

From JMB / SXM Weekly News 12/10/18: Airport Terminal Reopening; jetBlue FLL-SXM Nonstops; 98% of Flights Return by March; Royal Islander; SMGH; SkipJacks; Belair; Volunteering; Toy Drive; Jacky Rom; Holiday Sale Ending Soon; SkyMed Customer Stories [35 news stories]

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Vol. 2, #1180 --- Monday, December 10, 2018
News From St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM



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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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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 308,000 people around the world...

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



twitter

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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Delivers 300+ SXM Discounts & Other Benefits**

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35 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 12/15/2018 12/22/2018 50 **Atrium Beach Resort & Spa Luxurious one-bedroom unit overlooking Kim Sha Beach** on the 7th floor of the Atrium Resort. Great views day & night .. watch the sunset right from your awesome balcony. Located in Simpson Bay on the Dutch side. Full kitchen with full-size refrigerator, 4-burner stove, lots of cabinets. There's a pull-out couch in the living room for extra guests. Daily maid service with full change of linens mid-week. Many great restaurants, bars, grocery stores and casino are within walking distance. Renter pays \$50 timeshare tax upon check out. \$750 Brian - +1-315-730-5320 brian.sanford@sanfordssales.com

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

SALE 2/16/2019 2/23/2019 Week 7 **Belair Beach Resort Dutch side condo on Little Bay Beach 3rd floor directly on the Beach.** Quiet location. Two BR, 2 BA with king size bed in master, double in 2nd BR w/access to private bath. Private Balcony overlooking Beach, Caribbean Sea and St. Barths. AC, fully equipped kitchen, dining room, living room has sleeper sofa. Sleeps 6 total. TVs in living room and master BR. In-room wifi. Reserve your own Free Beach Chair w/Umbrella for the week plus daily Free Beach Towels. Newly renovated since Hurricane Irma. Best Snorkeling on the Island in Little Bay. See www.belairbeach.com for great details. Why Rent this February when you can Buy and Own until 2091? \$13,000 David 19788867611 davidfarzan@gmail.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](#)

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"Like" Our ["Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM" Facebook Site:](#)



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

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

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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. Jet Blue Set To Begin FLL-SXM Nonstops

As we first reported here several months ago, JetBlue is now poised to begin its much-heralded daily nonstop service between Fort Lauderdale (FLL) and SXM Airport.

The flights *could* inaugurate lower fares to SXM from much of the country, including the Midwest, Southwest, and the West Coast. Fort Lauderdale is a major hub (focus city) for JetBlue, which means that it has flights from many cities that will enable new connections to SXM.

If you're trying to find a Valentine's Day present for someone, this may be your ticket, since flights begin February 14, 2019.

For more information, see www.jetblue.com.

HOLIDAY MEMBERSHIP SALE

******* ENDS VERY SOON *******

**Get 300+ SXM Discounts
& Many Other Island Benefits,
& (P. S.) Invitations to Members-Only Island Parties:**

**Get, Renew, or Reinstate YOUR JMB Membership
Today:**

**New JMB memberships: 6 yrs only \$139 (best offer; 3 yrs. \$79; one year \$33
http://everythingxm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml**

Renewal JMB memberships: 7 yrs. \$139 (best offer); 3 yrs. \$69; one year \$33
<http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

Reinstatement JMB memberships: 6 yrs. \$129 (best offer); 3 yrs. \$73; one year \$35
<http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

2. Air Transat Resuming Flights This Month from YYZ and YUL

This month, Air TRANSAT resumes flights to SXM from both Toronto and Montréal, a major increase in seats to SXM from Canada. WestJet resumed flights to SXM a while back, as we reported.

3. 98% of 2017 Flights Back by March

If your excuse for not returning to SXM was either that there were no flights to the island, high ticket prices, or insufficient accommodations, you would be wrong on all three counts this Winter.

As we've reported here, fully rebuilt or renovated accommodations of all descriptions are opening up rapidly; the transition from pavilions/tents for arrivals and departures at the airport to terminal-based arrivals and departures gets underway this week (see separate article); and a full 98% of the number of passenger flights that had been going through SXM Airport in 2017 will be back online by March, 2019.

