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Vol. 2, #1150 --- Monday, May 7, 2018
News From St. Maarten / St. Martin



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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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From: www.jmbcommunications.com

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

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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 more than 306,000 people around the world...**

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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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TOP STORIES IN THIS ISSUE:

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

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- WestJet Returns to SXM
- Carnival Passengers Rating SXM at Pre-Irma Levels
- Why SXM Has Focused on Ship Passengers
- C130 Crash Brings Chills to Irma Evacuees
- Planet Hollywood Resort/Casino: Why It's Great for SXM
- Flamingo Resort Update

- **A Long-Time Visitor's Observations**
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29 news stories this week

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Timeshare Rental and Sale of the Week

Each week JMB randomly picks timeshare condominiums for rent and for sale in SXM from the huge selection at http://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 2/16/2019 3/23/2019 Week 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 The Villas at Simpson Bay Resort & Marina A & B (Master and Junior Suites) together accommodate 6 people. Master suite consists of a full kitchen, King size bed/master bedroom, 2 Murphy beds/living room with flat screen TV, dining/living room, spacious bathroom with separate double vanity area. Beautiful, large deck (off of bedroom and living room) overlooks Simpson Bay. Junior suite: (lock out) 2 full beds, a small kitchen, dorm size refrigerator, microwave, toaster, coffee maker. The bathroom is spacious with a separate double vanity area. Deck overlooks Simpson Bay & Pool. **All boat excursions are located onsite and available directly from the resort. \$2,200.00 per week Rosanne O'Donnell 609-613-0728 mess113@yahoo.com

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

SALE 2/10/2018 2/17/2018 week 6 Royal Islander Club La Plage Located on Maho Beach, the Dutch side of St. Maarten. This is a high demand week, Saturday to Saturday stay. The unit is a 1 bedroom, ground floor unit facing beautiful gardens, the pool and beach. 1 king bedroom plus additional queen size sleeper sofa. The unit sleeps 4. Full kitchen and 1 bath. Decorated in island style. Walk to restaurants, shopping, casino and nightlife. Princess Juliana Airport is only minutes away. Rented for 2017. \$5,200.00 plus transfer fee. Diane 262-569-0806 dianocon1@aol.com

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 / SXM" 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

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

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- 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://everythingxm.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. Hurricane Season May Start Early

At the end of the day, there was very good weather news for SXM at the end of last week. Rains were expected to begin Thursday night and last through much of the weekend for much of the northern lesser Antilles but, fortunately for SXM, thanks to the positioning of the developing system little to nothing was expected to happen in SXM.

The developing tropical weather system looked fairly healthy on Friday morning, according to Rob Lightbown, chief honcho of CrownWeather.com. The extent to which that system would develop was not clear at that time, but Rob recommended that everyone on the Florida Peninsula, all Bahamas residents, and people on the East Coast as far north as Cape Hatteras should keep an eye on the system should it develop further, which was considered possible.

As we mentioned last week, if any watches or warnings are issued they will be posted in the Weather Center on our everythingSXM.com website. For the top level of information available through Crown Weather's private forecasting subscription service (which is remarkably inexpensive), please see www.crownweather.com. That's incredibly useful especially if at any time your location could be in the path of an approaching storm — something that applies to everyone from the US Gulf Coast northward along the entire East Coast and into the Canadian Maritimes, as well as everyone throughout the Caribbean and the Gulf.

2. May Weather

Weather in May begins to get less dry than late winter and early spring. Showers can last somewhat longer and be a bit heavier, something that can be exacerbated when tropical waves start to appear as hurricane season starts formally at the beginning of June. See story 7 for sources of in-depth weather information.

3. Check With Your Airline: Lots of Flight Changes

As high season morphs into the summer shoulder season, there are normally a number of flight changes. This, of course, is no normal season because of hurricane Irma's effects on accommodations and flights. Consequently, there seem to be more changes in flights now than usual. So... regardless of when you have reservations, it's important to contact your airline multiple times before you fly to see if there have been changes: airlines don't always contact you to tell you. This applies regardless of which airline you fly, since we've had multiple calls from passengers on a number of airlines upset about flight changes.

It's also critical that you contact your airline again a few days before your flight. If they make one change, they can make more....

4. WestJet Returns to SXM

Canadian carrier WestJet resumed service from Toronto to SXM this past week — the first Canadian carrier to do so. The flights are not daily and are not expected to become daily until later this year, by which time other Canadian carriers will be resuming SXM flights.

For reservations, contact WestJet directly.

Many more stories follow this message.

****EXTENDED ONE FINAL WEEK****
MUST END SUNDAY 5/13 & WILL
NOT BE FURTHER EXTENDED

Our
JMB Website Supporters
Island Discount Program

+++ Anniversary Sale +++

Ends Next Sunday, May 13...

