

From JMB / SXM Weekly News 3/9/20: Airport Gets Go-Ahead; AA Gets Worse; Airplane Cleaning; Fares; SkyMed; Secrets; Planet Hollywood; Timeshare Changes; SXM Gen. Hosp.; Westin Changes; Timeshare Changes; Heineken Regatta [39 News Stories]

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**Vol. 3, #1239 --- Monday, March 9, 2020
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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Weekly News is part of JMB's St. Maarten / St. Martin website: www.everythingsxm.com

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http://everythingxm.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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--**Get SkyMed BEFORE You Need It**
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---- ******* SkyMed Customer Stories*******
Protect Yourself With Emergency Medical Evacuation Membership from SkyMed
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-- **Less Money, More Benefits, Ten Year Price Guarantee on SkyMed Ultimate**

-- **Please Patronize JMB Sponsors**

-- **SXM Business Owners: How To Increase Foot Traffic**

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39 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 3/14/2020 3/21/2020 11 **Royal Islander Club La Plage St Maarten 3rd Floor Superb view location sunsets** This deluxe units include private balconies, overlooking the ocean and tropical gardens. These also contain: Living room with sleeper sofa Dining area with seating for four Fully equipped kitchen Refrigerator Dishwasher Microwave Oven and toaster oven Coffee maker Three TV sets Two spacious bedrooms with a king-size

in the master bedroom and two full size beds in the guest bedroom. Two hair dryers in both bathrooms Two Private patios or balcony In room safe. \$1,500 Richard royalislanderowners@gmail.com

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

SALE 3/21/2020 4/4/2020 Weeks 12 & 13 **Simpson Bay Resort & Casino** Marina penthouse, 1 of 5 suites on top floor, includes dedicated parking; Sleep 6 w. 2 bedrooms with king beds & TVs, 2 twin Murphy beds, 2 full baths, 2 convenience safes; recently renovated including stainless steel kitchen appliances, granite counters, 4 bar stools; unusually spacious living space, approx. 1700 sq. feet, includes seat-6 dining table, living room w. TV, enclosed patio w. wet bar, convertible sofa, additional seat-4 table/chairs; large balcony overlooks Simpson Bay & has hot tub; easy access to beaches, pools, tennis courts, gym, restaurants; walking distance to many restaurants in Simpson Bay; pictures available on request; willing to negotiate multiple week purchase; \$19,500 per week Pat (347) 387-2294 patc4226@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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<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.)

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How To Get a GROWING LIST of 300+ Money-Saving St. Maarten- and St. Martin-Focused Travel Benefits

Visit <http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret> , the *secret* site for JMB Website Supporters members only, for low fares to SXM from cities across the USA, Canada, and Western Europe, plus a growing list of 300+ additional major travel benefits.

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

All JMB Newsletters Read *From JMB*

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

THIS WEEK'S STORIES:

Stories are numbered; scroll down for stories of interest.

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

1. SXM Airport Finally Gets Go-Ahead to Go Ahead

Finally, almost exactly two and a half years since hurricane Irma struck St. Maarten, SXM Airport has been told it will actually receive the millions of dollars that were promised to it (and for which it signed papers) several months ago.

The latest delay was allegedly caused by bondholders whose approval was required but who delayed receipt of the money and rebuilding of the rest of the Princess Juliana terminal by insisting on apparently minute changes to ensure they get the return on their investment that they expect. [It would seem to us that logic should have dictated that approving the agreement and expediting rebuilding would've been the best way to ensure a profitable airport capable of providing a good return on the investment of the bondholders, but what do we know?-Ed.]

Here is the text of the announcement:

The Sint Maarten Trust Fund steering committee gave the final go-ahead to start the reconstruction of the Princess Juliana Airport on Sint Maarten. USD\$72 million from the Trust Fund, financed by the Netherlands, is allocated for the reconstruction. The European Investment Bank is also contributing with a loan of USD\$50 million.

"I am very pleased that we were able to approve the governance conditions for the airport. Now the reconstruction of the airport can start and we can ensure that the resources are spent responsibly and sustainably", said Frans Weekers, the representative of the Netherlands of the Trust Fund steering committee.

The plans for the reconstruction are ready, and the necessary financing agreements were signed at the end of 2019. A number of conditions aimed to strengthen the management of the airport were attached to this plan. This includes actions to improve the corporate governance of the airport and put focus on 'building back better' so that it is guaranteed that the resources for the repair of the terminal are used transparently and effectively.

Parallel to the financing process started in 2018, preparations for the reconstruction of the airport terminal had begun. As a result, remediation works at the airport can commence. After tendering, it is expected that the extensive repairs will start by the end of the third quarter of this year. The full reconstruction of the airport will be executed in phases, with a total time span of 18-22 months.

The Sint Maarten Trust Fund is financed by the Government of The Netherlands, managed by The World Bank, and implemented by Sint Maarten. More information on activities related to the Trust Fund can be found on <https://www.sintmaartenrecovery.org>

2. AA Is Making Its Tight Seating Even Worse

In a move that's a remarkable combination of bewildering, counterintuitive, and arrogant, American Airlines last year decided that its seats were not sufficiently uncomfortable, so it said it was going to squeeze more seats into its cabins to make all of its airliners fleet-wide equally uncomfortable. That's not how they put it, of course, but judging by passenger reaction — including the reaction of first-class passengers — that's the bottom line.

Our [Everything SXM Facebook Group](#) members almost a year ago voted American Airlines their "least favorite" of all airlines serving SXM: apparently AA wants to make sure it maintains that dubious distinction. More on this program is [here](#). Caution: the more you read of that article, the worse it gets.

3. Airlines Stepping Up Antiviral Cleaning

Airlines expect to take — and are already starting to take — an enormous hit from reduced business and, to an extent, reduced pleasure travel across the USA and around the world. In an effort to convince passengers that flying is not an unhealthy exercise, airlines apparently are stepping up antiviral activity on their fleets. Contacts in some airline companies have told us that the airlines do have mechanisms to treat airline cabins with antiviral measures between flights, and are stepping up their efforts in that regard.

Nonetheless, passengers are urged to take antiseptic wipes with them and, before they are seated, to carefully clean seatbelts, tray tables, and anything else in their seating area that they might normally touch — as well as wash hands frequently. When leaving airliner lavatories, passengers should always use paper towels to unlock the door and turn the knob to open it.

