits

9. "Section Three" -- Member Discounts / Benefits News & Updates

This section of *SXM Weekly News*, which appears weekly, will provide detailed information about current JMB Website Supporters discounts and benefits both for current members and for people thinking about joining JMB.

We now offer about 300 discounts (including those now being rolled out). We think you'll find many surprises here that will be of great interest and value. Please check this section in the coming weeks as we continue to roll out entirely new discounts and benefits.

For more info on what you get with your JMB membership, [go here](#).

SECTION 4: Island News, Info, & Features

LAST_CALL:

SALE MUST END THIS WEDNESDAY NOV. 1

Get About 300 SXM Discounts
& Other Benefits -
AGAIN THIS SALE MUST END WEDNESDAY 11/1

Get Hundreds of St. Maarten / St. Martin Discounts
& Other Benefits at Great Prices:

New JMB memberships: Three years, \$89; Five years, \$109; One year, \$39
http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

Renewal JMB memberships: Four years, just \$89; three years, \$69; one year, \$34
www.everythingsxm.com/secret Go to the **Membership Renewal Center**

JMB Membership Reinstatements: Four years, just \$89; three years, \$69; one year, \$34
<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

10. Dutch Side Gov't Refuses Kingdom's Help

The government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has already sent millions of dollars worth of help to St. Maarten and is ready to send millions more — with conditions.

As we understand it, the Kingdom simply wants to make sure all the money is properly spent to help the island recover from the devastation caused by hurricane Irma.

The Dutch side government, however, says that it is country St. Maarten, an independent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and it should be able to decide how to spend the money and where by itself, without Kingdom involvement. On that basis, it refused the aid from the Kingdom, potentially delaying recovery. It said it won't accept the Kingdom's conditions.

Now there are howls from other parts of Prime Minister William Marlin's fragile coalition government which could conceivably fail due to possible defections.

The Kingdom, meanwhile, appears not to be the least bit amused. It has apparently told St. Maarten that it must accept the funds with the conditions the kingdom demands. Never has it been so abundantly apparent that the Dutch side needs the Kingdom in order to survive major hurricanes — just as much as the French side needs the French nation to provide the wherewithal to enable it to survive severe hurricanes.

Opinion: It's time for the Dutch Side to stop standing on ceremony and get the job done.

11. Dutch Side Orders Two Salvage Barges to Leave The Country

Not long ago, the combined estimate of boats sunk by hurricane Irma on both sides of the island topped 300.

To prevent an environmental catastrophe from leaking fuel and other hazards, two salvage barges have been at work pulling sunken boats out of both Oyster pond and Simpson Bay lagoon. But the work was abruptly stopped last week when the government suddenly told the boats to leave the island.

Regardless of the government's reason for doing this, business people and many others started howling — boat owners, environmentalists, people looking forward to the Heineken Regatta next March, business owners whose boats survived, and others. In addition to all the environmental issues, the sunken boats also present a hazard to navigation for other boats.

One highly seasoned Merchant Marine Captain who we spoke with last week and who has sailed into St. Maarten many times said this: "It's a sad thing when two salvage vessels leave St. Maarten because of some BS paperwork some clown wants."

The view of many people on the island appears to be that the salvage operation needed to be fast-tracked to help SXM get back on its feet, but instead it was stopped in its tracks by government red tape — the same sort of red tape, apparently, that delayed initial shipments of food and water from the Kingdom from being distributed upon

arrival from the airport to people in need just after Irma swirled away.

The Dutch Side government says that other salvage vessels are coming. Our opinion: Expedite the job. The island's economy is reeling from the cost of repairs and the loss of revenue resulting from the visit by the second worst tropical cyclone in world history, which left St. Maarten in conditions which were equal to those suffered by Puerto Rico from Maria. Puerto Rico was apparently much less well prepared than St. Maarten. As we reported last week, most electricity is already back on SXM and food and water are more widely available every day.

The island is recovering from Irma faster than anyone had dared hope thanks in large measure to the resilience and determination of its people. The government on the Dutch Side needs to be part of the solution....

12. Chamber Releases Upbeat Promo Video

Just look -- tremendous accomplishments only a few weeks after Irma are shown in [this new video](#).

13. From Visitors, Positive Feedback

Ever since tourists began arriving once Princess Juliana SXM Airport reopened a couple of weeks ago, our readers have wanted to know their reactions to a post-Irma SXM.