That's plenty of airlift, plenty of accommodations, and lots of nice warm weather for you to enjoy instead of freezing and or shoveling back home.

Please also see story #22 concerning the condition of the island.

4. Airport Transition to Terminal Begins This Week

The arrival and departure tents at SXM Airport, politely referred to as pavilions during the last several months, will soon be broken down, folded up, and removed, back to the company that rented them to the airport. The reason: the much-anticipated return of both arrivals and departures of commercial aircraft back into the main terminal building begins this week.

For now, both arrivals and departures will be accommodated on the first floor of the main terminal, where remediation and rebuilding have been completed. The first floor has also been modified to enable it to accept departures, previously handled on the second floor.

Meanwhile, work on the second floor will go into overdrive. It is expected that the second floor will be fully open to normal flight arrival / departure operations next Fall, well before the 2019 – 2020 high season begins.

We are arranging tours of the facility so we can give you additional information and hopefully some photography. We will also be talking to airport senior management about the status of preclearance of people headed to the US.

Preclearance — under which those passengers would go through US customs and immigration in SXM before their flight takes off — would enable SXM flights to be treated like domestic flights upon arrival in the US, without further customs or immigration. Airport authorities in the recent past have said that preclearance is a matter of if, not when.

Preclearance is expected to involve further construction at the SXM Airport terminal, currently shaped like a partial crescent. That crescent would be completed at its eastern end, adding a few more gates that would be convertible for different uses at different times. The airport would then have the structural capability of handling U.S. Customs

and Immigration preclearance.

We expect to have more on this in future articles, as well as more information about the progress toward full restoration of normal services on their normal floors at the airport.

5. December Winds Arrive

SXM's annual December winds — so named, oddly enough, because they occur in December — seem to be back. Winds have been steady and a bit stronger than in other months the last couple of days.

If you are on the island and wondering what beaches are comfortable because of the winds on any given day and what beaches aren't, just use our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) and ask our peeps. They will give you the latest information and in many cases, pictures or videos too.

Although we haven't seen them in a few years, December sometimes also brings what are called Christmas worms. They are bright red — hence the name Christmas -- and tend to wriggle their way across outside cement or inside floors.

One night while staying in Guana Bay a number of years ago, we went into the kitchen during the night and saw dozens of them in a very loose formation headed across the kitchen floor toward the back door, under which they slithered outside. We haven't seen any anywhere since. There was no hope of picking them up and moving them so I just let them be — a wise choice. They did their thing and left....

6. Current SXM Weather / Weather Updates

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.*

Download your own NHC Hurricane Chart:

Years ago, before we were all saturated with weather information from cable TV to local (redundant and repetitive) news and forecasts plus weather updates and bulletins on our smart phones, gas stations and television stations offered printed hurricane tracking charts so people at home could try to figure out for themselves whether they were about to get slammed by the latest hurricane.

We haven't seen hurricane tracking chart handouts for years, but if you want one they are easy to get.

The exact charts used by the National Hurricane Center (NHC) are available for download from the NHC [here](#). Select "Atlantic" and you're good to go. You can print out the chart and use it repeatedly, or simply print a bunch of them and use one for each storm that may approach an area of interest -- like, SXM. Bear in mind that this hurricane season may well be frontloaded — so you might want to print a few of these now and *not* save doing that for later.

7. Get The 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.

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Lead Story: Government Mulls Hotel Incentives

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As a foreigner writing about SXM — a tourist for almost 42 years — sometimes only the expression "you can't make this stuff up" comes to mind, since things here on the island often don't resemble processes used to make decisions at home by many local governments.

Case in point, a story in the *SXM Daily Herald* last week noted that the government was mulling over incentives for smaller hotels, to which our reaction was wait, what?

The hurricane was 15 months ago, and the island has been in heavy recovery mode ever since. It has largely recovered, although few people off the island know that (except you, thanks to us and other travelers you know). The government doesn't seem to be doing anything in contemplation of promotion in North America to proclaim to the

world that the island is ready for tourism. It has talked about it but never done it.