4. SkyMed Will Evacuate Travelers with Corona Virus (Caribbean, USA, etc.)

Late last week, SkyMed, the medical evacuation membership company we have long recommended to our readers, said that it will medically evacuate SkyMed members who contract the coronavirus from nations throughout the SkyMed universe, which is the United States, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean. This includes cruise ships with stops in this area. Evacuations are contingent on the ability of destination hospitals and municipalities to accept coronavirus patients. Here is exact information about this from SkyMed:

Q. Is the COVID-19 virus covered under Medical Condition Exclusions in the SkyMed Member Service Agreement?

A. The COVID-19 virus is currently classified by the CDC as a Biosafety Class Level 2 and is NOT excluded in the SkyMed Member Service Agreement. The SkyMed Member Service Agreement states ***'Medical transport services will not be provided to any member who has a diagnosis of, or is suspected of having, a Biosafety Class Level 3 (or above) pathogen as classified by CDC.'***

Q. Can SkyMed evacuate a member diagnosed with COVID-19?

A. **YES**, it is possible for a SkyMed member diagnosed with COVID-19 to be air evacuated to their home hospital transport preference. The receiving hospital must pre-approve acceptance before the flight is dispatched. Our member must be declared 'Fit to Fly' by their attending physician and the Fit to Fly form submitted to SkyMed's Medical Director. It is important to understand that it might not be a viable option given current travel bans and restrictions. Most City/State/Provincial government authorities are currently blocking entrance of infected patients and this is an overriding situation beyond SkyMed's control.

We have identified several air ambulance companies that will contract with us to transport COVID-19 patients. They are ALL required to obtain prior approval on all movements through the proper channels and follow all quarantine requirements imposed by local and receiving governments. They cannot, knowingly, transport a patient with COVID-19 (or other known exposures) without Health & Human Services (HHS) approval.

Q. If a member is located in an area where local governments have enacted COVID-19 related travel restrictions would an air evacuation be possible for other emergencies like a heart attack or stroke?

A. If our SkyMed Member is declared Fit to Fly by their attending physician, SkyMed believes it will be possible to conduct an air evacuation. Because there are new developments daily related to the COVID-19 disease circumstances may change without notice. Every situation will be unique to the area our Member is located in and SkyMed must adhere to all laws, at all levels of all governments, that we are working within.

SkyMed will take things literally one day at a time and one Member at a time. We will do everything possible to assist and inform our Members.

5. U. S. Gov't Considering Steps to Discourage Cruising In General

In a move that has astonished thousands (if not millions), the federal government has said that it is looking into discouraging people from cruising because of the coronavirus.

If that's the logic they are following, perhaps they should close all the nation's interstate highways permanently, since somewhere around 30,000 or more people die on them every year.

In fact, it's not the cruises that are the problem. It's that sick passengers travel and infect others (sometimes knowingly, sometimes not) and that *some cruise companies do a grossly inadequate job of ensuring that their entire ships are cleaned sufficiently to ensure the ongoing good health of passengers*. It is also up to the cruise lines to figure out a way to make sure that sick people with contagious diseases don't get on their ships and make other people ill.

Discouraging cruising is treating a symptom, not solving a problem, and there is a huge difference between the two. We hope the people in Washington figure that out and focus on solving problems rather than exacerbating them.

6. Airlines Slashing Fares; Check Yours

Thanks to reduced passenger loads resulting from the global coronavirus situation, airlines are now both slashing fares and reducing flight frequencies around the world. We don't expect them to cut frequencies to St. Maarten during the winter. But if you're thinking of flying anywhere during spring, summer, or fall, chances are the fares on those flights or some of them have already been cut.

If you have confirmed reservations for any flights at any time in the future, check with your airline — you may be due a refund or a partial refund minus fees if your fare has changed. We also suggest you check again a couple of weeks before you fly in case fares have been cut further, which could well happen.

7. Gorgeous Typical Winter Weather Returns

Ever since mid-January, visitors to SXM have been expecting typical winter weather here. But January was the rainiest in decades, and February — though an improvement — did not exhibit normal scattered clouds, hot conditions tourists expect here in SXM a fair amount of the time.

Winter weather has now settled in to SXM with most days sunny and delightfully hot with evenings around 76 or 77, usually with cooling sea breezes.

If you're tired of the winter doldrums where you're from, it's time you got down here and enjoy some thoroughly delicious SXM winter sun.

8. Where to Find Current SXM Weather Info

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 Group](#), 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.
- 5) For a quick look at weather radar exactly where you are or where you're going, try the My Radar phone app or My Radar for Windows -- excellent programs.

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.

More stories are below.

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9. Guaranteed Big-Time Savings on Hotels, Cruises, Car Rentals

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.

SkyMed Travel offers exceptional pricing on everything and almost invariably beats everyone else's pricing. We have found their pricing excellent across the board and their 115% 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 there to get the absolute greatest possible discounts.

You won't be disappointed.

Not a SkyMed member? Learn more about it at www.skymed.com/jmb, then call us with questions or to sign up. Call 508-747-8281 any weekday. Thanks...

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

10. SECRETS Resort to Some Arriving Guests: "Sorry, No Rooms"

Although as you'll see in the next couple of articles, SECRETS is getting generally good marks from arriving guests - that's not happening with everyone.

Some guests, reporting in the SECRETS thread in our [Everything SXM Facebook Group](#), are saying that the resort is telling some arriving guests that it doesn't have room for them in the resort. Worse, it did not advise them of the situation before they headed for the airport back home to come to the island.

Sources close to the hotel are telling us that only one building remains open and that there simply is not room for all arriving guests to be accommodated in that single building. (The resort opened March 1 even though by general consensus it was not fully completed.) Now the resort is telling some people that there was water damage in several rooms after the resort opened, making those rooms uninhabitable. Some guests at the resort are saying that they have been offered vouchers for return visits since the resort by its own admission is not fully operational. *Perhaps it should also give refunds to people who paid it a lot of money for something they didn't get.* We've sent a number of questions to the resort about this and other consumer-related concerns and the resort has never bothered to answer.

The resort also apparently is not telling anyone when more rooms will be available. We went to the property on Saturday but the people in charge of the lobby said we could only tour the property and take pictures with a hotel representative who they said "is not available today." No matter; there are already people in the hotel taking pictures and posting them in the SECRETS thread in our [Everything SXM Facebook Group](#).

We do not know how many reservations the resort has in the coming weeks or how many rooms it has to enable it to fulfill those reservations; we hope it has enough to accommodate everyone who paid for a vacation.

Last week was Heineken Regatta week on the island and there was precious little room availability island-wide (there were very few cancellations due to people fearing the coronavirus, which is not present in St. Maarten). If you have reservations at this resort it might not be a bad idea to get it in writing from them that they promise your room will actually be available and all the amenities you have paid for also will be available....

More SECRETS news is below.

11. SECRETS Guest Delivers Trip Report

This is verbatim from Laura, a recent visitor to the Resort. It was originally posted in the SECRETS thread in our [Everything SXM Facebook Group](#):

About us - my husband and I are in our mid thirties and travel a bunch both for work (across the US) and pleasure (domestic and Europe vacations mostly). We've been to a handful of Secrets resorts over the years (maroma, the vine, Costa Rica, Cabo, Huatulco).

Rooms:

The rooms are decorated in a soft beach chic decor. We didn't have any issues. It was clean and bright. I felt like the bed was comfortable but would have loved some additional pillow options (I'm super picky with my pillows). I do wish the 'do not disturb' button wasn't so bright (it's a red light next to the bed) but we just blocked it with a book. It's a bit odd that there isn't a true outlet in the bathroom but I used their hairdryer by the minibar where there is a

mirror. Just bring an adapter and you will be all set! No there isn't a tub but I don't use hotel tubs ever.... TVs are a work in progress but probably a blessing to not have on vacation and I'm sure up and running soon enough. We had a standard room but think the swim out rooms at this Secrets are actually worth the extra money. They are still working on the 2 floor buildings that is [Sic!] in the rendering on the website. I believe (but don't hold me to this) these rooms will have Mountain Views, swim outs, and views of almost a lagoon where some boats go by.