JMB Website Supporters
is celebrating its
16th Birthday --
but you get the Presents!

**Get About 300 SXM Discounts
& Many Other Benefits Through Our Exclusive
JMB Website Supporters Island Discount Program**

Join, Renew, or Reinstate Today:

These Prices MUST End Sunday May 13

New JMB memberships: One year \$39; Two, \$59; Our Best Offer: Four Years just \$99

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_xsm/paypal.shtml

Renewal JMB memberships: One year, \$35; Our Best Offer: Five Years just \$99

www.everythingsxm.com/secret Go to the **Membership Renewal Center**

JMB Membership Reinstatements:

One year, \$35; Our Best Offer: Five Years just \$99

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

In Addition To Those 300 Discounts
& Other Benefits,
Your JMB Membership
helps keep

SXM Weekly News
Publishing for You Every Week!

Don't Miss It -- Join Today!

5. Carnival Passengers Rating SXM at Pre-Irma Levels

As you'll see in the next story, cruise ship passengers are very important to SXM because cruising is how many people first catch a glimpse of what SXM offers.

That's why Carnival's post-trip surveys of its passengers are so important to the future of SXM's economy. Carnival

reported last week that passengers taking its post-trip surveys are now rating SXM as highly as they did before Irma. That says a lot about the remarkable recovery that continues to be underway on SXM, and to the success of SXM business owners at returning a semblance of normalcy to the product tourists experience. Bottom line, it's one piece among many of very positive news for SXM.

Please also see Section 4, story 13.

6. Why SXM Has Focused on Ship Passengers

SXM is working very hard to knock the socks off ship-bound visitors for the reasons outlined in the previous story. As we've noted here before, Irma was the most powerful hurricane in recorded Atlantic basin history, causing billions of dollars in damage on SXM alone. It obliterated every business on Orient beach, for example, leaving only a few foundations. Wreckage from some buildings was carried by surging waters and 240 mile-per-hour recorded gusts as far away as the vicinity of the Butterfly Farm, hundreds of yards to the west.

The Dutch side quickly got to work to make its pristine Kimsha beach not only available to tourists, but also comfortable for them with the kinds of amenities, in rudimentary fashion, that were available on Orient. The main difference was that everybody needed to keep their clothes on. (Topless is okay.)

Nearby Simpson Bay was also the first commercial area to recover from Irma. For months, it is been close to normal, and according to some restaurateurs business also isn't as bad as some had feared, though it certainly was not at normal high season levels.

As we noted in the previous story, cruise ship often passengers become stayover tourists if their initial visits are successful; that's why courting them is such a big deal for the island.

7. Current SXM Weather Info (Updated)

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. There are now also active weather widgets on the site's home page.
- 3) Our [Everything SXM 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.

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.*

8. **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.

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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.

9. Hundreds of SXM Timeshare & Villa Rentals Available

With several timeshare resorts back online — Belair, Sea Palace, and Atrium Resort, with Divi, Simpson Bay, and Oyster Bay Beach following quickly -- timeshare owners are now posting units available for rent on our [timeshare rental site](#) on everythingSXM.com and on our new companion Villas for Rent page, also on everything.sxm.com. Check them out: they were heavily revised twice last week and will be updated again this week.

-----> **See also Story 13 Re: Planet Hollywood Resort Hotel / Casino** and an additional story about Flamingo Resort in Section 4.

SECTION 3: JMB Member Discounts & Benefits

10. JMB 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 some 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 months as we restart rolling out a number of entirely new discounts and benefits.

We are now adding new discounts and benefits. Please stay tuned; special messages will be sent to all JMB Website Supporters members as the newest benefits are rolled out.

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

11. Next Level Car Rental Now Offers Discounts To JMB Members

The latest car rental company to join our JMB Website Supporters Island Discount Program is Next Level Car Rental.

It, like Leisure Car Rental (a partner of ours for years), is also a local company and is also female owned, like Leisure. You will be able to find more information about the discount that Next Level offers by logging into our members-only secret website and checking car rentals in the Discounts Master Index effective today, Monday, May 7, 2018.

More new discounts are coming soon.

SECTION 4: Island News, Info, & Features

Get Peace of Mind
When You Travel
with SkyMed "Takes You Home®"
Medevac Protection:

Their Lowest Daily Cost
Is in SkyMed's
Five-Year "Ultimate"
Medical Evacuation Membership,
SkyMed's best coverage!
Details on
What SkyMed Is and How It Works
are in story #25.

Don't risk being without it!

Buy or Upgrade to a new Five-Year SkyMed Ultimate
Membership Through Us (their Best Membership
at their Lowest Daily Cost) & Get 5 Years

***of membership in JMB Website Supporters
w/ About 300 SXM Discounts
as our Bonus***

Plus you can get a 10-year
price guarantee on SkyMed!