So the story appears that the government is mulling over incentives for small hotels. Already on its plate are requests from Sonesta, for example, for substantial aid to help them in their cost to rebuilding, already well underway.

Cases have to be made to the World Bank for loans related to hurricane recovery. It would seem that the process would be fast-tracked to make things happen correctly and expeditiously, but if that were the case, why are these requests still on the table? And why hasn't anything been allocated toward promotion, to help bring far more people to the island who have money and are eager to spend it to help their favorite island?

We have no idea what the answer is. All we can do is continue to report the news for you, fairly and accurately, and hope that you, like us, return to the island and pitch into a highly recovered tourism destination that still really needs your business and looks forward to your return.

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Renowned French Artists Painting Hotel Mercure Wall of Art

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Over the last several years, Baki Arbia, owner of Mercure Simpson Bay Resort in the French lowlands, made it a showplace. It was immaculate, modern, sumptuous, incredibly comfortable, and flawless. As we reported early in 2017, the resort also was festooned with a great deal of art gathered from around the world by Baki, himself an outstanding artist.

Then bull in a china shop Irma came and screwed everything up. A number of rooms at this property have now been restored to their pre-Irma beauty and the resort has reopened, while additional units continue to be repaired and renovated.

Now, a group of French artists has come to the resort and painted many murals on the wall facing the main road through the lowlands, Rue de Sandy Ground. It's something to behold, and we hope to post pictures soon on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). By all means next time you visit the island go through the area to see this very special treat.

More about this property is [here](#).

8. Royal Islander Is Back Online

Royal Islander la Plage went back in business as of Saturday, December 8, a welcome return for the venerable Maho beach timeshare.

If you'd like to see pictures, just ask the folks who are staying there by using our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#).

9. Availability of Places To Stay Expanding Like Popcorn

The availability of places to stay on SXM is expanding rapidly this month. Recent editions of this publication have reported on which hotels and timeshares are returning to operation, and about others that will return soon..

To see details about what has opened recently and about those opening soon, see our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) and look in the Files area. Files also offers a wealth of additional information about SXM.

Why "like popcorn?" Hot buttered microwave popcorn takes a while to get going, but when it does the popping is almost incessant — that's the stage we're at right now.

N. B.: We are not responsible if you have a sudden hankering for a bowl of hot buttered microwave popcorn.

10. Places to Stay: Many Available, Take Your Pick

With several timeshare resorts back online — Belair, Sea Palace, Divi, Atrium Resort, Simpson Bay Resort, and Oyster Bay Beach now open too -- timeshare owners continue to post units available for rent on our [timeshare rental site](#) on [everythingSXM.com](#) and on our new companion Villas for Rent page, also on [everythingxsm.com](#). Check them out: they have just been heavily revised.

Get your rental weeks now. Note: ads on those pages are from JMB Website Supporters members exclusively.

SECTION 3: JMB Member Discounts & Benefits

11. 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 continue to roll out a number of entirely new discounts and benefits.

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

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

SECTION 4: Island News, Info, & Features

HOLIDAY MEMBERSHIP SALE

******* ENDS VERY SOON *******

**Get 300+ SXM Discounts
& Many Other Island Benefits,
& (P. S.) Invitations to Members-Only Island Parties:**

**Get, Renew, or Reinstate YOUR JMB Membership
Today:**

New JMB memberships: 6 yrs only \$139 (best offer); 3 yrs. \$79; one year \$33
http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

Renewal JMB memberships: 7 yrs. \$139 (best offer); 3 yrs. \$69; one year \$33
<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

Reinstatement JMB memberships: 6 yrs. \$129 (best offer); 3 yrs. \$73; one year \$35
<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

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Lead Story: SMGH Construction Delay Seems Likely

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Ground was just broken not much more than a week ago for the new **St. Maarten General Hospital**, construction of which was delayed by design upgrades following hurricane Irma.

An early start to real construction now seems in doubt because of financial instability on the part of the company selected to build it, which is European.

Some local news agencies in SXM last week were reporting that the construction company had gone bankrupt, a claim since denied by SXM health minister Emil Lee, a long-time booster of this project. But there may well be enough financial instability now that the initiation of construction may not happen as quickly as everyone had hoped.