Here is a selection of comments from a cross-section of tourists:

1. "The island was much cleaner than I expected it to be. The images that I saw on TV and on your [Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin Facebook Site](#) made me think that there would still be a lot of debris. When I arrived, I saw tons of it next to the Royal Palm hotel. The entire empty area there was filled with debris more than 20 feet high. But by the time I left, it was gone. Traveling around the island there was much evidence of devastation. But almost everywhere, people were working, rebuilding, and very happy to see tourists. It wasn't the old hustle-bustle that I was used to, particularly on the Dutch side. It was more quiet but more resolved. I was sad for the devastation I saw but happy that so much work was being done to move on."
 2. "I was very surprised at how many restaurants had reopened. But I was also surprised at how many were damaged. During the time I was there, many restaurants reopened. But from the look of some others, especially in Grand Case, it looks like it may be some time before they reopen. The French side looked worse than the Dutch side. It was clear the whole island had been devastated — but somehow it did look like the French Side got the worst of it."
 3. "I've never seen so much beach sand inland. I know there was a big storm surge and huge waves everywhere plus the winds which I heard were measured well over 220 miles an hour. Some people have even told me that gusts were up to 250 mph. To me, the island looks like it had been hit by the worst tornadoes ever seen on land. The Maho area was amazingly bad, looking like all the windows or almost all were sucked right out of the building. But Porto Cupecoy looked best of all — like it might simply need to get up, dust itself off, clean out blown-in debris, and get back to work. While I was there, Mario's Bistro in Porto Cupecoy reopened with a limited menu. Lots of smiles all around."
 4. "I know that 90% of the buildings on the island were damaged or destroyed, and that many people who I bump into as a tourist have a lot more going on inside their heads than simply doing their jobs. When I was there, I asked a few people to open up and tell me what happened to them. I think it was a good release for them, perhaps a bit cathartic. I think they also were grateful that somebody actually cared and wanted to hear — someone who wasn't there and didn't go through it with them. I don't think any of us who weren't there can imagine what they truly went through. So many people were so very lucky to get through Irma alive. They won't ever forget it. They can't."
 5. "We brought some things to give to people, both friends and people we didn't know. We want to do something besides sit in the sun, eat at restaurants, buy some souvenirs, and read the newspaper. I think the single most important thing we did was listen."
-

14. Will The Westin Dawn Beach Reopen?

That's one of the most frequently asked questions on SXM today, since the Westin is one of SXM's top resorts and certainly its foremost destination for business conferences.

Columbia Sussex holds the keys to Westin's future. Their answer: It will "take a few months for us to receive assessments and plan our path moving forward."

Columbia Sussex / Westin did not come to SXM with the intent of picking up its marbles after the first severe hurricane and going home. They know they have a superb location on the island and a very attractive one for business meetings and vacationers. Anecdotal observations tell us that their business has been improving on SXM particularly since the end of the Great Recession.

Nonetheless, Irma was no ordinary system; its damages were severe. The decision could favor rebuilding -- or not. Theoretically Columbia-Sussex could also go in a modified direction and decide to locate the main campus back from shore several hundred yards, beyond the current sewage treatment plant, assuming it owns or could get that property.

Were it to do that, it could create a beautiful garden location and provide its guests with attractive, innovative transport to the beach -- perhaps an aerial tramway. That would create an incremental tourist attraction while enhancing Westin's SXM presence. Whether it's on their radar ... we don't know. Right now it's just an idea from us.

We think SXM would severely miss Westin were it to leave -- and vice versa. Our hunch is that they aren't going anywhere -- one way or another.

15. Front Street Hoopla Again: Cobblestones Going Away

Years ago, under the oversight of long-time tourism visionary / island politician Theo Heyliger, SXM rebuilt Front Street and Back Street with new lighting and cobblestones, giving the Dutch Side capital a more attractive, unique ambiance / appeal.

Tropical downpours exacted a toll on the cobblestones, causing unevenness and creating depressions which made driving either road a mogul after mogul experience. Occasional hurricanes didn't help.

Walking was worse, particularly for women in heels. This week SXM is removing the stones and paving Front Street after having done the same on Back Street.

For motorists and pedestrians, it will be a welcome change.

16. New Bonus From SkyMed Gives You Free Extra Years of JMB

Buy a new SkyMed one, three, or five year membership -- or upgrade to a three or five year membership at getskymed.com or by phone at 508-747-8281 (SkyMed calls only). Forward your approval letter from SkyMed to us at support@jmbcommunications.com with the subject SkyMed along with your full street address and daytime phone number... and we'll issue you a JMB Website Supporters membership extension for the same number of years.

This program is available for a strictly limited period only. If you've been thinking about getting or upgrading SkyMed protection, now is when you'll want to do it.