Applies only to new or upgraded
Five-Year Ultimate memberships
bought directly through us
(including the original SkyMed purchase).
Not combinable with any other offer.
Available exclusively through us.
For details, contact
Jeff Berger at 508-747-8281
or email Jeff.Berger@skymed.com
with the Subject "SkyMed."
Do it now...
this offer could soon disappear.

12. C130 Crash Brings Chills to Irma Evacuees

In service by the United States military for decades, C-130 transport planes were pressed into service last September to evacuate thousands of Americans off SXM after hurricane Irma devastated the island.

Every account we read about the C-130 tells us that it is an exceptionally sturdy, reliable airplane. That's why there was great shock when a San Juan-based C-130 taking off from the Savannah airport after undergoing maintenance crashed last week, killing all nine crewmembers aboard. The airplane was being ferried to its final resting place, an aircraft "boneyard" near Phoenix, Arizona. Miraculously, no one on the ground was killed.

We used our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) to ask evacuees whether the plane they flew in from SXM to San Juan was based there. A number of responders answered affirmatively, sending a chill through them. Those first responders came to SXM under rough circumstances to evacuate thousands of Americans. A conga line of C-130s finished the evacuations in a matter of days.

The grace, bravery, resourcefulness, and down-to-earth friendliness of the National Guard crewmembers aboard the C-130s will forever stay in the memories of all those grateful evacuees.

13. Planet Hollywood Resort/Casino: Why It's Great for SXM

Our story in last week's *SXM Weekly News* reporting that a Planet Hollywood Resort Casino would be built on the site of the former Sonesta Great Bay Beach Resort received mixed reactions from our readers.

Many had stayed in Great Bay a number of times over the years. They praised its staff. They praised its pricing. And they praised its scenic, convenient downtown Philipsburg location.

Some did not like the idea of such an upscale facility replacing the Great Bay they knew and loved. But another article we recently published carried observations from John Caputo, a St. Maarten resident who holds the Domino's pizza franchise for SXM and a number of nearby islands. He said during a recent trip to the airport, he noticed that many SXM visitors are aging. They're loyal visitors who love the island but for its long-term survival, John said SXM needed to do more to attract younger, affluent visitors as well.

The recently opened Rainforest Adventures chairlift and zipline at the Emilio Wilson estate also drew some hostility from people who felt the estate should be left as it was in perpetuity. However, our view is that both the Rainforest Adventures project in the Planet Hollywood hotel/casino project are home runs in pursuit of attracting an incremental young, affluent demographic which can help the island's economy for many years.

SXM has great beaches, phenomenal people, extraordinary dining, and an infrastructure that clearly needs work. It's taking the appropriate steps to move itself into the 21st-century: We're thrilled to see Planet Hollywood and Sunwing's initiative at bringing it to fruition.

14. What About The Current "Hollywood" Casino?

With a Planet Hollywood casino coming to SXM, might it make a ruckus concerning the existing separately owned Hollywood Casino in the "doughnut hole" at Simpson Bay Resort?

We're no lawyers, but our view is that Planet Hollywood not would not have a case. We expect it would have to show that only it has the right to use the word Hollywood, which is widely used in many countries. We just don't think the notion would fly, and we doubt that Planet Hollywood would want to waste time and money pursuing it.

15. Waste Mgt. Authority Coming To Fix Dump Woes

As cruise passengers aboard mega ships approach the A. C. Wathey cruise and cargo facilities in Philipsburg, the most glaring thing they see is a huge mountain of garbage behind the city's low skyline. Worse, that garbage mountain is often smoldering.

SXM has been wringing its municipal hands for years about this festering problem. Now, it says it is going to create a Waste Management Authority whose job it will be to fix the island's waste management woes.

A post on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) this past week suggested that SXM go in the same direction as Denmark, which uses all its garbage to create electricity or for recycling — and has to import more garbage because it has none left. SXM should take a closer look at that alternative, though any alternative that relies on CO2-belching combustion to create energy is not a wise idea long-term for this planet. (It was recently announced that CO2 levels are now at their highest level in recorded history.)

Here are [more details](#) about the Waste Management Authority.

16. Flamingo Resort Update

Longtime reader Yvonne M. has submitted the following observations concerning Flamingo Resort:

"We've been so busy--but finally made it back to the beach area outside the Flamingo for our Volunteer Beach Clearing project yesterday. 90 minutes and 4 full bags of debris (plus one pile of debris gathered to collect in a bag today) and the beach looks much improved. We'll try to do one more session to get around the curve at the point.

"The progress [at the resort -Ed.] is positive. Flamingo roofing work is progressing, now they need the new roofing materials to finish that big job. They have cleared the lot near the maintenance building, so hopefully containers are on their way with the supplies."

SXM Weekly News will be publishing more accommodations updates in our next issue.