For the hotel- I am a bit concerned that the Mini fridge gets too hot in the cabinet and not venting properly? Just a heads up!

Food/Restaurants

All have cold towels go wipe your hands and hand sanitizer?? LOVE the staff at each location greeting you! Room service was really only the bad experience we had. The menu is pretty limited and the food was just not good.

Market Cafe - Breakfast

Good selection and getting better every day. I'd say still not completely up to par with some of the other Secrets we've been to as far as service, speed, and variety- but it will get there! They went from 30 people to 230 in a couple of days and just need time to adjust.

Market Cafe Lunch

This food is great! Amazing selection for lunch and super yummy.

Barefoot Grill Lunch

Opened a few days in and offering burgers, hotdogs, Caesar salad, pizza, fries, nachos. Standard food...

Sea side grill Dinner

Food is excellent. So this is actually the Olio menu in the sea side grill restaurant. Service is a little on the slow side but the food itself is great - lobster ravioli, French onion soup, duck, steak, cod... loved all of these dishes.

Himitsu

Food was also great but service was slow. Loved the spring rolls and sushi!

Portifino and Olio Update

Still being built but looks like will be ready in a month. They will have an amazing view right on the water!

Beach

The beach has soft sand without rocks and seaweed. The water is clear with all different Caribbean blues. Across the way is a view of Anguilla. They will happily set you up with umbrellas and drink service is up and running! Peaceful - no one trying to sell you anything. They have beach volleyball, ocean kayaks and jet skis (for additional \$).

Pool

Bar is walk up which is different but I kinda like it because then people aren't sitting in that area the entire day (and lets be honest - oddly never getting out to go to the bathroom). Then the pool gets deeper as you walk to the other end. They are still working on the 'infiniti' piece and adding waterfall features it looks like. Seating by the pool all has great views of the ocean and mountains. They also created a mock beach area by the other side of the pool and beach bar which is a neat feature! I would love to see some seats at that bar! They do have a large hot tub but it's not yet operational. Would love some music! No pool floats yet - people have been bringing their own.

Entertainment

At the pool they have had water bikes and yoga mats in the pool. They flew in the instructor and she crushes it. She also does yoga and Pilates classes in the morning. I believe they also offer guided hikes in the morning! They also have volleyball, horseshoes, dance lessons, ping pong, etc.

At night the live music has been great and far superior than at other secrets. They've had a performer up by lobby bar and then at 9 every night a full band - we saw both the horn band and the rock band and thought they were very talented and entertaining.

Spa

They are offering massages for the time being. The hydro spa/water journey isn't ready yet.

Cocoa Cafe

Loved the decor and staff is very accommodating. Still working on a set menu which I think will help. Had an afternoon sandwich from here and it was far superior to anything from room service!

Gym

They are still working on the permanent gym so they have equipment in a temporary location by the lobby - something like 2 bikes, 2 treadmills and some weights.

Sports Bar

A little on the smaller side compared to other Secrets but does look like this is ready to go just need the TVs to work.

Overall

My husband said it's like an onion - They are adding layers every day. I'm not entirely sure they should have opened quite yet - maybe one more month - but everyone has been bending over backwards to make sure they can do whatever possible to make your stay the best it can be. Today they brought fresh fruit around as you were on the beach. Landscaping is in full force. Staff has been great. I really can't emphasize this enough.

Small things that will work themselves out over time - They have been running out of certain liquors because they probably didn't know exactly what people were going to drink and how much. Turning over tables is a bit slow. Same with getting food out at dinner. But the food is really good. The hot water at night when everyone goes to shower all at once and plumbing in general could use a little attention once they are at full capacity. Having enough clean towels in all the rooms. With things changing every day, please take this review with a grain of salt and only consider this if you are to arrive in the next month or two.

12. Physical Observations of SECRETS

There is no question that the obvious conclusion of anyone going through this property today would be that it is an unfinished resort. It chose to open March 1 regardless of that. It has continued to place some arriving guests in other properties; we don't know what properties or where or whether there are any amenities remotely similar to those offered but not provided to them by SECRETS.

We know there was at least one wedding planned for March 5 at the resort but we don't know what happened to that event. There were some large groups with dozens of people scheduled to be in the resort this month and last. We know some of them were relocated by the resort, but we don't know about the disposition of others.

The resort is getting closer to being 100% but it is clearly not there now. Our sense is that those arriving in April, May, or June will see the resort in progressively better shape.

In another life years ago I (Jeff) did some meeting planning and one rule we kept was to stay out of new resorts the first year they were in operation. It's a very smart rule to follow, especially in the Caribbean....

13. General Reactions of SECRETS Guests

One theme we hear and see repetitively from SECRETS guests is that the employees are bending over backwards to do the best they possibly can do for resort guests. That's a great sign from which one can infer that they have been trained properly and are doing what they're supposed to do. It's also possible, of course, that they have been imported from other SECRETS resorts temporarily to work the opening and hopefully train local staff. That's also a positive.

All of this does bode well for the future of the resort. The resort's main problem is that someone made the decision that the place had to open before it was ready — never a good thing to do from a consumer perspective or from a PR perspective. It happens when bean-counters are in charge.

14. Planet Hollywood Construction Set to Begin

The SECRETS resort (see preceding three stories) is one of several examples we're reporting on this week of the upcoming improvement in the demographics of SXM visitors to be expected during the next few years.

It's a younger, more affluent demographic that will be coming to the island, versus its current aging but fiercely loyal principal demographic of timeshare owners. The timeshare resorts are doing everything they can not only to keep timeshare owners happy, but to expand and improve their offerings to make sure their loyal owners stay loyal and happy.

Perhaps the best example of the looming improvement in demographics coming to the Dutch side is the imminent full construction of the 465-room Planet Hollywood Resort, which now has final construction approval and is expected to start heavy construction in May and through the remainder of this year and next. The resort is expected to open sometime during 2022. The site will be an interesting place to watch as construction progresses over the next couple of years.

We will keep you posted especially next fall and winter when construction should be in full swing.

15. "Westin" Going Away, New Nameplate Coming

We've now heard multiple reports all saying that the Westin nameplate will not reappear on St. Maarten. The Westin St. Maarten Hotel, Resort, and Casino was virtually destroyed by hurricane Irma. Owner Columbia Sussex Corporation elected to restore and renovate the Dawn Beach Club, its large timeshare facility on Dawn beach adjacent to the resort, before tackling the "Westin" property.

With that project pretty much complete, Columbia Sussex is now turning its attention to full-scale restoration and rebuilding — much better and much stronger and perhaps significantly more luxurious — on the property formerly branded Westin.