Questions? Call Jeff at 508-747-8281; he'll be happy to answer them.

17. Now: Just \$59/month* for SkyMed's Best Medevac Protection

How about SkyMed for \$59 a month for your family?

SkyMed medical evacuation programs protect your pocketbook and your health when you become critically ill or injured while traveling. That's because SkyMed Takes You Home® to doctors and hospitals you know and trust when you become critically ill while traveling. They protect your pocketbook by making it unnecessary for you to pay for a medical evacuation in cash in advance --- the only way to get this level of protection without being a SkyMed member.

Those out-of-pocket costs are huge: upwards of \$45,000 in many cases, and often far more.

*Now, you can get a five year SkyMed Ultimate membership and pay for it monthly at just \$59 per month for your family, which makes it easily affordable to practically anyone (even retirees and AUC students).

Of course, if you prefer, you can prepay for five years at the sharply reduced rate of \$2495 for JMB Website Supporters members. When you apply, you can get a 10 year price guarantee as well simply by noting on the application that you want an automatic renewal. That's the equivalent of paying \$499 per year for 10 years— an extraordinary price guarantee in times that are tumultuous politically worldwide.

You can also pay the \$59 a month for a month or two then convert to the prepaid Ultimate membership to grab those prepayment savings. For info, call Jeff Berger at 508-747-8281 (SkyMed calls only). He can answer all your questions and even help you get signed up. *Please also see the next story.*

Learn more at www.getskymed.com.

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18. About 300 SXM Discounts Are Yours in Our "Dog Days" Sale, ***Must End This Wednesday Nov. 1***

Our Dog Days membership sale Ends on November 1, this Wednesday. It's your best opportunity to obtain 300 discounts on virtually everything you do during your island vacation.

When we return to the island later this year, will be meeting with many of our discount partners and will keep you posted on when they will reopen, if they aren't back already by that time. We also have already signed and will be adding new partners for the winter season.

Stay tuned — and definitely plan on being in SXM this winter. As we said elsewhere in this issue, we expect many timeshares to be open ahead of schedule on a staggered basis. Also see story 5 about villa and (non-timeshare) condo rentals.

19. Get Our SXM Euro Ovals

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

You can now get two for \$10 or five for \$15 mailed first class to your home in the US or Canada. You can pay for them by PayPal or by check. If you pay by PayPal, make sure US dollar funds are sent to Jeff@JMBcommunications.com and in the comments section be sure to tell us what you're buying — two for \$10 or five for \$15, SXM euro ovals, and include your current, correct mailing address.

If you pay by check, we accept US dollar checks only drawn on US banks — sorry, no Canadian checks. You can mail them to SXM euro ovals, care of JMB Communications, PO Box 1812, Plymouth, MA 02362-1812. Make the check payable to JMB Communications.

We have a decent supply but we suggest you order quickly. Allow 30 days for shipping.

We periodically publish pictures of these on our [Everything St. Maarten Facebook Site](#).

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20. Still Time: Enter Our SXM Summertime Vacation Giveaway

Our Summertime SXM vacation giveaway is underway and you can now enter. *SXM Weekly News* readers (NOT pass-along readers) can enter up to 10 times per subscribed email address. The drawing has been deferred until January, 2018.

Here is our current prize list. Since this giveaway promotes non high-season visits to SXM, most of these vacations are yours from mid April to mid December, 2018, though for obvious reasons those dates are subject to change. All vacations are subject to availability.

- an 8-day, 7-night vacation at La Vista Resort, May through December 2018.
- a 5 night stay (based upon availability April 10-Dec 18, 2018) in an ocean front room at the Westin St Maarten Dawn Beach Resort, Spa, and Casino.
- a 4-day, 3-night stay at the beautiful Oyster Bay Beach Resort.
- Dinner for Two at Davide Foini's legendary IZI Ristorante Italiano in Simpson Bay (One winner)
- Dinner for Two at Marco Ferrante's Isola Ristorante Italiano next to Hollywood Casino at Simpson Bay Resort. (One winner)
- Dinner for Two at Spiga, the highly acclaimed Italian Restaurant in Grand Case. (One winner.)

Enter here: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/getting_here/entry-form-for-our-seven-vacation-giveaway.shtml

Dates for all vacations subject to change thanks to Irma....

21. Where to Find Past Issues of SXM Weekly News

Look here for our PDF archives: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml. Most issues for the past few years are now online.