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JMB Website Supporters

+++ Anniversary Sale +++

Ends Sunday, May 13

JMB Website Supporters
is celebrating its
16th Birthday --
but you get the Presents!

Get About 300 SXM Discounts

& Many Other Benefits Through Our Exclusive

JMB Website Supporters Island Discount Program

Join, Renew, or Reinstate Today:

New JMB memberships: One year \$39; Two, \$59; Our Best Offer: Four Years just \$99

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

Renewal JMB memberships: One year, \$35; Our Best Offer: Five Years just \$99

www.everythingsxm.com/secret Go to the **Membership Renewal Center**

JMB Membership Reinstatements:
One year, \$35; Our Best Offer: Five Years just \$99
<http://everythingxm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

In Addition To Those 300 Discounts
& Other Benefits,
Your JMB Membership
helps keep

SXM Weekly News
Publishing for You Every Week!

Please Join Today!

17. Warehouse Fire in Point Blanche

The last thing anyone wanted to see in SXM was a fire in a warehouse for a shipping company, including damage to a number of shipping containers. But it appears that's exactly what happened starting late Thursday night when a welder's torch reportedly being used for post-Irma roof repair allegedly led to the start of the blaze. Here is the story from [the Daily Herald](#).

Good news: Tropical Shipping, a busy business with offices in that building, was back in business the very next day.

18. A Long-Time Visitor's Observations

Visitors who asked to remain anonymous submitted the following about their trip to SXM, underway very recently:

"[We] are spending 9 days here, (a) because we've missed the place an awful lot and (b) we want to be supportive of our friends and acquaintances on the island in a very rough economic time, post-Irma.

"I think there is price-gouging going on. This was always an expensive island, but the prices on some everyday things are through the roof. For example, I bought a loaf of rye bread today for \$8.85. Nine bucks for a loaf of bread? The other day, we put back the 6-pack of bagels because it was \$12.00. Two bucks a bagel.

"We had lunch [in Simpson Bay] today. No longer are chips and salsa served when you sit at a table [at this restaurant]. The beer is a dollar higher than other places in the neighborhood. And the quality of the food has gone down while the prices have gone way up. \$16.00 for a pulled pork enchilada. \$15.00 for a chicken burrito. That's just plain nuts.

"We were awe-struck by the level of destruction, especially on the French side. We saw very little evidence of

reconstruction or even cleaning up of storm-related debris [there]. I know that rapid response is not a very well known concept on this island, but you'd think a place that is so dependent on tourism as much as this place is would be making herculean efforts to clear wreckage. Evidence of that is hard to spot. I spoke with a construction manager and he told me that just getting glass for window replacements is a huge obstacle. It is taking several months for the simplest orders of glass.

"I believe the majority of JMB Website Supporters are going to be shocked when ... they return to the island. I remember how long it took to clear sunken ships and other debris after Luis in 1995. But as one islander told me, Luis was a gentle puff compared to Irma.

"Tomorrow will be the last Carnival-related day, so maybe after that more progress will be made. But I am not optimistic, based on what I've observed thus far."

Jeff Comments: Irma was, as reported before here, the most powerful Atlantic hurricane in recorded history, and the second most powerful tropical cyclone of any kind ever recorded on the planet. We know from locals that the recovery effort actually has been Herculean. Because of the monster year for hurricanes throughout the Western Atlantic tropics and the Gulf, demand for window glass, air conditioners, and many other building products is smashing records -- and taking extra time to fulfill.

Aggravating the supply/demand problem, insurance companies on the island have allegedly been incredibly slow at paying claims, worsening the ability of individuals and businesses to recover anywhere near as quickly as they would like.

Despite all this, the opinion of the vast majority of people who have visited is that although the damage is stunning, the recovery so far borders on spectacular. Is there price gouging? There undoubtedly was immediately after the hurricane, in some places. But this is the first time we've seen anyone accuse it of continuing. Is the pricing high? Absolutely. Is there justification for it being as high as it is? You would have to ask business owners that. Given the fact that business owners must pay a turnover tax on everything that is brought in by ship (virtually everything you eat in every restaurant), and the fact that shipping costs must also be covered, we think that restaurants are doing the best they can under conditions that are still enormously difficult.

19. School BackPacks for SXM Kids: Help Fill 'Em Up

Jennifer Ormiston Novak, a moderator on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) who works for JetBlue, is working with a number of people to fill backpacks with school supplies for student use this coming fall. JetBlue will be shipping the items for free.

You can help make this happen: Here is information about [how you can donate](#).

20. Our Lists of Open Hotels, Timeshares, Restaurants

Every time we hear about a timeshare, restaurant, or hotel reopening in SXM or announcing its reopening date, we update the information in the Files section of our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). As a result, you can check on the current status of virtually anyplace on the island through our Files section.