What we are hearing specifically is that the new resort to appear on this site will be a five-star property with a new nameplate which could be any of many Marriott brands, as Westin was. It's pointless to guess which nameplate will be selected but it's also possible that the resort could start to reopen in stages as early as the end of this year, which would be another major welcome shot in the arm to SXM.

We will keep you posted as we hear more. We also expect to be able to get photography of this site in the coming months as it continues to develop.

16. Construction Coming at Two Big SXM Timeshares...

Construction appears to have started on one of two major construction projects at two different SXM timeshare resorts, one in Simpson Bay and one near Philipsburg.

Once we have more information on both projects, we will be publishing it here in *SXM Weekly News*. One resort is expected to double its capacity, while the other is erecting a condominium project which is believed to likely offer full-ownership condos and not timesharing.

17. When Will Royal Islander Great Bay Open?

Aggressive rebuilding of the Royal Islander property in Great Bay is continuing. The project is adjacent to the former location of the Sonesta Great Bay resort which was destroyed by hurricane Irma and where the new Planet Hollywood will be constructed. We are trying to find out when the Royal Islander Great Bay should be reopening, which may be as soon as this fall. The only negative about the reopening is that the resort is located directly next to where Planet Hollywood will be constructed — and that will be a major construction zone for at least the next two years.

We'll have more to come on this soon.

18. 2020, 2021 T/share Rentals Available on EverythingSXM.com

The demand for accommodations keeps increasing and even with new hotels opening on the island or nearing their opening during 2021 and 2022, it's clear that demand for 2021 will be high. For that reason, we have decided to enable our JMB Website Supporters members to start placing ads for timeshare rentals with 2021 dates effective immediately. The current update of our timeshare listings now includes initial 2021 (as well as 2020) timeshares offered by our JMB Website Supporters members.

Bear in mind that these are direct rentals that buyers purchase directly from our JMB Website Supporters members. There is no middleman, there are no extra rental fees, and there is nothing else to get in the way of you making your best deal directly with the timeshare owner. That's why our timeshare rental ads on everythingSXM.com are among the most popular means for tourists to rent SXM timeshare weeks directly from owners.

Again, you will find those weeks on our main SXM website, everythingSXM.com.

19. How To Rent Out Or Sell Your Timeshare Units

If you own timeshare weeks that you would like to rent out or sell on our main everythingSXM.com website, you can do it once you become a member of our JMB Website Supporters island discount program. For all the details, go to our main site, everythingSXM.com and click on timeshare rentals in the navigation bar. You'll find the details about posting there. For information about joining JMB Website Supporters, click the page curl on all pages of everythingSXM.com. As a member, you will have access to a growing pallet of about 300 discounts and other benefits including the ability to post up to 10 ads per year in our rental pages at everythingsxm.com.

The ability to post timeshare rentals on our site is limited to JMB Website Supporters members only, and is not available to any others at any price.

20. Buying a Condo in SXM? Here's Important Info

Just before Thanksgiving 2018, working with Arun Jagtiani of Island Real Estate Team, we put together and conducted an SXM Relocation Seminar for dozens of attentive attendees at Emilio's Restaurant at the Emilio Wilson estate near Philipsburg.

Many of you have asked whether it would be possible for you to see video we made of our relocation seminar.

Although we do intend to put on future relocation seminars, the video of our November '18 seminar is available online to anyone interested in buying on SXM, whether for a vacation home, retirement home, income property, or anything else. Lots of outstanding info was communicated during this excellent seminar, and another is now in the early planning stages.

See the video [here](#).

Please check this link to [BrightPath](#) in SXM, a company that can help provide very deep and expeditious help in completing residency requirements for people buying a second home, income property, or a new business in SXM, or relocating there. They're located in the Puerta del Sol building opposite Avantika, Simpson Bay, Dutch side. Ask for Vivian Chamas and let her know you heard about BrightPath through Jeff Berger's *SXM Weekly News*.

SECTION 3: JMB Member Discounts & Benefits

21. JMB Member Discounts / Benefits -- Updates Underway

Jeff is working this winter to further increase the already huge number of restaurants, jewelry stores, hotels, and other businesses offering discounts or other incentives to members of our JMB Website Supporters SXM Island Discount Program.

As these additions are made, they will be reported here in *SXM Weekly News* and will also be noted in our [Everything SXM Facebook Group](#), which currently offers roughly 300 discounts and other benefits to its thousands of members.

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

SECTION 4: Island News, Info, & Features

**** Unprecedented SkyMed Medevac Event Continues ****

SkyMed *Takes You Home*® when you become seriously or critically ill or injured when traveling.

Here are particulars:

You'll find an overview of all key SkyMed Features & Services here:
<http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxmweeklynews/SkyMedServices.pdf>

And you'll find Frequently Asked Questions here:
<http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxmweeklynews/2020SkyMedFAQ.pdf>

Important SkyMed Facts:

SkyMed *Takes You Home* benefits apply in the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean. Optional GETS (Global Emergency Transport Services) protection is available in the rest of the world, but service is not provided to countries on the U. S. State Department's "do not travel" warnings list.

Our March Madness Sale:

From now through March 31, 2020, here's what our March Madness SkyMed Sale delivers:

1. Buy a new or upgrade to a new Five Year SkyMed Ultimate membership through us, and we'll give you a five year extension of your existing JMB Website Supporters membership on us (our reg. cost for a new five-year JMB membership is \$139.00). If you're not a JMB member, we'll set up a new five-year JMB membership on us. Note: If you're upgrading, your original SkyMed membership must have been bought through us.
2. RENEW a five-year Ultimate bought through us for another five years, and we'll give you a five year extension of your existing JMB Website Supporters membership on us (our reg. cost for a new five-year JMB membership is \$139.00).
3. Same as (1), but applies to three-year SkyMed Ultimate memberships. Buy or upgrade to a three-year SkyMed membership, and we'll set up a new three-year JMB membership on us. Note: If you're upgrading, your original SkyMed membership must have been bought through us.
4. RENEW a three-year Ultimate bought through us for another three years, and we'll give you a three-year extension of your existing JMB Website Supporters membership on us (our reg. cost for a new three-year JMB membership is \$109.00).
5. Buy a new Annual SkyMed membership from us and we'll give you a one-year extension of your existing JMB Website Supporters membership on us (our reg. cost for a new one-year JMB membership is \$59.00).
6. NOT A JMB WEBSITE SUPPORTERS MEMBER? No problem: We'll set up a JMB membership for you. See next item.
7. All purchases must be made directly through us between February 21, 2020, and March 31, 2020 by phone at 508-747-8281. Purchases made any other way do not qualify for these JMB Website Supporters benefits. If you are not visiting SXM no substitutions are available for the above offers

22. Highly Successful 40th St. Maarten Heineken Regatta Concludes

With nearly ideal conditions for four full days, the 40th St. Maarten Heineken Regatta was scheduled to conclude on Sunday afternoon with prizes awarded Sunday evening at the Regatta Village in Port de Plaisance, Dutch side.

For complete results, see our 2020 Regatta FILE posted in our [Everything SXM Facebook Group](#). Many Jeff Berger regatta photos have also been published on our Facebook page.