We'll keep you posted, as always.

If you're American or Canadian or an ExPat of either country living in SXM, just make sure you have medical evacuation protection from [SkyMed](#): you don't want to be thousands of miles away from doctors & hospitals you know and trust, where your insurance actually works, just because you got critically ill or injured while you're away. SkyMed *Takes You Home*®. See story #24.

-- Finally, Salsa Classes For Adults, from Experts

If you thought that the Soggy Dollar Bar (behind Vesna Taverna in Simpson Bay) was only for kids, you'd be wrong — adults also love it.

One of the reasons is that on Latin night, they have salsa dancing lessons from 7 to 9 PM for a cost of only \$10 per person — wicked cheap, as they say in Boston. **Every first Tuesday of the month Soggy Dollar celebrates Latin Night with a Live Band in addition to the 2 for 1 drink specials on Brugal and El Jimador with FREE entrance and Margarita for everyone!** Come that night to Vesna's for dinner at 5pm, then walk back next door to Soggy at 6:45 for the Salsa Lessons. No need to register in advance.

We're trying to see if they actually do it every Tuesday night... stay tuned.

12. JMB Membership Cards Required for All 300 SXM Discounts

Reminding JMB Website Supporters members, we invite you to take advantage of all the discounts and other benefits offered to all of our members. However, you must use your JMB Website Supporters membership card, along with a valid current government issued photo ID if requested, to prove your JMB membership when requesting discounts or benefits.

If your card has expired, you are not entitled to any discounts or benefits. You can reinstate your membership [here](#). If your membership is current but you do not have a valid membership card that we emailed to you after your last membership transaction, [contact Membership Services](#) and they will email you a new one. Membership cards are not sent by snail mail.

13. Big Fish Isn't Big Fish

We wanted to make clear something that we feel many of our readers may not realize.

The Big Fish restaurant in Dawn beach, next to Mr. Busby's Beach Bar, was practically destroyed by hurricane Irma. The managers, Mike and Teresa, quickly returned to Canada and as far as we know have no intention of returning to

run any business in St. Maarten. Their chef and their staff all have scattered elsewhere.

The owner of the building is preparing to open a new restaurant called Big Fish on the site of the old Big Fish. Although we expect it will sell seafood, it is not the Big Fish of recent vintage you remember; it can't be, because all of the people that operated that establishment aren't around.

We thought you have a right to know that Big Fish isn't necessarily Big Fish...

13a. SkipJacks Is Roaring Back

Directly from W. B. "George" Shetter at SkipJack's:

"And now for some GOOD news. The long awaited seawall has finally been poured. Forms have been removed and now awaiting the pouring of the concrete cap that will become the restaurant floor when tiled. Looks like we are on the 'to do list' for the Restaurant Gods finally... The kitchen is pretty much ready to go. What is [it] they say?

"Perfection takes time."

Soon come, mon....

14. A Closer Look at Belair Beach Hotel

Everybody who goes there loves it. Few people talk about it, since they want to keep it as their own little secret. It has a great beach. It has a nice seaside bar. And it's close to both Simpson Bay and Philipsburg, making shopping easy and dining out a quick, easy trip.

Belair Beach Resort has been on the map in St. Maarten for decades. Irma dealt it a nasty blow, slamming the facility hard.

Meanwhile, a few miles away in Cupecoy, the Summit Resort Hotel, perched high on a hill overlooking Simpson Bay lagoon, was for all practical purposes blown away by Irma. Huddled in one of the buildings during the storm was resort General Manager Edna P. "Energy" Evans, one of the most managerially talented hospitality dynamos ever seen on the island.

When it became clear that Summit had been totally destroyed by Irma, folks from Belair Beach contacted Ms. Evans and asked her to take over the resort and orchestrate its renovations so it could return to service in the spring of this year. She took on the task, and was named Director — the top executive of the resort — and orchestrated its remarkably speedy return to availability for its many loyal timeshare owners.