If you don't belong to Facebook, you'll need to join (it's free and now quite secure) and answer three simple, quick questions we ask to vet people who want to join. You'll be approved in no time and we look forward to welcoming you.

21. Zika, Chikungunya, and You (Best Repellent)

Thanks to the now proven reality of climate change, officials throughout the US are warning people to be prepared for increased outbreaks of a variety of mosquito-borne diseases. No doubt your local officials have already issued predictions for the summer season.

Although nothing significant is currently happening in SXM with relation to Zika, Chikungunya, and dengue fever, nonetheless it is always wise to be too cautious rather than not cautious enough. When on the island, we use mosquito milk insect repellent, a concoction widely used throughout the Caribbean and available in roll-on format.

Among other things, it contains lemongrass, the scent of which, experts say, mosquitoes detest.

You can buy it in SXM, but we know of no place in the US that sells the same product. It's available in both roll-on and spray, but the roll-on is much more potent and highly recommended unless you're putting it on kids.

22. 2018 SXM Holidays – Where To Find a Full List

Not long ago, we published a list of official SXM 2018 holidays. There are plenty of them — and when they occur, many businesses must close. The current list is on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) and we will be revising it yearly going forward. Check it out.

23. Gorgeous SXM Pictures, Every Day

It's a place where you can compare notes about SXM with people who love the island as much as you do; post your favorite SXM pictures; ask questions; get answers or answer other peoples questions; and have interesting conversations about your favorite island getaway.

One of the things people like most about our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) is the ability to post your favorite pictures and have thousands of other people see them around the world. If you haven't yet taken advantage of joining our site, do it today. It's a great way to keep aware of ... everything SXM.

24. Please Patronize JMB Sponsors

CAR RENTALS:

[Leisure Car Rental](#)

[Tropical-Tropicana Car Rental](#)

Next Level Car Rental (Goes live today, 5/7/18)

CIGARS HAND-MANUFACTURED ON SXM:

[Das Cigars](#)

CUBAN CIGARS:

[Cigar Mack](#)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL EVACUATION MEMBERSHIPS:

[SkyMed International](#) (Scottsdale, Az.)

JEWELERS:

[Little Europe Jewelers](#) in Philipsburg.

[Zhaveri Jewelers](#) in Philipsburg.

Caribbean Gems

Oro Diamante

Ray's Jewelers (just joined)

REAL ESTATE COMPANIES:

[Island Real Estate Team](#) is widely regarded as SXM's top real estate organization. A JMB Sponsor, they offer both residential and commercial real estate in every price range. Call the number that follows and ask to speak with the agent who handles what you seek: 1 721 520 7284. Please let the agent know that you were referred by Jeff Berger's *Everything SXM Facebook Site*.

RESORTS:

Baker's Suites

Simpson Bay Resort

RESTAURANTS:

[IZI](#)

LA PATRONA (Simpson Bay Resort)

MARIO'S BISTRO (Porto Cupecoy)

[SPIGA](#)

[VESNA TAVERNA](#)

VILLA RENTAL COMPANIES:

If you're interested in making a villa reservation (doing it with close friends can be fun and more economical than you'd imagine), contact our top recommended Villa rental/sale partners at [Island Real Estate Team](#). Call the number that follows and ask to speak with the agent who handles villa rentals: 1 721 520 7284. Please let the agent know that you're interested in a rental and you were referred by Jeff Berger's *Everything SXM Facebook Site*. Hundreds of villas are now online.

[Jennifer's Vacation Villas](#) has also joined us as a villa rental partner. *Jennifer's Vacation Villas* is a licensed management, real estate and villa rental company specializing in the rental of private villas and condos on both French and Dutch St. Maarten. Its proprietor, Jennifer, is a New Yorker who has been residing in St. Maarten for 40 years and whose goal is to provide guests with personal attention and to ensure that their vacations are memorable. Jennifer's Vacation Villas also does Weddings, Private Events, and any additional services including massages, boat trips, and private catering. Their aim is to make your vacation stay as comfortable, accommodating, and easy going as possible. Call 1 (721) 544-3107 | +1 (631) 546-7345. When you contact them, please tell them you were referred by Jeff Berger's *Everything SXM Facebook Site*.

5/7/18

25. Critically Ill or Injured? SkyMed **Takes You Home**®

Think your vacations are full of eventful days? Look at these:

A recent Summer trip ended in disaster when a child visiting her grandmother in Grand Case was bitten in the head by the grandmother's bulldog, imperiling the girl's eyesight. She was flown to Miami in a medical evacuation jet for emergency eye surgery that saved her sight. Flight cost to the patient: \$0.

A woman from Virginia shopped at an island grocer and headed back to her car carrying two bags of groceries. She tripped and fell on a curb and knew at once she had fractured her hip. After being stabilized locally, she was flown home on a medical evacuation jet from SkyMed where she had the surgery she needed. Flight cost to the patient: \$0.

