



By Captain Jean Levine

Chapter 8 October Cruising Log

We are approaching the end of the Cape Verde Storm season, now we watch the weather with even more intensity. A few tropical waves are rolling off the African coast but they are notably farther apart. As October begins the weather game changes from the usual predictable storm formation in the east, to the western Caribbean with little warning or predictability. It is close to the time when Jeff and I will start to head back up the island chain and the gamble we face entails heading North before the wind shifts from the Southeast to the Northeast and hopefully without any of those storms popping up like backwards Lenny. Our plan is to depart Grenada around October 13th and take our time cruising back to the Tobago Cays and some of the other islands we skipped on the way south. We spent the first part of the month doing some good old scrubbing and cleaning, changing oil and varnishing the teak, etc. October 13th comes and so much for plans, of course the boat had other ideas, both the generator and the watermaker acted up. Since Prickley Bay is home to Enza Marine, specialists in both our Northern Lights Generator and Spectra Watermaker we called on the men in black as they call themselves. We have learned if you are were the parts are you have it fixed now or its never. Our departure was delayed, so why not do another Hash!

Besides we had social obligations like Birthday party's, snorkeling, BBQ's and Hey its American football on TV.

Hash #470 Black Bay hosted by "Bo Peep" given his Hash name because at 80 years old he still Hashes only now he uses a tall walking stick and like "Lil Bo Peep" once got a group of "sheep" (other Hashers following him) lost. This time I had an idea of where this hash would start and I had the group of cruisers assemble a little early and George drove us (17 people stuffed into one van) to the Carenage to join the caravan to Black Bay. The village of Black Bay lies just north of Concord Falls on the hillside overlooking a black sand beach on the west coast of the island. During the afternoon it had rained really hard. Do you remember how the hash trail is laid with little bits of paper? Well guess what some of the trail was washed away. The "kennel" received instructions and then we were off, Jeff and I now run still not as fast as the real runners but we both hold our own. Down the road then down the hillside toward the river that flows from the falls, we continue along the river to a small footbridge and across the river we go. This is where the first trouble starts and like hounds that lost the fox's trail, the group I was with fan out to look for the trail and I found it, over here! Jeff had run ahead and was with a different group apparently they had found a different trail. Because I ran with my pack along the river, which we forded and came out on the Black Beach, then picked up the trail south then up a steep hill where we found Jeff and his group wandering around looking for the trail. It turns out that the two trails had been meant to be a figure eight leading up the hill to a cave then back down and along the beach. Oops! Looks like "Bo



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Peep” has done it again and lost his sheep. The fact that we lost the trail did not seem to matter because the scenery was the most spectacular of all the Hashes we had done on the island. The hike along the river was magical, the Black Sand Beach uniquely beautiful and in the end back in the village we saw an incredible sunset into the sea from a great vantage point. The locals had cooked up some good old fashion fried chicken, fries and of course cold beer. I was really sad to say good-bye to all the friends I had made at the Grenada Hash House Harriers. I really wish we did not have to go since the big Hash that takes place on Carriacou comes up on November 8. I would have organized a pursuit race with the cruisers from St Georges, Grenada to Tyrell Bay, Carriacou and had the local hashers join us as crew. Oh well, I like to say that I have left something undone so that I have something to look forward to in returning.

Jeff and I said our good byes to the other cruising friends we have made in Mt Hartman Bay then moved the short distance around to St Georges for last minute chores. First on the list fueling up at the Grenada Yacht Club, as we came around the corner Jeff noticed the first cruise ship of the season just docking. It was “The World Resident Sea” the ship that is made up of exclusive condo apartments instead of multiple guest quarters. After fueling we were heading out to anchor in the outside anchorage, when I spotted Hash friends Cindy and Julian (Bo Peep) on board a ship heading out of port. Both of them are Ship Pilots Julian the senior pilot and Cindy a pilot in training, they had both just brought in “The World” and were taking out another ship. On their way back into the port Cindy brought the pilot boat alongside and we made plans for lunch the next day. Later that evening Jeff spotted another cruise ship “The Dawn Princess” and we wondered where they would fit at the dock. Well they didn’t, this would be a tender port, this time around, until the new cruise terminal is finished in December.

