



**By Captain Jean Levine**

## **Chapter 7 September Cruising Log**

Polyphonic is at anchor in the beautiful Mt. Hartman Bay at the foot of the “Hobbit House”, a three story home built into the hillside carved out of the earth with a mound of lush green lawn as its’ roof and a cement gutter that looks like a slide flowing down the three floors. The interior is supported by a tree trunk that is too large for three people to wrap their arms around, the top floor is open air with no windows and furniture carved out of rock, the servants quarters adjoin the house on the side; cut right out of the dirt complete with arch windows with wooded shutters that look like they are right out of Hobbiton in the Lord of the Rings. Here in Grenada the “Isle of Spice” so given the name from the fragrant trees that bare, cloves, cinnamon, bay, pimento, tonka beans, nutmeg and mace. We explore the rainforest, mountains and Crater Lake as well as make new friends among the locals and other cruisers.

As the month begins Jeff and I find ourselves settling into a routine. Mt Hartman Bay is about two miles from Spiceland Mall and about 7 miles from downtown St. Georges. A local bus driver has made of business out of servicing the cruisers from the Moorings Secret Harbor and Prickley Bay Anchorage, Darius runs two trips a day into town and back stopping at the Mall so you can shop. Along this route is also the marine store, DVD rental shop and five different grocery stores. The main Post Office in downtown St George has a dozen computers in an air conditioned room for use by the public at only \$3EC per hour, which is a little over \$1US. The bus fare is \$7EC roundtrip or about \$2.60US, so we make several trips a week into downtown. I discovered while we were in the Bahamas that it is a good idea to find out when the provision ships come in, then, plan your shopping around the time the shelves are being stocked. Grenada is no different and although many US products are available everything you need my not arrive on the same ship so by shopping a few times a week you can usually get most everything on your list. Besides shopping there are of course many local restaurants and Jeff and I have had fun trying them out, our best pick goes to CHOO LIGHT a Chinese food restaurant within a short walk from the marina and it is so cheap that anytime I don’t feel like cooking it is a great escape.

The first week finds us saying goodbye to some new friends, Gary and Connie on Aliyah, Gordon and Karen on Volador, Brad and Karen on Karen’s Weigh, they all secured their boats then flew home to the states. Our friends Carrie and Larry on Thunderball sailed off to Venezuela with plans to leave their boat and go explore Brazil.

Sharon from Cat N Around, after leaving the boat in the Virgin Islands, flew to Grenada and is now renting a mother in law apartment from Inga.

Inga sailed here 13 years ago on a 27-foot boat, bought some property, and then built a home overlooking Mt Hartman Bay. Sharon and Inga look out on our boat from on top of the hillside. Across the street from Inga her neighbors are Paul and Ann, Paul is the



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former commodore of our sailing club, “The Windjammers of Clearwater.” Paul spotted us at anchor then read about us in the local newspaper (we had participated in the Grenada Yacht Club Regatta), he emailed the club and Marielle forwarded the email to us. It is a small world; we had no idea that Paul had any plans on moving to Grenada. Inga hosted a lovely dinner party so that we could catch up on the latest plans and get to know each other. Inga is a fascinating woman in her 50’s who has sailed across the Atlantic, biked through Europe and hitchhiked around Africa, besides all of that she has taken up tennis. So Inga and I spent much of the month playing tennis at the now closed Secret Harbor Resort. There was a large hole in the fence and we crawled through a few times a week for 2 hours of great exercise. Jeff started doing his Tai Chi and martial arts work out and we both have been doing a lot of walking, to get in shape for more “Hashing”.

I had talked up the “Hash” to many cruisers and had them all primed for participating in the next event. As a practice I found a trail map of Mt Hartman Park and got a group together from the anchorage to explore. Just like the first Hash Sharon and I had done this turned out to be a muddy path, plus we managed to get lost in the woods. Eventually we turned up at the rock Quarry overlooking the Bay, luckily we met Lee who hacked a path through the overgrowth for us with his Machete back to the marina and we were saved. It was an adventure and later we all laughed about it.