Two men were riding their horses on a hill in Cole Bay when a car backfiring spooked one of the horses, which

threw its rider. The other rider got off his horse to check his companion when the car again backfired, spooking the horse again which led it to kick its dismounted driver in the head, luckily causing "only" a severely dislocated jaw. The local hospital had no ability to solve that problem so the victim was airlifted by SkyMed back to Pennsylvania for surgery. Flight cost to the patient: \$0.

A member of the clergy fell down cement stairs and broke her leg. She too was airlifted home by SkyMed for surgery. Flight cost to the patient: \$0.

Mary Beth and her partner Don were vacationing in SXM when Don fell and broke his hip -- only about a month after they had bought SkyMed. SkyMed flew them home on a medevac jet for the hospital care he needed. Flight cost to the patient: \$0. Savings: over \$35,000.

An MD from Florida who always visits SXM was on a cruise vacation to the Greek Islands with his wife when he broke his femur aboard the ship. He was rushed to the hospital in Corfu but called SkyMed *which arranged and paid for* an emergency medevac flight to Athens for urgent surgery. A few days later SkyMed evacuated him again, with an excellent male nurse, all the way home to Florida, where an ambulance took him home for recovery. Required flight cost to the patient: \$0. Savings: big time.

Not all trips end well: anything can happen when you travel. Being a member of SkyMed was the common thread in all these cases. *SkyMed took its members home in a private, ICU-equivalent medical evacuation jet -- home to doctors and hospitals the patient knows and trusts -- and home where their health insurance works.* That one of up to 18 benefits received by SkyMed members for not much more than \$1.35/day for annual or multiyear memberships.

All this is why we always recommend SkyMed. Call Jeff Berger weekdays at 508-747-8281 and leave your name, phone number, and time zone. Jeff will call back at a mutually convenient time and answer all your questions. He can also sign you up by phone. You're eligible to apply regardless of your age or health if you are a U.S. or Canadian citizen or an American or Canadian expat living in SXM or certain other countries.

Nobody is immune: anything can happen anywhere. Do it today. To learn more, visit www.getskymed.com. JMB members get big discounts off SkyMed's regular pricing: see the story about JMB Website Supporters at the beginning of this section.

Got questions about SkyMed? Call Jeff directly any weekday at 508-747-8281 (SkyMed calls only). Leave a message if he's on the other line, with your phone number and time zone. Some SkyMed info is below and Jeff can answer all your remaining SXM questions. He has been a SkyMed Ambassador for many years.

What it Is: SkyMed is a Scottsdale, Arizona, based medical evacuation membership company. It "Takes You Home" if you're a SkyMed member when you become critically ill or injured while traveling anywhere in the United States (all 50 states), Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean. Global coverage, offering services in the rest of the world (except where the U. S. State Department has issued [travel advisories](#)), is available as an option on annual memberships and is included in multi-year "Ultimate" memberships, through SkyMed company GETS, Global Emergency Transport Services. Americans, Canadians, and ExPats living in any of the countries named here are eligible to apply for membership.

What Medical Evacuations Cost Without SkyMed: At the low end, medical evacuation flights aboard private specially-outfitted and staffed "air ambulances" usually cost anywhere from \$35,000 to \$70,000 *payable in cash in advance, before anything happens.* Prices from Mexico and some distant parts of the world can cost far more. For SkyMed members, SkyMed arranges and pays for all the services it offers. There are no claims forms, no deductibles, no pre-payments for services by you with you waiting for SkyMed reimbursements -- no hassles. You make one phone call to SkyMed and SkyMed handles everything. *Medical evacuations are typically never covered by your health insurance policies.*

What it Covers: A complete, highly thoughtful spectrum of important evacuation-related services. Download the complete list with descriptions [here](#).

How It Works: As you would in any medical emergency anywhere, get to a hospital right away when you become critically ill or injured. You can call SkyMed at their toll-free number (or collect from outside the US) when you first get to the hospital if you like, to make us aware of the situation. Once the medical staff has given you emergency care, call SkyMed from the hospital so we can talk with those handling the member's care. Critically ill or injured members must be stable for medical evacuation air travel to occur safely. SkyMed keeps you informed every step of the way, and SkyMed arranges and pays for the ambulance from the hospital to the airport; the medevac jet to your destination city; and the ambulance from that airport to the hospital. We will already have obtained and transferred your records to the destination hospital, where a bed will be waiting for you and a team will be ready to help you. We take you home where your support system is and where your health insurance works. All you pay is your SkyMed membership fee; SkyMed arranges and pays for all the services it provides for you.