If you've never been on SXM during the Heineken - the largest warm-water Regatta on the planet, plan to be here next year when the Regatta runs March 4 to 7, 2021. It's not called "Serious Fun" for nothing....

23. St. Maarten General Hospital Construction Beginning

Real construction activity for the new St. Maarten General Hospital will begin in the next several weeks. The new hospital will be located to the left of the existing hospital as you face it just outside of Philipsburg. It will contain just shy of double the number of beds in the current hospital and it will include room for further expansion. The hospital is expected to be open to patients by sometime during 2022. The new hospital will be built while the current St. Maarten Medical Center remains in full operation. Once the St. Maarten General Hospital has been constructed and is in use, the current St. Maarten Medical Center will be demolished.

We'll keep watching this for you and issue further reports later this year.

24. French Quarter Road Construction Finishes, Road Reopens

Thanks to reconstruction of a portion of the main road to Orient through French quarter and Orleans, a detour has been in place in that area since last fall. Construction has now been finished and the road has reopened — no further issues.

25. No Coronavirus in St. Maarten

There is no coronavirus in St. Maarten.

A husband and wife who had visited their son in St. Barth and then headed for SXM Airport a few weeks ago to return home to Paris were intercepted at the airport in a friendly way by French officials and taken to Louis Constant Fleming hospital in Marigot where they were put in isolation and tested for the coronavirus, of which they had no symptoms at the time.

Both their son in St. Barth and the French couple were later diagnosed positive for the coronavirus, and the couple was kept in isolation at the French side hospital. All three cases — as is the situation with the majority of cases of coronavirus — were termed "not worrisome" by officials.

There are no other cases of coronavirus anywhere on the island and as far as we know, no testing is underway for any. For full details on coronavirus including a substantial amount of highly useful information for protecting yourself from it everywhere, please see the Coronavirus File in the Files area of our [Everything SXM Facebook Group](#).

The French couple is expected to be released after their 14 day detention is over and they no longer test positive for presence of the virus.

26. SkyMed Provides Medevacs to People w/ Coronavirus

SkyMed international, the Scottsdale Arizona company that we have long recommended for protection against the huge cost of emergency medical evacuations while traveling, is able to provide emergency medical evacuations to

people diagnosed with the coronavirus. Here are details:

Q. Is the COVID-19 virus covered under Medical Condition Exclusions in the SkyMed Member Service Agreement?

A. The COVID-19 virus is currently classified by the CDC as a Biosafety Class Level 2 and is NOT excluded in the SkyMed Member Service Agreement. The SkyMed Member Service Agreement states **'Medical transport services will not be provided to any member who has a diagnosis of, or is suspected of having, a Biosafety Class Level 3 (or above) pathogen as classified by CDC.'**

Q. Can SkyMed evacuate a member diagnosed with COVID-19?

A. **YES**, it is possible for a SkyMed member diagnosed with COVID-19 to be air evacuated to their home hospital transport preference. The receiving hospital must pre-approve acceptance before the flight is dispatched. Our member must be declared 'Fit to Fly' by their attending physician and the Fit to Fly form submitted to SkyMed's Medical Director. It is important to understand that it might not be a viable option given current travel bans and restrictions. Most City/State/Provincial government authorities are currently blocking entrance of infected patients and this is an overriding situation beyond SkyMed's control.

We have identified several air ambulance companies that will contract with us to transport COVID-19 patients. They are ALL required to obtain prior approval on all movements through the proper channels and follow all quarantine requirements imposed by local and receiving governments. They cannot, knowingly, transport a patient with COVID-19 (or other known exposures) without Health & Human Services (HHS) approval.

Q. If a member is located in an area where local governments have enacted COVID-19 related travel restrictions would an air evacuation be possible for other emergencies like a heart attack or stroke?

A. If our SkyMed Member is declared Fit to Fly by their attending physician, SkyMed believes it will be possible to conduct an air evacuation. Because there are new developments daily related to the COVID-19 disease circumstances may change without notice. Every situation will be unique to the area our Member is located in and SkyMed must adhere to all laws, at all levels of all governments, that we are working within.

SkyMed will take things literally one day at a time and one Member at a time. We will do everything possible to assist and inform our Members.

We realize that this information was also published in story 4; we just want to be sure you see it because of its importance. We are adding these two Q&As to the FAQ noted in story 27.

26a. Update: Husband Breaks Leg, Then Things Get Worse...

This is for readers who missed this followup a week ago.

Barbara and Joe were in Grand Case a week ago Thursday night when Joe broke his leg. We've spoken with Barbara but haven't asked how it happened, though we know he was transported to the French side hospital which normally handles broken legs as a matter of routine. They told Barbara and Joe (paraphrasing), "We can't help you. You need to get a medevac off this island and get surgery."

Barbara and Joe had no idea how to set that up (she didn't know about us or about SkyMed) so she posted a Facebook question, a good place to get comments but not a perfect place for medical advice. A friend of Barbara's, Phyllis, became aware of what was going on and left Jeff a message which he didn't hear for several hours.

Meanwhile, Barbara called a company someone had recommended on FB (not SkyMed) and was told, "We'll take him home for \$37,000. Give us your credit card info." Not knowing what else to do, she gave them her credit card info and they immediately put a \$37,000 hold on her account.

As soon as Jeff heard all this on Saturday morning, he called a top SkyMed executive and said, "\$37,000 sounds crazy. Who are the people she called? Can we do anything?" Normally, SkyMed takes its members home at no cost when they become seriously or critically ill or injured throughout the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and all the nations of the Caribbean. Memberships are sold to Americans, Canadians, and xPats living in any of those areas, and global protection is an available option. If Barbara and Joe had been SkyMed members, their cost for an air ambulance arranged through SkyMed would have been \$0.

Because of the complexity of the case and the care it demanded, the cost through SkyMed to nonmembers Barbara and Joe, though up there, was still thousands less than the \$37,000 that other company had quoted. Barbara canceled the trip with the other company (that she told us had had given her no info about whatever arrangements it was making). SkyMed flew Joe and Barbara home in a medevac jet / air ambulance last Sunday. It arrived in Boston a few hours later where it was met by a ground ambulance arranged by SkyMed which took Joe and Barbara to Massachusetts General Hospital where he had surgery the next day.

Barbara told us last week that the surgery had gone well but that Joe faced a lengthy recovery period from that major injury. We'll be keeping in touch; we wish them well. Barbara said as soon as they are past all this and into travel mode again, they'll be signing up for SkyMed....

What happens: Through SkyMed membership, members call SkyMed once they're being treated at a hospital for a serious or critical illness or injury. Soon, SkyMed makes all the arrangements for the hospital-to-hospital medical evacuation and pays for all the services it provides, keeping the member fully aware of what's happening and when it will all be done.

No one ever buys SkyMed expecting to actually use it: they get it for peace of mind, just in case. But about 18 times every week, something unexpected happens... and SkyMed takes its members home to doctors and hospitals they know and trust, saving time, money -- and lives.