Once we had explored the local area, I booked us on the “Round the Island Tour”. The all day tour circumnavigated the island and gave us a wonderful history lesson as well. The first thing we learned was that the French and British fought over this island for many years and it changed hands a number of times. As we began our tour, we drove along the road leading up the hill overlooking the Carenage in downtown St. George for a spectacular view of the city. Here we learn that Fort George on the point overlooking the harbor was built by the French in 1705 and what I thought was a Fort on the hilltop in the center of the bay is actually the prison. Fort George was also at the heart of the uprising in 1795 that eventually involved the US intervention. Grenada started to transition from British rule to full independence in 1974 during this time Sir Eric Gairy ruled the country, until he was overthrown by a left wing coup lead by Maurice Bishop. Bishop wanted to turn Grenada into a socialist state; he managed to receive financial aid from Cuba. Bishop did make some improvements in medical care and education but at the cost of freedom, anyone who opposed was thrown in jail. His second in command Bernard Coard and his wife Phyllis, along with some members of the army, took Bishop prisoner at Fort George. On October 19, 1983 Bishop and about 200 of his followers were executed, at this point the US sent a “rescue team” and restored Democracy which was welcomed by the people. Continuing on the tour we followed the road along the west coast much of the road is being repaired and improved. After the last hurricane direct hit, back on September 22, 1955 the road had deteriorated, the new road is wider and has a sea wall for protection



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from the waves. We drove through many little villages, Happy Hill and Black Point then on to Concord Falls.

The Falls are visible from the one lane road and the bus parked so that we could go for a swim. The waterfalls down about a 50 foot rock wall into a 18 foot deep emerald pool then continues down into several small cascades then flows out to the sea. The river is surrounded by Breadfruit, Mango, Avocado and Citrus trees as well as Nutmeg and Cocoa. The island began its world trade with sugarcane, but as the price of sugar declined new crops to export were needed, it was during this low point that Nutmeg was brought to the island. The local plantations quickly changed from just growing sugar cane to a mixed crop of Cocoa, Nutmeg, Bananas, and Mangos. Before long Grenada became the worlds second largest producer of Nutmeg, only behind Indonesia, which leads to our next stop. The Nutmeg-processing center in Gouyave.

The Nutmeg processing plant was a fascinating place everything is still done by hand with the exception of one diesel powered motor that runs a powerful nut grinder. The local farmers coop take the fruit, which looks like an apricot and uses the outside flesh for producing jam, then the inside pit is covered in a waxy shell called mace that is graded by its color and sold along with the nut center, by the pound to the processing plant. Once the waxy cover is graded and separated the nuts are dried in long wooden bins where it is turned by hand. Then they are tested for quality by placing the nuts in a bath, the floaters are rejected and the sinkers are then dried again and now the hard outside shell is cracked to get to the nut inside which is the actual Nutmeg. Nothing goes to waste the rejects and shells are used as packing material and mulch. The final nuts are exported around the world later to be ground into Nutmeg. Besides the Nutmeg processing plant Gouyave is a fishing village with a daily fish market, we also observed a couple, man and wife, shaving the bark from a Cinnamon tree into small chunks to sell at the market. Our driver stopped along the road to show us Bay, Pimento and Clove trees growing just off the road. We continue driving up the west coast until the road heads east along the Northern shore, here at Caribs' Leap, it is said that the French, in 1634, drove the remaining Carib Indians off the island. Just past Caribs' Leap is the Kick Em Jenny Volcano Observatory. Kick Em Jenny is an underwater volcano just 5 miles North of Grenada; recently a second volcanic cone has been discovered and named Kick Em Jack. The underwater cone is about 600 feet below the water surface, but when it releases gases into the water, it can cause a boat to loose buoyancy, so a 1 ½ to 5-mile exclusion zone has been designated when the volcano is showing signs of activity a Marine warning is posted. Luckily when we sailed past all was quiet.

Next stop, Lake Antoine the second fresh water lake on the island located on the northeast corner of the island, at the foot of Mt St. Catherine 2760 ft. In the high grass atop the hill overlooking the lake is concealed a vast pineapple crop, during the rainy season the grass is so tall that it covers the plants. After viewing the lake from the hilltop we head down to where the lake overflows into a river, where the Rivers Rum Factory



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has made rum using a water wheel since 1785. This is the oldest Rum factory on the island and they take great pride in explaining the process. The water wheel turns a mill, which grinds the sugarcane, then the sugar extract is fermented, then distilled in a boiler that is stoked by a wood burning stove, then the liquid is tested for alcohol content. The goal is pure 151 rum, with no colors or fancy added flavoring, the demand on the island is so high that they do not export any of the final product. We of course got to sample it, I knew better but Jeff insisted since he tried it, I had to try it.... I think the Indians have a good name for it "Firewater". From the Rum Factory we turned south down the eastern coast and then inland to the Belmont Plantation for a catered luncheon of island specialties.