Across the island, some other talented executives orchestrated other returns to business, among them neighboring Divi Little Bay Beach Resort and also Oyster Bay Beach Resort on Dawn beach. We previously published the story here about Simpson Bay Resort, which saw three of its buildings destroyed by an apparent tornado but got the others open quickly so they could house homeless employees and Dutch troops who greatly helped in the weeks and months immediately following Irma's devastation. Royal Resorts Chief Executive Richard Sutton and Resort General Manager Marcel Javois and their staffs did brilliant work there.

Walk-through Belair Beach Hotel as a timeshare owner now, and you will be amazed at the condition of the resort from top to bottom. Our hats are off to Ms. Evans and to top executives at other resorts who did an extraordinary job of returning them to operation for their timeshare owners.

15. Taking A Taxi? Avoid Gypsies -- & Get the Price First

SXM has a significant number of licensed, insured taxis on both sides of the island.

On the Dutch side, taxis have a registration plate which says TAXI in large letters on the plate. On the French side, the plate includes the letters TXI. If you see a taxi without these registration plates, it is a gypsy with an untrained, uninsured, unlicensed driver who could be literally anybody. A few years ago, one of them rear-ended me in an accident eyewitnessed by a Dutch side police officer. He came to the illegal car and started berating the gypsy, who

described himself as a "lowly pensioner," which made the cop yell louder.

In addition to making sure the taxi you take is real, also ask the fare to your destination. Most taxi drivers on the Dutch side are members of associations and primarily wear orange or yellow or blue dress shirts. They have standard published prices for different types of trips.

16. Volunteering on SXM

One of the foremost volunteering organizations on the island is called [All About a Smile](#). Among its principals are author Jacky Rom and Jeff Jhangiani, both of whom you can contact via Facebook. They will be delighted to set you up to help on the island.

See next story.

17. Toy Drive Gifts Number in the Hundreds

On the night before Thanksgiving at Snoopy's Restaurant, Admin Volunteers from our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) Vicki Whitley and Bruce Spring headed up an on-island toy drive promoted heavily through the Facebook site. Almost 100 people came with holiday gifts for kids — and many more donated funds which have been used to buy still more gifts for SXM children.

A small but devoted group of volunteers has spent many hours wrapping these hundreds of gifts and categorizing them according to recipients. They will be distributed a bit later this month through the [All About a Smile](#) organization.

On behalf of the people who have worked on this project and the hundreds who have donated gifts or cash for more gifts or both, we wanted to thank you and all volunteers for your help. It will be very much appreciated by the many children on the island who will receive the benefit of your thoughtfulness.

18. Author Jacky Rom Writes for Kids

British author Jacky Rom, who frequently visits SXM both to volunteer (mainly at [All About a Smile](#)) and to use it as a place to write, usually pens fascinating mysteries. But, you may be surprised to learn that she has also written children's books that can both fascinate and instructive to your children and grandchildren.

You can find her books on the island at Van Doorp and online at both Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

19. December Traffic Reflects Heavy Christmas Shopping and...

Usually after Thanksgiving, things get relatively quiet in St. Maarten.

Things are not quiet now in St. Maarten. Restaurants are busy, roads are clogged, and stores are busy. Christmas shopping time is usually busy here, but there are more tourists this month so far than I recall seeing early in December in many years, a great thing to see.

When we originally planned this article for this issue of *Weekly News*, we expected to relate heavy traffic to holiday shopping. But the reality is that things here on SXM were so much busier last week than expected — with some resorts at or near full capacity — traffic is even heavier than expected, and most people on the island are very happy.

So, traffic is heavy — but the weather is great, the island has made a fantastic recovery, and things look great for the coming high season as we've been saying here for months. See also article 22.

20. Island Culture: The "Silent" Thank-You

In the US, if you yield the right-of-way to someone at an intersection, they generally wave or flash their lights at you in thanks. When anyone toots at you in the US, it may be accompanied by a one-finger wave.

Things are very different in SXM.

Here, you sometimes get a wave of thanks when you yield to someone or allow someone to cross the road. You sometimes get lights flashed at you in thanks. But you may also get a toot of the horn — which is a way people here say thank you.

Or, you might simply get no reaction at all. That's not a sign of arrogance, it's just a cultural thing. You can be sure they appreciate your gesture, it's just not culturally necessary for them to express it so many don't. That takes some getting used to but once you understand it, it's fine.