JMB Website Supporters Members Get Discounts & Bonuses: Discounts are available on all multiyear SkyMed memberships. Ask Jeff for details; see the end of this story. Bonuses available give you additional years on your JMB membership when you buy a new multi-year SkyMed membership from us or upgrade a SkyMed membership bought from us to multi-year. After buying, simply notify support@jmbcommunications.com of your SkyMed purchase and you get an equal number of years added to your JMB membership.

Many Special Features:

a) SkyMed Takes You Home®. Others in their fine print say they take you home or to the nearest appropriate facility, at their option; that could be thousands of miles from home.

b) No age limit to apply. No age limit for services.

c) Pre-existing conditions covered in full after only 90 days for one-year and longer memberships, and immediately for short-term memberships.

d) Guaranteed renewable regardless of advancing age or health changes (applies to annual and multiyear memberships).

e) No membership price increases due solely to advancing age or declining health. You pay what everyone pays.

f) Ten-year price guarantee for five-year Ultimate SkyMed memberships: When you apply for a five-year SkyMed Ultimate membership and indicate "renew automatically" on your application, you are guaranteed the same price upon renewal that you paid when joining. The SkyMed Ultimate, which is prepaid for five years at inception, currently offers more features and benefits than SkyMed's annual memberships (see What it Covers, above) at a highly advantageous annual cost. SkyMed Annual memberships have no price guarantee (though their price has been unchanged for several years). Jet fuel price spikes can affect the cost of Annual memberships. But with the Ultimate's 10-year price guarantee, you're solid no matter what.

Where to Get Answers To Your Questions: Call SkyMed Ambassador Jeff Berger any daytime or evening at 508-747-8281. He can answer all your questions and even complete an application with you in about 10 minutes. Often, you'll have SkyMed's reply in one or two business days. You can also email Jeff at jeff.berger@skymed.com or jeff@jmbcommunications.com (with the subject SkyMed); please include your phone number and area code.

SkyMed Takes You Home®: What else matters?

26. Anniversary Sale Must End Sunday 5/13 -- Do Not Miss It

JMB Website Supporters was founded 16 years ago, in April, 2002, after a month of testing. And JMB Communications was formed in June, 1990, almost 28 years ago: so it's time to celebrate with one of our most popular sales of the year. Sale ends next Sunday May 6; act today so you won't miss it.

New JMB memberships: One year \$39; Two, \$59; Our Best Offer: Four Years just \$99

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

Renewal JMB memberships: One year, \$35; Our Best Offer: Five Years just \$99

www.everythingsxm.com/secret Go to the **Membership Renewal Center**

JMB Membership Reinstatements:

One year, \$35; Our Best Offer: Five Years just \$99

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

27. Restaurant of the Week: iZi Ristorante Italiano, Simp. Bay

A top restaurateur on SXM for more than 20 years, David Foini obsesses to deliver top quality, creative ingredients

and presentation, and outstanding service. You'll see his collection of Everything SXM Awards of Excellence (and other awards) signifying his success at doing all of that. Upbeat, fun atmosphere, and great food. Just go. You'll totally understand why IZI is one of SXM's very best restaurants. Tell David we sent you.

Here is a rundown of the status of all restaurants featured in the last year or so in our *Weekly News* restaurant column. Dates below are when each restaurant was last covered.

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 5/7/18) David is doing a spectacular job here as always: do not miss IZI when visiting SXM. Now open for lunch as well.

Mario Bistro www.mariobistrot.com/en/ 4/30/18 Mario's Bistro reopened a few weeks after Irma hit and looks forward to your return. Phenomenal dining.

Spiga, www.spiga-sxm.com (featured 4/9/18) Reopened as Cafe Spiga, new menu; redesigned; also now serving lunch. New bar, new bar snacks, same great staff, service, and wonderful food.

Celine Too Motor Yacht, www.sailstmaarten.com (featured 8/7/17). Sunk by Irma. Neil has bought a new sailing yacht as big as Celine Too was and is readying it to enter service soon. Neil is known for amazing cooking on board his boats.

Big Fish Restaurant www.bigfishsxm.com/ (featured 5/1/17). Big Fish has closed. We do not have any word on whether Mike and Teresa will be reopening.

Busby's Chicken Rotisserie (featured 6/5/17) Wrecked by Irma. The owners are awaiting insurance resolution. Isola Ristorante Italiano (featured 5/29/17) Marco Ferrante's Isola Ristorante Italiano next to Hollywood casino in the middle of Simpson Bay Resort was one of the first restaurants to reopen soon after Irma struck, and it has been open ever since. It is now also fully enclosed and fully air conditioned - no street noise. Neat place.

Avantika Thai www.avantikasxm.com (featured 2/6/17) Avantika is open. SXM's best Thai.

Canoa, www.canoasxm.com (featured 4/10/17) Canoa has established a gofundme campaign to help it rebuild. We have no information on timing, but our guess is probably late 2018, or later.