27. SkyMed Q&A / FAQ

SkyMed® FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Answers to Common Questions

This document contains general SkyMed information in answer to common questions. SkyMed's services are defined by its Member Services Agreements – plain English documents that tell you what you get and how it works (see much more info below). As always, SkyMed offers a 30-day "Free Look period," so if for any reason you're not satisfied with your unused SkyMed protection before 30 days have expired, SkyMed will refund your money.

Q1. Does it cover my trip to...?

1. Basic short-term and annual "SkyMed Takes You Home®" protection applies throughout the USA (all 50 states), Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean. Global Emergency

Travel Services (G.E.T.S., a subsidiary of SkyMed) protection is available outside the USA, CANADA, MEXICO, BAHAMAS, BERMUDA, and the CARIBBEAN (the rest of the world), however neither SkyMed nor G.E.T.S. covers trips to nations on the U. S. State Department's then-current "Do Not Travel" list – North Korea, Iran, and Venezuela currently, for example, and several others. Before planning a trip, check that list if you have any question about whether protection is provided for your destination – or call SkyMed directly during normal office hours (Mountain Standard Time) at 480 946 5188 or 1-800-475-9633.

Q2. Who is protected?

1. "Single" protection is available for individual travelers. "Family" protection includes your spouse or domestic partner and your young children up to 18 or 24 if they are full time students.

Q3. Do I need to call SkyMed before traveling outside my home country?

1. If you're traveling during the normal high season for travel to your destination, no. If you're traveling to your destination during its low season, do call SkyMed Member Services at the 800 number in the first question and let them know.

Q4. What if I'm going to a country not listed above in question 1?

1. Then you'll need (G.E.T.S) protection. If you have one of our Ultimate multiyear memberships, (G.E.T.S.) protection is included. On Annual (one-year) memberships, "G.E.T.S." protection is an inexpensive option.

Q5. What's the difference between "short term" and "Annual" or multi-year protection?

1. Short-Term protection is intended for brief trips, say a week or two. Like Annual protection, it "Takes You Home®" to doctors and hospitals you know and trust when you suffer a serious or critical illness or injury while traveling. Preexisting medical conditions are covered from day one with the short-term plan. It's inexpensive, only \$15/day for family protection. Remember, though, that Annual and Multi-year Ultimate memberships cost much less – only about \$1.35/day for family plans. Plus, they're guaranteed renewable without regard to advancing age or declining health. If you get a short-term plan, once it has expired, it is done, and you must reapply and requalify for another when you next travel. With Annual and multiyear Ultimate memberships, all you need do is renew before the renewal deadline – no need to reapply unless your membership has lapsed and the grace period has ended.

Q6. Is there an age limit for applications?

1. There is no age limit to apply. There's no age limit on renewals, either.

Q7. Can you cancel my protection at a certain age or if I get really sick?

1. Annual and multi-year Ultimate memberships are guaranteed renewable, as noted above. They will not be cancelled simply because you're a certain age or because your health has changed.

Q8. Will you raise the price of my membership at a certain age or if I get sick?

1. Once you're a SkyMed member, at renewal time you'll pay the same low renewal fees that everyone else with your type of membership pays. If you join at age 75 or older and purchase the X-Pat plan because you live in Mexico, the Bahamas, Bermuda, or the Caribbean, the X-Pat plan is more expensive than the standard traditional (Annual or multiyear Ultimate) plan.

Q9. What exactly does SkyMed cover? Is it health insurance?

1. You'll find an overview of all key SkyMed Features & Benefits here:
<http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxmweeklynews/SkyMedServices.pdf>

This is the same list you'll find on the back of our current membership applications. SkyMed provides up to 18 benefits related to medical evacuation if you suffer a serious or critical illness or injury while traveling. It is not health insurance – in the "SkyMed universe," SkyMed *Takes You Home®* to doctors and hospitals you know and trust, where your health insurance works.

Q10. What about pre-existing conditions? Are they covered?

1. Yes: for short-term memberships, medevac protection (including items listed in the answer to Q9, above) is included for critical illnesses or injuries related to pre-existing and non-pre-existing conditions. For Annual and multiyear Ultimate memberships, pre-existing conditions are covered after a brief 90-day waiting period.

Q11. I want guaranteed renewable protection because of my age, but I'm going on a trip sooner than 90 days. What can we do about that?

1. Get our inexpensive short-term membership to cover your near-term trip, including medical evacuations for serious or critical illnesses or injuries due to pre-existing conditions. At the same time, apply for an Annual or Ultimate membership, to kick in once your near-term trip ends.

Q12. I'm not traveling for a while. When should I apply?

1. Get SkyMed before you need it – just like fire insurance. Since you don't know when you'll need it – and since health can change in a heartbeat thanks to falls, accidents, or other issues – it's always better to do it sooner rather than later. Beyond that, if you have pre-existing conditions and get SkyMed Annual or multiyear Ultimate medevac protection now, that 90-day exclusion period for pre-existing conditions protection may well be finished by the time you travel.

Q13. What kind of questions do you ask in your application? Do you send somebody to do a medical exam?

1. There's no medical exam. Our application is simple, asking about hospitalizations in the last six months, your current medical conditions, and your prescriptions – and on the prescriptions, all we need is their name, not dosage info. If you have a complex medical history, SkyMed may ask for a "HQ" (health questionnaire) to be completed by your doctor and submitted to SkyMed by fax. You should also have your passport number handy; we record it so it's there in case you need help outside your home country.

Q14. How long does it take before I hear whether I'm accepted?

1. Generally just a few business days, but it's always best to do your application early to ensure sufficient time for processing.

Q15. I have more questions. Where do I find the answers?

1. SkyMed Ambassador Jeff Berger, located in Massachusetts, will be happy to answer your questions. Call his private line at 508-747-8281.

Q16. Can I sign up online?

1. For fastest results, we always suggest you contact us directly. We've done thousands of applications and can whisk you through the process in minimal time and with minimal bother. To get additional information first and see some customer stories, check our site, www.skymed.com/jmb. But to sign up, always call 508-747-8281. The process normally takes about 10 minutes, if that.

Q17. Who can get SkyMed?

1. SkyMed is available to residents of the USA and Canada, and to X-Pats living in the countries listed in Q1. X-Pat protection is necessary if you live outside the US or Canada for six months or more, in aggregate, in any 12-month period. Always notify SkyMed if you move.

Q18. I have a rather deep medical history. Will SkyMed still accept me?

1. Although SkyMed accepts the vast majority of applications, others do get health questionnaires (see Q13) and occasionally some do not qualify. There is no cost to apply if your membership application cannot be accepted. A history of a heart attack or cancer several years ago or other maladies does not automatically signal any issues for SkyMed. Apply – there is nothing to lose (again, no charge if you're not accepted). And as we noted in Q6 there is no age limit to apply and no age limit to renew.

How to Contact Us or Sign Up

Jeff is a SkyMed Ambassador. Reach him directly at 508-747-8281 during regular office hours, Eastern time. You can also find him in Facebook Messenger through www.facebook.com/groups/mysxm or you can email him at jeff@jmbcommunications.com with the Subject **SkyMed**. He has an alternate Skype number too, 508-591-3483. It is always best to sign up by phone directly with Jeff at the numbers above – it's fast & easy.