The Belmont Plantation was primarily a cocoa processing center, now a large bamboo building houses a beautiful two story restaurant, the owners are natives of Grenada and the family museum houses much of the history of the island. First, we are treated to cold drinks of fresh fruit juice of Guava or Citrus, then Callaloo soup with fresh baked rolls. (Callaloo plant looks like elephant ears and tastes like spinach and grow all over the island.) Then a buffet of fresh salad greens, cucumbers and tomatoes, rice, mashed breadfruit baked in a casserole baked with cheese, BBQ chicken, grilled fish and curry beef stew, accompanied by steamed green beans and carrots; then finally a dessert of mango ice cream. After stuffing ourselves we toured the plantation, which gave us a chance to walk off the big lunch. We had a chance to see a 7-month-old Mona monkey that was a pet of the restaurant. The little monkey was about 18 inches long, smaller than our cats and full of monkey business. He leaped out of the girls' arms and swung his way around the tables in the restaurant, really cute but I was glad we had finished eating. Back on the bus we continue south down the coast, past some beautiful beaches and photogenic fishing villages. Grenville is the second largest city on the island and supplies the north and east side of the island with provisions and shopping, a bustling town. Before long we were back at Secret Harbor the all day tour gave us a great orientation. Friday September 12, we leave our anchor behind to save our spot, with Sharon, Phil and his daughter Sarah we head around to St. Georges for fuel and ice, at the Grenada Yacht Club. It was a lovely day on the water and we could not help notice a new boat in the anchorage in Prickley Bay as we passed by the entrance. The new comer was named "Pelorus" a 375 foot Super Mega Yacht, with 44 crew and not only a marina on her stern but also a whole floating dock that folded down from the transom. The yacht was a solid four decks and from the side completely covered the point of land extending out of Prickley Bay. When we circled for a closer look we realized that Polyphonic could fit inside without removing our 73-foot Mast. That was indeed the largest private yacht any of us has ever seen.

Saturday came and so did Hash #468, I made the announcement on the cruising net and organized transportation for about 25 people to join the Grenada Hash House Harriers in La Borie. We arrived a little early but managed to figure out where the group would start



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and soon the rest of the “kennel” showed up. Including the sailors the total number of participants came to about 70 people. It was much easier than the first muddy hike that started in Granton. We started off on the small road then headed off down a hill across a stream and through a sugar cane field, then up a hill past the goats through a village back to the road where there was a mid-point beer stop if you so desired; as you crested the hill you could look down into Westerhall Bay just north of where Polyphonic is anchored, continuing on through the woods you came out back at the beginning. This hash had a number of false trails and even I took a wrong turn, but that is part of the fun, getting lost and losing the “scent”, soon back on track, you feel like howling like a hound dog, in the end you compare which trail you took and how long it took to complete. The locals had cooked up an” Oil Down” which is a boiled mélange of local vegetables, onions, garlic, dumplings, Callaloo, fresh fish, chicken and seasonings. Delicious! As we all enjoyed the after Hash cold beer and social hour many of us “virgins” were initiated, this ceremony involved running the gauntlet of fellow hashers sling beer foam. All who participated had a lot of fun; it was a great workout and great fun meeting the locals.

The Sunday after the hash Jeff and I hosted a day sail to nowhere, with the crew of Duchesse, Moonshadow II, plus Sharon, Paul and Ann. It was a beautiful day for sailing with a 10 to 15 knot wind and mild seas. We sailed out on a reach, ate lunch, then made one tack and sailed back.

Grenada has been a wonderful place to wait out the storm season, there seems to be such a large number of cruisers here that there is always some social hour/happy hour to attend. Sundays is the Hog Island BBQ cooked by Rogers BBQ with volleyball on the beach and the musical jam session. Thursday night is Nomad and The Gypsy at the Boatyard Tiki Bar in Prickley Bay. Friday night the Secret Harbor Taxi drivers host a BBQ and bar at the Rum Squall in Mt Hartman Bay. Also on Friday Clarks Court Marina in Woburn hosts a BBQ and happy hour. So the social events spread out over four bays and anchorages everyone takes turns being the host. A few highlights were the Captain Ron cocktail party, everyone had to make an eye patch or dress as your favorite character from the movie and of course we played the movie. Then Tristen on “Usesqueba” hosted the other really fun party. During the month of September a number of cruisers were studying for the Ham Radio License Exam and Tristen decided the Hamsters were getting all the attention. So he hosted a **Hamburger** cook out along with a **Ham** contest to see just how well the Hamsters knew Morse Code, the evening ended with a flashing (in Morse code, of course) of the question “Who invented the Morse Code?” answer must be two words and a prize was awarded, a **Ham**mock. HaHa HeeHee! We all giggled like little kids as we flashed the question and got a variety of answers before the correct answer of Samuel Morse. I think it really helped to ease some of the tension of the three days of exams that were to follow.