Jeff and I made our final trip to the Internet at the post office and checked for our lost mail packet, it never did arrive. Then we met Cindy at the port office and had the pleasure of going out to lunch at Jeff’s favorite Chinese restaurant overlooking St George’s harbor. Cindy had been given a beautiful hardbound book, by the Captain of “The World”, it detailed the construction and the layout of the 110 Condo apartments, Spa, Helipad and advertised its suppliers, and she shared it with us over our meal. I will miss Cindy and hope we will see each other again in the future.

After a couple of days finishing chores in St George’s Jeff and I set sail for Carriacou with plans on a rendezvous with Ariel and Peregrine. It was a flat calm motorboat ride in the lee of Grenada then a boisterous sail past Kick “Em Jenny and the little islets and on into Tyrell Bay where we arrived by midday. Once again I caught a tuna, but due to the brisk conditions (steaming along at 8.5 to 9.2 knots) and since Jeff has little interest in tuna, I set him free. Once anchored we went ashore to go explore the boatyard and found our friends on Serendipity of Falmouth doing the dreaded bottom job on their boat, we invited Bob and Jane for sundowners on Polyphonic. Shortly after we got back to the boat Ariel and Peregrine showed up anchored nearby and were all invited to join us for the



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sunset cocktail time. While we were anchored in Mt Hartman Bay we did very little party hosting on Polyphonic since most evenings were spent ashore at various gathering spots, so it was kind of the cruise home kick off and a final farewell to friends who from there are heading off to different destinations. The next morning Jeff and I along with Joe and Michelle from Peregrine went ashore and caught the local bus to the main town of Hillsborough. It was a great way to get a small landside tour of the island, the beaches on the western side of the island are beautiful, the windward shore is supposed to have a spectacular reef and great snorkeling but Jeff and I will have to put that trip on the next time list. We split up when we got to town since Joe and Michelle were on an exploration trip and Jeff and I went to town to clear out of customs and immigration. After a little shopping we joined Joe and Michelle to catch the bus back to Tyrell Bay, I saw what I thought was the beach near the dock where we had left the dinghy and jumped off the bus and of course everyone followed. Oops! I had gotten off a little too soon and we had a lovely 2-mile walk. We dropped off Joe and Michelle, hauled the anchor and motored around the point to Sandy Island located in Hillsborough Bay. I had read that the snorkeling along the North shore was really good so we stopped. The island is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile long and only 50 feet wide so we anchored off the south side and took the dinghy around the end then drifted along the whole length of the island with the dinghy in tow. You could see that at one time this was a beautiful reef but like many we found there was a bone yard with signs of new growth and indeed some colorful fish. After our swim I hauled the anchor and Jeff kindly agreed that we would pick up a mooring in Clifton, which is the principle town on Union Island our next stop. A short 5-mile sail put us in the harbor in Union island at about 4pm and after hooking a mooring nicely tucked in behind the reef, we rushed ashore to clear customs and luckily caught the agent just before he left for the weekend. After customs we had to walk to the airport to clear immigration, now we are back in St Vincent and the Grenadines for a clearance fee of 110EC. The airport is located on the spit of land that protects the anchorage from the North and receives only small craft, no 727's here, it was an easy walk in flip flops and we were happy to have the formalities finished. The mooring was a real treat as the anchoring in the bay is difficult with poor holding and the mooring we had was well protected by the huge reef with no roll, I noticed that some of the boats closer to shore were rolling. After a good nights sleep in smooth water, the wind howling at 25 knots and the big ugly seas outside the reef, were hardly noticeable. So we were in no big rush to head out and we went into town to look for fresh veggies, orange juice and some bread. Around noon we decided to take a short hop to the next island North of Union called Mayreau and the picturesque anchorage of Salt Whistle Bay. The winds were blowing steady at 20 knots with gusts touching 30 knots so we just sailed with a small part of the jib unfurled, even though we were sheltered to windward by the Tobago Cays the seas were lumpy and poor Sarge started to yowl, lucky for him it was a short time before we were in the lee of Mayreau and the seas flattened out. Before long we were anchored in



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the sand behind the Northwestern edge of Mayreau in Salt Whistle Bay. On the Northern most edge of the bay lies a big triangular rock then the white sand beach butts up against it to the east and the cove itself is lined with palm trees, along the cove on the leeward side is a restaurant and bar. The restaurant opens for season, which starts on November 1st, and was still closed but was unique since all the tables were carved of stone each in its own alcove with a thatched roof and a few cruisers were using the tables for a picnic. We were able to anchor so close to shore that we just put on our snorkel gear and swam ashore and after walking the beach we snorkeled our way around the rocks on the North side of the anchorage then back to the boat. There were a few rain squalls during the afternoon as a tropical wave pasted over but soon the sun came out, I took a picture of a rainbow stretching out across the sky ending over Salt Whistle Bay. That evening Jeff and I sat in the cockpit for sunset and witnessed an unusual sight. Instead of a green flash when the sunset we saw green clouds illuminating the sky.