From:
JMB Communications
Membership Services
support@jmbcommunications.com

28. Want an SXM Vacation? How to enter our Vacation

Giveaway

During our "Paradise SXM" Event, we'll be giving away several SXM vacations, including weeks at Simpson Bay Resort, Belair Beach Hotel, Adonis Cupecoy hotel, Azure Hotel and Art Studio on Simpson Bay beach, and El Zafiro hotel and restaurant on Simpson Bay beach -- and other properties to be announced.

The giveaway celebrates our site surpassing 6.5 million visits. Most of the weeks we give away will be handed out to randomly picked entries late in March. Some others — particularly at villas and condominiums to be announced — will be given away a bit later. All are subject to seasonal limitations and availability.

In addition to vacations, we will give away dinners for two, gifts at jewelry stores, day sails, probably zipline trips, a car rental, and possibly some major gifts on one or two neighboring islands - all to be announced soon.

Here is more on our Paradise SXM vacation giveaway. To enter the giveaway, go to our home page at everythingxsm.com. That's the only place & the only way you can find the link to enter our giveaway. All winners *MUST* be subscribers to SXM Weekly News (required); it's free. We will verify that all winners are subscribers.

Paradise SXM will be one of our biggest Giveaways ever. Several people will be winning vacations from us. Why not you?

29. Get SkyMed Now For All Upcoming Travel: Member Stories

On a recent Thursday at Mullet Bay Beach, a woman at the edge of the water fell and accidentally knocked down her friend, standing close by. The friend felt pain in her leg as she got up, went to a hospital, and was told she had a "soft tissue injury" and should relax in the sun. Pain continued. Next day she went to the Maho Clinic for another opinion since she couldn't put any weight on the leg without pain. The doctor there sent her to the French Side for a new x-ray. That diagnosis came back - broken leg and she had to be medically evacuated back to the US for surgery. A few days before, the woman had bought short-term SkyMed medevac protection for her short trip to SXM. Cost, under \$100. She was sent home by jet by SkyMed. The charge for the jet: \$0. Without SkyMed, had she needed a medevac jet, the \$26,000 (approx.) price of that jet home would have had to be paid in cash in advance; with SkyMed she was home and in the hospital of her choice the next day for \$0 out-of-pocket.

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.

Anything can happen anywhere: Do it today. To learn more, visit www.skymed.com/jmb, our new SkyMed site, going live shortly.. JMB members get big discounts off SkyMed's regular pricing: see the story about JMB Website Supporters in this section.

30. Restaurant of the Week: Vesna Taverna

Open for breakfast and lunch 7 days a week, Vesna Taverna is also open for dinner every week from Tuesday through Saturday night. Vesna is half Greek and half Macedonian and her husband Yannick is French, and together they have an amazing restaurant serving a spectrum of Continental, American, French, Greek, and other eclectic flavors.

Saturday is Greek night with many homemade Greek specialties *in addition to their entire regular menu*. They also have freshly flown in salmon and mussels (not together) from Nova Scotia and a new and quite fabulous filet mignon. At lunch there are sandwiches, salads, and lots of healthy smoothies. Sally is in charge during breakfast and lunch and Vesna is in from 4 until whenever Tues. through Saturday. (You can even get salads for breakfast or hummus which is fresh made in house and outstanding.)

Get the bagel tower for breakfast (or one of their paninis); you cannot miss. See www.vesnataaverna.com and when you call for reservations tell them that Jeff Berger sent you.

Pictures of what we had were posted over the weekend in our [Everything SXM Facebook Group](#).

Here are recently featured SXM restaurants:

Vesna Taverna, www.vesnataaverna.com (featured 3/9/20). Now open every day for B/L; dinner is offered Tuesday through Saturday. Outstanding dining and very reasonable pricing.

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.izirestaurant.com (featured 3/2/20). Open for lunch and dinner except Mon., when they're closed. Great food from one of SXM's very best restaurants. Fun atmosphere, too.

Sale & Pepe (featured 2/10/20) Cool location among breathtaking megayachts, cool decor, knowledgeable staff, and great menu, service, and food. Sale & Pepe is hitting its stride. Chef Davide Zagami stays mostly in the kitchen ensuring things go just right.

SkipJack's SXM, <http://www.skipjacks-sxm.com/> (featured 2/3/20) SkipJack's triumphantly reopened with an entirely new dining deck late in January, 2019. Great place - go! Great staff and superb food in a picture postcard lagoon setting.

La Rosa Restaurant, Maho Plaza, 1/27/20: Loved the relaxing vibe, attentive service, GREAT food, reasonable prices, and BIG portions. www.larosarestaurant.com/index.html

Isola next to Hollywood Casino at Simpson Bay Resort, 1/6/20. Italian. Excellent food, many choices, busy, good specials. Many folks from Simpson Bay Resort dine here as well as many locals and lots of casino high-rollers. www.isolaristorante.com

Avantika Thai www.avantikasxm.com (featured 12/30/19) **Avantika is wonderful; SXM's best Thai.**

Mario Bistro www.mariobistrot.com/en/ **11/26/19** Mario's Bistro is one of the most spectacular culinary experiences you'll ever have. Go. Phenomenal dining at very reasonable prices. On the plaza at Porto Cupecoy, Cupecoy Beach.

Spiga, www.spiga-sxm.com (featured 11/18/19) New bar, great staff, service, and phenomenal food. Everything is great, appetizers are out of this world. Not to be missed.

Mama Pizza, Porto Cupecoy (featured 11/11/19) Excellent pizza, and sizeable portions / reasonable prices on numerous other Italian specialties. On the plaza at Porto Cupecoy, Cupecoy Beach.

Pineapple Pete, www.pineapplepete.com (featured 7/8/19) Known for great lobster Thermidor and lots, lots more. Generous portions, reasonable prices. Huge variety. Games for kids.

Wasabi Charlie Japanese Restaurant (formerly Sushitto) (7/8/19) is the new name of Sushitto, now

relocated next door to Pineapple Pete in Simpson bay. Essentially the same menu, same staff, same great food/service.

Mandarin Pan Asian, Port de Plaisance (featured 6/10/19) Excellent Pan-Asian dining including Japanese, Thai, and Chinese. Nice setting near the casino at Port de Plaisance.

Emilio's at Emilio Wilson Estate (featured 4/21/19) is as stupendous as it ever was, with spectacular dining in an equally spectacular restored building on the Emilio Wilson Estate. Ask to see the wine cellar and the museum. Open for lunch and dinner: not to be missed.

Freedom Fighters ITAL SHACK Rasta Restaurant, www.sxmfreedomfighters.com/restaurant 4/15/19. Just go....

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 3/11/19). Open for lunch and dinner except Monday, when they're closed. Great food from one of SXM's very best restaurants. Fun atmosphere, too.

Topper's <http://www.sxmtoppers.com/> (featured 1/28/19) One of SXM's oldest and busiest restaurants, Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and late dining. Open morning until late night. Sports on TV. Karaoke some nights.