21. Gluten Free Dining on SXM

If you suffer from celiac disease and are required to seek gluten-free dining on SXM, and gluten-free groceries, most of the larger markets now carry such gluten-free products, usually in special sections. In fact, there's more attention paid now to gluten-free than there is to sugar-free, which should also be getting better play in supermarkets.

We list gluten-free dining alternatives in the Files area of our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). Check out the Files area for a great deal of useful information.

22. If You Hadn't Heard About Irma...

If you had been on another planet or perhaps 30,000 leagues under the sea for the last year and a half and you visited St. Maarten now, you'd know something was a bit different but it would be impossible for you to know, right away, that the strongest Atlantic hurricane in history had blasted the island in early September, 2017.

The island's recovery has been so totally stunning that although you'd notice some roofs are missing, some buildings are missing, and a few boats are still sunk in the lagoon, you would think the island looks rather awesome and be happy to see that everything is functioning pretty much as usual.

Yes, some cars are bit banged up and there are scattered other hints that something happened, but you'd have no real idea that it was a hurricane with sustained winds of 185 mph with recorded gusts up to 240 mph, possibly higher in tornadoes -- the single most powerful Atlantic hurricane in history.

Come down and see a recovery that will be totally beyond your imagination....

23. Restaurant of the Week: Spiga

Ever since its founding not long after the millennium, Spiga Restaurant in Grand Case has been remarkable for its consistently extraordinary creative Italian dining.

Ciro and Lara Russo were comparatively lucky. Some places in Grand Case were altogether destroyed by Irma, but Spiga lost its dining porch (since completely replaced), and suffered some other damages. But the restaurant survived and reopened many months ago, and along with it, Grand Case has now begun to blossom anew.

The inside of Spiga looks a bit different, with a new bar to accommodate diners waiting for their table. That gives people a chance to talk before dining and share some island experiences. One experience all have in common is the love of this very fine, friendly restaurant, which offers consistently amazing dinners year-round.

Although the menu currently isn't as huge as it once was, everything you love about the restaurant is here. The food is creative and incredibly delicious, as always. The service is exemplary. And Lara and Ciro are always there to provide that outstanding service and magic in the kitchen.

Save room for desserts, which are always very special. If you have any dietary constraints, please express them to Lara by phone when you make your reservation. See much more at www.Spiga-SXM.com.

Coming soon: **Avantika**

Here are recently featured SXM restaurants:

Spiga, www.spiga-sxm.com (featured 12/10/18) Reopened as Cafe Spiga, new menu; redesigned. New bar, new bar snacks, same great staff, service, and wonderful food. Everything is great, appetizers are out of this world.

Mario Bistro www.mariobistrot.com/en/ 12/3/18 Mario's Bistro reopened a few weeks after Irma hit and looks forward to your return. Phenomenal dining.

Isola next to Hollywood Casino in Simpson Bay Resort, **11/19/18**. 100% redesigned, inside and out, floor to ceiling and everything inside. Just go.

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 11/12/18, David is back and the restaurant has reopened. Great food from one of SXM's very best restaurants. Fun atmosphere, too. Now open for lunch and dinner.

SkipJack's SXM, <http://www.skipjacks-sxm.com/> (featured 7/2/18) Skipjack's main dining deck overlooking the lagoon was wrecked by Irma and is being rebuilt. They should be open late 2018 or early 2019.

La Patrona, Simpson Bay Resort (featured 6/25/17; added 1/17) La Patrona is SXM's only truly authentic Mexican restaurant. Highly recommended.

Wasabi Charlie Japanese Restaurant (formerly Sushiitto) (6/18/18) is the new name of Sushiitto, now relocated next door to Pineapple Pete in Simpson bay. Essentially the same menu, same staff, same great food/service.

Emilio's at Emilio Wilson Estate (featured June 4 2018) is the new property run by renowned chef Dino Jagtiani, whose Temptation Restaurant was wrecked by Irma.

Avantika Thai www.avantikasxm.com (featured 5/14/18) Avantika is open. SXM's best Thai.