SkipJack's SXM, <http://www.skipjacks-sxm.com/> (featured 7/17/17) Skipjack's main dining deck overlooking the lagoon was wrecked by Irma and is being rebuilt. They should be open late 2018.

Trattoria Pizza Pasta, Maho Plaza near Casino Royale (featured 9/12/16). The Maho area was hit very badly by Irma and Pizza Pasta has closed and is not expected to reopen, not at that location anyway. Selena has moved to St. Kitts where her mom, Ilde, and dad, Dario, operate their Ciao restaurant.

Daniel's By The Sea, www.dawnbeachsxm.com (featured 8/14/17) Wrecked by Irma. The owners are awaiting insurance resolution.

La Patrona, Simpson Bay Resort (featured 1/30/17; added 1/17) La Patrona is open and has been for quite some time.

Domino's Pizza <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dominos-Pizza-St-Maarten/95635717338> (featured 9/16) Open.

The Boathouse, <https://www.facebook.com/CDayDay777> 10/3/16 Just got insurance settlement, not yet reopened.

The Hideaway, <http://www.lavistaresort.com/restaurant.html> (featured 10/31/16) Open; contact the restaurant for details and reservations. Updated 3/2/18.

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

Melange International Grill (featured 2/20/17) Reopened.

Le Pressoir, <http://www.lepressoir-sxm.com> (featured 7/6/15) Believed permanently closed and likely for sale. We'll post quickly if we hear anything else.

Temptation, <http://www.temptation-sxm.com/> (featured 7/5/17) Permanently closed. Dino has now relocated to Emilio's at the Emilio Wilson Estate, which will be featured here soon.

Lal's Curry In A Hurry Indian Restaurant, Airport Road, Simpson Bay (featured 7/10/17) Open now for lunch and dinner.

Mr. Busby's Beach Bar <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 6/26/17) Wrecked by Irma. The owners are awaiting insurance resolution.

Island Pizza, <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 6/19/17) Wrecked by Irma. The owners are awaiting insurance resolution.

Pineapple Pete, www.pineapplepete.com (featured 7/31/17) Reopened.

Papagayo, <http://www.cluborient.com/papagayo.php> (featured 10/17/16) Club Orient was wrecked by Irma; rebuilding is planned. ETA not yet known.

Dany & John's Cupecoy Beach Bar (on Cupecoy beach; follow the car path the turn near Shore Pointe to get there). (featured 4/17/2017) Reopened. Their sign blew away in Irma -- to Virgin Gorda's airport 192 miles away.

FIG, Maho complex at Le Terasse Had closed permanently before Irma hit.

St. Maarten Yacht Club, at the Dutch Side Drawbridge Reopened.

Jimbo's, www.jimboscafe.com (featured 6/12/17) Recently reopened.

Vesna Taverna, www.vesnataverna.com (featured 1/22/18). Reopened. Now open Wed through Sunday B/L/D.

Topper's <http://www.sxmtoppers.com/> (featured 2/27/17) Reopened quickly.

Taloula Mango <http://www.taloulamango.com/> (featured 4/20/15) Reopened.

Bylbos, Simpson Bay Not yet known.

Sushiitto Japanese Restaurant, Port de Plaisance <https://www.facebook.com/sushiitto.sxm> (featured 2/13/17) Closed permanently; see next item. Pierre ("Pete") Ferland has opened a new Japanese Restaurant next to Pineapple Pete...

Wasabi Charlie Japanese Restaurant (formerly Sushiitto) is the new name of Sushiitto, now relocated

next door to Pineapple Pete in Simpson bay. Essentially the same menu, same staff, same great service. Emilio's at Emilio Wilson Estate will be featured soon. It's the new property run by renowned chef Dino Jagtiani, whose Temptation Restaurant was wrecked by Irma.

You will find hundreds more restaurants from both the Dutch Side and French Side listed in the Files area of our [Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM Facebook Site](#). Our thanks to our Admin there, Contessa Aiello, who edited the restaurant entries on that site.

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a unit of JMB Communications.

28. 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 now until at least June, 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 will 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....

29. 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. Back issues are expected to be updated (at long last) this week.

Get The Current Low Price
on SkyMed's Best 5-Year Ultimate Membership
and keep the current low price on your first 5-yr. renewal.
That's a 10-year price guarantee.
More benefits... same price.

Ask Jeff for details -- call him at 508-747-8281 (SkyMed calls only, reg. hours Eastern time.) More info? See getskymed.com.

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)

To unsubscribe, go here: www.sxmweeklynews.com. 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 www.sxmweeklynews.com; unsubscribe your old email address and subscribe your new one. *JMB Website Supporters members should notify Membership Services of the new email address for continued Secret Site access.*

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

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

Contact Us (Revised 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 .

Privacy Policy http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxm/privacy_policy/index.shtml

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