Dany's Smooth Cupecoy Beach Bar (on Cupecoy beach); follow the road toward Shore Pointe and turn near Shore Pointe to get there. (Featured 1/20/2019) Parking, drinks, chairs and umbrellas, lolo-type food, and an all-over tan. What could possibly be better?

La Patrona, Simpson Bay Resort (featured 12/30/18) La Patrona is SXM's only truly authentic Mexican restaurant. Highly recommended: great food, great service, not to be missed.

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.

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

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

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

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 Group](#). Our thanks to our Admin there, Contessa Aiello, who edited the restaurant entries on that site.

31. Getting SXM Questions Answered Quickly

Join our [Everything SXM Facebook Group](#) and you'll find about 25,000 SXM tourists who love SXM as much as you do.

Our site is the best place around to ask questions and get answers about SXM -- around the clock. Check it out.

32. Want to See Back Issues of SXM Weekly News? Here's How

Our *SXM Weekly News* PDF archives enable you to download any issue of Weekly News published since Spring 2014, including our amazing *2018 April Fools' Day parody* and many Special Editions.

Check it out [here](#). It has recently been thoroughly updated. Each week's newsletter is usually added just hours after mailing of that issue to its subscribers completes (Monday).

33. Ensure Best SkyMed Deal - Jeff Berger / SkyMed.com/jmb

Our new SkyMed website is www.skymed.com/jmb, now live; please bookmark that and not any other site.

When you're ready to sign up for SkyMed, be sure to call us and let us take your application by phone; that way we get credit. It takes about 10 minutes, and we submit it electronically. We know what SkyMed is looking for and we can make sure you submit it efficiently; that way we do get credit for the purchase, which in a small way helps fund this newsletter and everything else we do for you.

SkyMed inquiries only can be received at 508-747-8281 during regular office hours, Eastern time. Thank you.
Customer stories are below is story 29.

ILENE STOP HERE

34. Going Somewhere? Get Guaranteed Renewable Annual SkyMed Protection Now, Only About \$1.35/day

SkyMed Takes You Home® when you become critically ill or injured when traveling. Without it, an emergency medical evacuation by air ambulance will cost you from \$25,000 to \$50,000 or more, sometimes much more, payable in cash in advance. Worse, you must get it before you need it - just like fire insurance.

Buy a new SkyMed multiyear five-year membership from us now by phoning us at 508-747-8281 (at about \$1.35/day price guaranteed for 10 years when we take your application by phone) and we'll give you a 5 year new or renewal JMB Website Supporters membership on us. All you need to do is email us a copy of your welcome letter from SkyMed after approval to jmbweb@jmbcommunications.com with the subject SkyMed.

Of course we'll be happy to answer your questions and we can tell you about everything SkyMed offers. Totally up to you what type of coverage you select. Much more info about SkyMed is in the next story.

You'll find an overview of all key SkyMed Features & Benefits [here](#).

By buying guaranteed renewable annual or multiyear protection now at only about \$1.35/day, pre-existing conditions will be covered in full after a brief 90-day waiting period. SkyMed protects you in the USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean. Global protection is available as well. For answers to your questions, call us today at 508-747-8281.

See next story for much more on SkyMed. Offer ends soon.

Again, our new SkyMed website is www.skymed.com/jmb: please be sure you bookmark that and not any other site. Thank you.

Customer stories are in story 29.

**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 skymed.com/jmb. SkyMed is the Principal Sponsor of JMB SXM programs.

See the rundown of all SkyMed Features & Benefits

35. 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 everythingxsm.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.

36. 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 www.skymed.com/jmb, our new site, going live shortly.

37. Please Patronize JMB Sponsors (Updated 3/2/20)

AMUSEMENTS

[Island Pedals Beer Cycle](#) (Philipsburg)

BOAT TOURS

Celine Charters (Enigma)

BREWERIES & DISTILLERIES

SXM Beer Brewery

Toppers Rhum & Vodka Distillery

CAR RENTALS:

[Leisure Car Rental](#)

[Sax Car Rental](#)

[Tropical-Tropicana Car Rental](#)

Exclusive Car Rental

CUBAN CIGARS:

[Cigar Mack](#)

[SXM Cigars](#)

DOLLAR STORES

[All in One Place](#)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL EVACUATION MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS:

[SkyMed International](#) (Covers the entire USA, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean. Global coverage available. Sold only to Americans, Canadians, and X-Pats living in these countries.)

JEWELERS:

[Zhaveri Jewelers](#) in Philipsburg.

[Caribbean Gems](#)

[Majesty Jewelers](#)

[Ray's Jewelers](#)

[Alpha Jewels](#)

[JN Jewelers \(Maho under Jax, open late\)](#) NEW!

Jewels & Beyond (Maho) NEW!

[Shoppers Haven](#)

PARFUMERIE / PERFUME

[Tijon Parfumerie](#), Grand Case, www.tijon.com

REAL ESTATE COMPANIES:

[Island Real Estate Team](#) is widely regarded as SXM's top real estate organization. A long-time 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 Group*.

Century 21 St. Maarten (new)

Sunshine Properties (new)

RESORTS:

Belair Beach Hotel

Simpson Bay Resort

Azure Hotel & Art Studio

Baker's Suites

RESTAURANTS & BARS

[IZI](#)

[SPIGA](#)

[VESNA TAVERNA](#)

ISOLA

Frenchy Ludo's

SNOOPY'S

Mandarin Asian Bistro (Port de Plaisance)

Melange (Port de Plaisance)

Pelican Bistro

Soggy Dollar Bar

Sale and Pepe

Topper's Restaurant

LA PATRONA (Simpson Bay Resort)

MARIO'S BISTRO (Porto Cupecoy)

Pineapple Pete Restaurant

Wasabi Charlie Japanese Restaurant

Emilio's

Taloula's Blue Bitch Bar

Nowhere Special

ROXXY Bar / Restaurant (NEW)

LA ROSA (NEW)

NONNA ROSA (NEW)

LAZY LIZARD (NEW)

SWIMWEAR:

Endless Summer Swimwear, Philipsburg & Simpson Bay

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 Group*. 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 Group*.

Candie Billant does condo and villa rentals and sales. You will find her at blueparadiserealty.com.

GoBeach Vacations

Sunshine Properties has just joined us.

Monte Verde / Belle Vue (new)

Relocation / "Papers" Consulting Companies

Bright Path is already posting on our [Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM Facebook Group](#)

Updated 3/2/20

**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.

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

SXM Weekly News, our everythingSXM.com website and its Hurricane Center, and our [Everything SXM Facebook Group](#) — 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. (Our site is based in the U. S. and is focused on the needs of tourists traveling to SXM.) If you own an SXM business and want to look into and take advantage of this unique marketing opportunity, please email susank@jmbcommunications.com with the subject "JMB Sponsorships". We'll get complete information to you quickly.

Winter 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 beyond. 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_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.*

Get Your Own Free Copy Of St. Maarten and St. Martin Weekly News:

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

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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)

3/9/20 #V3-1239 6:00 pm AST 3/08

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