22. Today Newspaper Morphs into Online Version

As we reported a couple of weeks ago, SXM's *Today* newspaper has ceased publication. But now, it has morphed into an online version; check out <http://stmaartennews.com/>

23. A Businessperson's Observations of Post-Irma SXM

This came to us from an American who has done business in SXM for years. He recently returned to the island for a post-Irma look. This is his report:

I was in SXM last week, for the first time since Irma hit, and I thought I'd share some general impressions of the island with you. There is some good news, as you'll see below.

We stayed at Simpson Bay Resort and, before getting to anything else, I have to give them credit for how quickly they seem to have jumped into tackling the repairs needed. There were workers everywhere and they seemed to be working non stop. I think SBR has said it will take them six months to reopen but I wouldn't be surprised to see it happen sooner. We had a dinner and lunch at La Patrona, and the food was delicious and service was wonderful both times. I can't say enough good things about the effort the folks at SBR are making to get things back on track.

As for other parts of the Dutch side, debris piles are being cleared thanks, almost entirely, to the Dutch marines who are on the island. Kim Sha beach had a 20 foot high debris pile that is gone completely now. Same with the debris piles in front of the movie theatre in Simpson Bay, across from Starz casino in Cupecoy, in Cole Bay, Dutch Quarter, Oyster Pond and in Philipsburg. I've read people's comments, and concerns, about debris and flies and mosquitoes but these are short term issues and will be gone by the time season arrives.

Since we were staying in Simpson Bay, we kept mostly to that area for dinner. We ate at Avantika one evening and found it to be the closest to normal of any of the places we visited. They were helped a lot by their well protected, courtyard style, location and had minimal damage from Irma. Other restaurants did not do as well. While some places are indeed "open" for business, no one should mistake open for normal. Far from it.

Karakter lost most of it's kitchen and offers a very limited menu now. They also lost their stage and have cut back on music as well. Hopefully, they will rebuild both kitchen and stage before season arrives. We had a nice dinner at Mario's, in Porto Cupecoy, but they also are offering a limited menu, and limited days they are open, for now. Lee's, the Greenhouse, Buccaneer Bar and others were open as well but, again, with limited menus and hours. Still, there is some life in these places even if it's not normal.

Now, for the bad news. We took a drive around the island one day and saw destruction everywhere. In fact, it is impossible to travel anywhere on the island and not see damaged and/or destroyed homes, restaurants, businesses and so forth. From the expensive villas in Terre Basses to the restaurants and hotels in Nettle Bay, to Marina Royale and the harbor area of Marigot, up to Grand Case, over to Orient, down through Oyster Pond, into Philipsburg and the surrounding area, there is nowhere that you can travel and not see devastation. Any area that had buildings, now had damaged buildings and destroyed properties. While debris has been cleaned up, as noted earlier, the remains and ruins of formerly developed areas is everywhere. This will take significant time to fix.

The French side of the island seems to have suffered far more damage from Irma physically but, given their status as an actual part of France, their prospects for recovery and rebuilding are actually much better. Marigot was badly in need of a significant facelift before Irma and it will get that now. Grand Case was charming, but overly crowded, and will benefit from rebuilding as well.

One area that will be rebuilt, but I almost wish it wouldn't be, is Orient beach. With all of the bars and restaurants washed away, Orient looks almost as beautiful today as it was when I first saw it in the 70s. Just one long stretch of beautiful deserted beach. I know the loss of so many businesses is tragic but it's actually nice to see the beach restored to the way it was in the early days. Overbuilding on Orient, as with other areas of the island, definitely hurts the natural beauty of the island....

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St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties,
and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW):

[Click to access our recommended real estate agent, Arun Jagtiani, featured on HGTV.](#)

Rent Out or Sell Your Timeshare (both SXM and Worldwide) -- Frequently Updated

JMB members can run up to 10 free ads on our website per 12-month period to rent out or sell St. Maarten / St. Martin timeshare weeks they own -- or any timeshares, anywhere worldwide. If you're not a member, learn more about membership here: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml .

Want to rent or buy a week?

2017 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.

SECTION 5: For Members Only

- 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 / change password" in the orange login box near the masthead at www.everythingsxm.com. To change your password, click that same link.
- C. How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads or Update the Price in an Ad: See www.everythingsxm.com/secret .Your username and password are required.

SECTION 6: Background Information for Travelers (For New Readers) Updated 7/2017

See www.everythingsxm.com.

About Email Address Changes / How To Unsubscribe (Updated 4/17/17)

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

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Contact Us (Revised 8/21/17)

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, contact ***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 respond individually.

Our main St. Maarten / St. Martin website: www.everythingsxm.com .

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