Enigma C3 luxury Catamaran, www.sailstmaarten.com (featured 8/7/17). Neil's new boat is as big as Celine Too was and it has now entered service. Neil is known for amazing cooking on board his boats.

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

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

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

Le Pressoir, <http://www.lepressoir-sxm.com> (featured 7/6/15) Reopening late 2018.

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.

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; dinner reopens in October (annual closing for Dinner).

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

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

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.

24. Protect Against Emergency Medical Evacuation w/ SkyMed: Customer Stories

Emergency medical evacuations are payable in cash in advance and often cost upwards of \$45,000 -- unless you have a SkyMed membership. SkyMed Takes You Home® to doctors and hospitals you know and trust, and where your health insurance actually works. It's available to Americans and Canadians and to ExPats of both countries, taking them home from throughout the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean including Cuba. Global coverage is available covering every country around the world except those on the U. S. State Department watch list. SkyMed makes all medical evacuation arrangements and pays for them directly...you just pay for your SkyMed membership.

Here are examples of SkyMed in action:

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: huge.

A 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 Cay 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.

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 takes its members home, usually 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's just one of up to 18 benefits received by SkyMed members for not much more than \$1.30/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 in about 10 minutes. 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 in this section.

More Info on SkyMed...

On its guaranteed renewable annual and multiyear memberships, SkyMed has a 90-day waiting period for coverage of pre-existing conditions -- everything else is covered in full as soon as your SkyMed membership has been approved, per SkyMed's member services agreement.

If you're traveling in January or later, you can beat that one-time 90-day pre-existing conditions exclusion by joining today. That way the 90-day exclusion period will be over by the time you travel -- so you're covered in full, including pre-existing conditions, at that time.

SkyMed Takes You Home® when you become critically ill or injured when traveling. There is no age limit to apply, and once you're enrolled you can renew without further medical checks regardless of your attained age or your health at the time of renewal. Without SkyMed, if you need an Emergency Medical Evacuation, you must pay for it in cash, in advance. No cash, no evacuation. And the cost without SkyMed can be astronomical. Why risk that?

By contrast, if you're a SkyMed member, you call SkyMed directly and they make all the arrangements for all the services they provide. SkyMed Takes You Home -- what else matters?

And there is *no age limit to apply*. Call us at 508-747-8281 and ask for Jeff; he'll answer your questions and can take your application by phone, usually in under 10 minutes.

It's available to Americans, Canadians, and ExPats from both countries. Short-term and annual coverage includes the USA (all 50 states), Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean including Cuba. Global coverage is available on annual memberships for a \$99 additional yearly fee, but global coverage is standard on multiyear SkyMed Ultimate memberships, which are both SkyMed's best and its least expensive medevac memberships.

You'll find an overview of all key SkyMed Features & Benefits here:

<http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxmweekly.../SkyMedServices.pdf>

Got questions? Call us daytimes (EDT) at 508-747-8281. Again, we can answer your questions and take your application by phone in about 10 minutes. We can set up evening phone appointments too. It's like fire insurance -- get it before you need it.

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. SkyMed is the Principal Sponsor of JMB SXM programs.

See the rundown of all SkyMed Features & Benefits

25. Are You Military?

If you're U. S. Military with a DD214, you're able to get a Platinum-Status Military JMB Membership for \$16.99/year, the lowest we ever charge anyone. You get instant Platinum Status which is permanent as long as you're a JMB member plus 300+ SXM discounts and other benefits. All you do is pay for four years to start and renew in four-year increments (\$67.96). Nobody else pays so little -- our small way of expressing how grateful we all are for your service.

Visit everythingssxm.com and click the page curl to sign up for your JMB military membership. We'll also need a DD214 with your SS# obliterated for security. We'll be delighted to welcome you.

26. Less Money, More Benefits, Ten Year Price Guarantee on SkyMed Ultimate

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.