September 19, Happy Birthday to Jean, Jeff took me on a guided hike through the rainforest to the Seven Sisters Falls. We were picked up at the dock then drove up the



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center of the island into the rainforest of Grand Etang National Park. Once inside the park we passed the highest point in the park that you can reach by car at 1960ft, there was a spectacular view of the west coast of the island. Soon afterwards we stopped and parked at a private home located inside the park then got out and hiked with our guide through the banana plantation and then into the forest. As we got deeper into the woods it started to rain, (hey it's a rainforest) but it felt refreshing and the footing was good since the trails were covered in nutmeg shells. The Seven Sisters Falls are named for the series of seven falls that continue through the rainforest, we hiked to the two lower falls. Jeff brought his bathing suit and jumped in for a swim, I stuck my toes in but took a pass on the swim. As we walked back to the van our guide pointed out the various fruit trees and picked us some Mandarin Oranges, Guava and Bananas. Next we took a drive past Grand Etang Crater Lake, the lake is so deep, that it is considered bottomless, since a measurement has never been achieved. While we were at the lake I noticed marked trails pointing the way to Mt Qua Qua and made a plan to return.

I few days later along with: Cindy and Paul from Simplicity, Deb and Steve from Argo, Murphy and Mark from Arctures plus their dog Skipper, we returned with plans to hike to the summit of Mt Qua Qua. However, Mother Nature had other plans, this time it wasn't just raining it was pouring. Just after our driver dropped us at the park entrance the rain came down in sheets, we waited until it backed down, then I ran to the park office and got a trail map, we then elected to take the less difficult shoreline trail. The trail was marked by white ribbons of tape tied to tree trunks but as we continued around the lake I found myself following Skip (the dog) instead of the markers. Soon we had to back track and find the trail again, it was just like a Hash, only this time the hound was the Hare and the people, the hounds! Despite the rain, we enjoyed an hour and a half hike around the lake. Then sat down to lunch at the Park Snack Shack, with perfect timing, Leroy our driver showed up just after we finished.

A lot of the cruisers enjoy walking and hiking and I have developed a following. During one of my evening walks I discovered that the road from Mt Hartman Bay meets the road from Prickley Bay and forms a circular path, with some of the finest homes on the island along both sides of the road. Some both beautiful and unique architecture is displayed among the homes, one house is a combination of Tex/Mex with a Tiki Hut and a little Mediterranean, another a Castle complete with watch towers on two ends and fortress type brick between the two towers, all painted yellow, yet another is a lighthouse out on the end of Prickley Bay point. So I announced I would lead a neighborhood stroll and got about a dozen people to join in the sunset walk. One thing that gives away the fact that you are still in Grenada when looking at these beautiful homes, they all seem to have a couple of cows or goats grazing in the yard, I guess they are the gardeners.

Before I knew it, it was time for Hash #469 Clark's Court. Part of the fun of the Hash is finding out where exactly it starts, the Internet website is updated every two weeks the night before the Hash and directions are vague at best. I had been arranging with a couple



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of willing taxi drivers to drive us to the event using the directions from the web. So at the last minute I find out that this Hash is going to be in our back yard. So I announce that the boats anchored in Clark's Court and Hog Island should go to the dingy dock in Woburn and the boats from Prickley Bay and Mt Hartman can still meet for a ride by land at Secret Harbor. The really tricky part was figuring out where the actual start was to take place, after driving over to Clark's Court we found that the road was closed but saw Hash blobs of paper marking a trail; Basil "Flower Power" the hash master arrived I jumped in the car with him to look for the guy who laid the trail because he was not even certain of where the starting point was located. Finally we found out that the start was at the Marina so all the people who had their dinghy's at Woburn took the taxi back to the dock and motored their dinghy's across to the Marina so that their ride would be there for the finish. So after a little mix up, the hash finally started and off we went, this time Jeff and I are veterans and choose to run with the leaders instead of walking in the pack. After a great run over the hills, past the swamp and the rock quarry through the cow pasture we found out that "River Rat" the person who laid the trail had multiple paths that converged so the runners came up behind the walkers. So this was the Tortoise and the Hare Hash!

Everyone had a great time so the confusion at the start was forgiven. I think the "Virgin Hashers" even enjoyed the initiation ceremony; they said the beer bath was refreshing. The Sunday following the hash was the usual Hog Island BBQ but with a special feature, a local blues band. They brought generators over to the island and built a tent with a stage for the band. A water taxi was provided for those coming from the University and other parts of Grenada for the island party. I think a thousand people attended if not more since people came and went all day, we left when the sunset mosquitos came out.

September in Grenada was a Hash House Hiking great time! It has been wonderful spending time here, the people are so warm and friendly and the island is beautiful. The island is clearly on a good path for development with practically no unemployment the economy is booming with even better times yet to come. If we were in a position to buy land here, we most definitely would. But for now we remain at anchor waiting out the final part of the hurricane season.