27. Please Patronize JMB Sponsors (Updated)

CAR RENTALS:

[Leisure Car Rental](#)

[Tropical-Tropicana Car Rental](#)

Starlite Car Rental (Belair Resort; just joined)

Sax Car Rental

CIGARS HAND-MANUFACTURED ON SXM:

[Das Cigars](#)

CUBAN CIGARS:

[Cigar Mack](#)

[SXM Cigars](#) (New)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL EVACUATION MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS::

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

JEWELERS:

[Zhaveri Jewelers](#) in Philipsburg.

[Little Europe Jewelers](#) in Philipsburg.

Caribbean Gems

Oro Diamante

[Ray's Jewelers](#)

Art of Time (new)

Artistic Jewelers (new)

Alpha Jewels

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:

Simpson Bay Resort

Baker's Suites

Azure Hotel & Art Studio

RESTAURANTS:

[**IZI**](#)

[**SPIGA**](#)

[**VESNA TAVERNA**](#)

Melange (new; Port de Plaisance)

LA PATRONA (Simpson Bay Resort)

MARIO'S BISTRO (Porto Cupecoy)

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*.

Heavily Updated 10/1/18

28. Use Our Weekly News Archives

Our recently updated *SXM Weekly News* PDF archives enable you to download any issue of Weekly News published in the last four years, including our amazing *2018 April Fools' Day parody* and our SXM Airport Special Edition, which has a great deal of useful future information on what's going to happen at the airport.

Check it out [here](#).

29. Got SXM Questions? Here's Where The Answers Are

Check out our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) and our main SXM website, everythingxsm.com.

**Your Business
Deserves a Marketing-Centric, Customer-Focused
Website That Works.**

That's what we do:

www.websitesthatworkusa.com

**In business since the web began --
a unit of JMB Communications.**

30. SXM Business Owners: How To Increase Foot & Web Traffic

SXM Weekly News, our everythingxsm.com website and its Hurricane Center, and our everything SXM Facebook site — along with our many Vacation Giveaways and hundreds of benefits of JMB Website Supporters membership — *are all made possible through our partnerships with our JMB Website Supporters members and our Sponsors.*

Our Sponsorships enable SXM businesses to present their products or services to a huge, responsive audience of tourists from around the world, but primarily the USA and Canada. If you own an SXM business and want to look into and take advantage of this unique marketing opportunity, please email susan@jmbcommunications.com with the subject "JMB Sponsorships". We'll get complete information to you quickly. Summer is here and with it, plenty of opportunity to bring more tourists into your business not only in the short term, but especially as tourist business increases throughout this year and into 2019. Contact us today for more information.

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_xsm/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 5/25/18)

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.

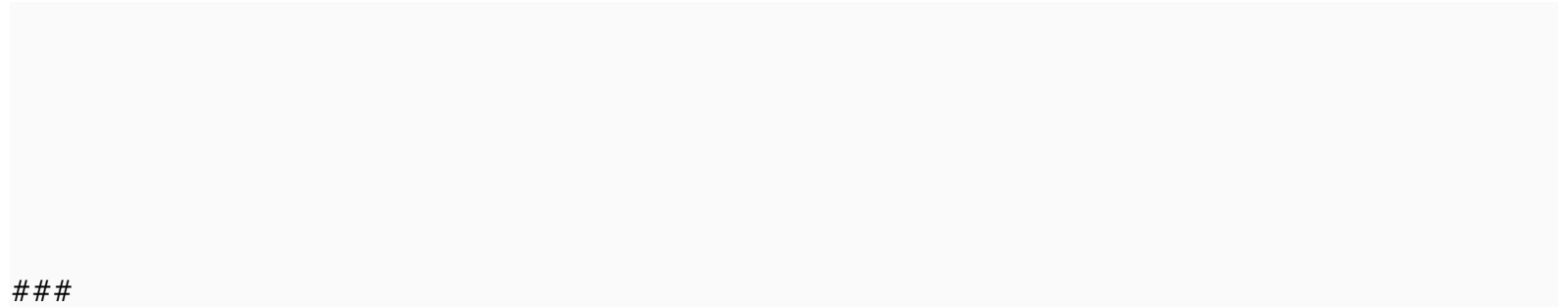
Our main St. Maarten / St. Martin website: www.everythingsxm.com.

Privacy Policy http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxm/privacy_policy/index.shtml (Updated 5/25/18)

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