When I woke up I saw that the sky had cleared but the seas were still big and ugly so I asked Jeff if we could stop in Canuoan instead of going all the way to Bequia as planned. Jeff took one look out to sea and easily agreed.

We had skipped Canuoan on the way south and this is where the Moorings Yacht Charters has relocated the base from Grenada and I was curious to see the new base. It was a 9-mile romp with jib and mizzen, a one tack beat to windward and there was a Moorings 4500 Cat leaving right behind us, so the race was on. I was tempted to put up the main so that we could maintain our lead but the sail went so fast that we decided to let him pass just before we entered Charlestown Harbor. Besides we wanted him to lead the way so we could pick out an anchor spot after the Charterers. We found that the whole Moorings fleet is on mooring balls as there is only a small dock in front of the hotel and base office. The Tamarind Hotel has a beautiful beach right on the bay overlooking the yachts with a big Tiki Hut Bar and restaurant giving the ambience of a Tahitian Village. Jeff and I anchored on the edge of the mooring field near "White Rock" which looked like a good potential snorkel spot. There were a number of pelicans hanging out along with some other shore birds. It had been a short sail and we were anchored before lunch so we pulled out the snorkel gear and went to check out White Rock, soon I could see why all the birds were hanging out. Lots of fish! Although the visibility was poor, since the high winds had been kicking up, the snorkeling was still good you could see beautiful soft coral growing from the rocks and with a variety of depth of water, lots of different fish. After our snorkel a local fisherman approached us to sell lobster and Jeff had been waiting for this opportunity so he bought 40EC (\$15US) worth which was 4 Caribbean lobsters and a Slipper lobster. Jeff filled the cooler with salt water and stowed them alive and kickin' for dinner later on. Around 4 pm we went ashore for our evening walk and to explore the island. The island is about 5 miles long and up to 1 ½ miles wide at its' widest. The northern end is a collapsed volcanic dome crater, high around the outer edge with a deep green valley in the center, open on the eastern side with a beach behind a



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long reef. Inside the valley is the Canouan Beach Resort complete with single-family homes, townhouses, tennis courts, golf course and beautiful swimming pool clubhouse complex located next to the beach. The high side of the resort is bordered by the forest reserve of Mt Royal an 811-foot summit. The center of the island runs north and south and is the narrowest part of the island the strip is about 330 feet high and has beaches along the windward eastern side as well as along the western Charlestown bay side. The windward side is protected by a long barrier reef and has no buildings; just open land rugged and dotted with cactus and scrub and beautiful white sand beach. There is a road that makes an oval around this strip of the island and Jeff and I made the 3-mile circuit getting a great overview of the island and meeting a tortoise along the way. The southern end of the island is dotted with three small summits 160 ft, 320 ft, 470 ft they protect the small airstrip, again only light small aircraft here.

After our nice walk around the island Jeff put the lobsters in the pot and we enjoyed a feast accompanied by some melted butter, lemon and fresh broccoli. Smile! I even shared some with Sarge and Shadow. The next day the wind backed down and we set sail for Bequia about 15 miles north. The wind was from the Northeast and got light enough for us to put up the mainsail but only for about a half hour before we were standing on our heads and we took it back down. After three tacks we made it into Admiralty Bay Bequia around 1pm and anchored in almost the exact spot where we had been before on our southbound trip. It was Monday October 27th Independence Day for St Vincent and the Grenadines, so most of the shops were closed, but we managed to find Jeff some Ice Cream at the Gingerbread House. The next day we came back into town to clear out for our trip North and check out the bookstore and the local book exchange at "The Porthole". It was there that we met our neighbors on the 70-foot Ketch "Flying Fifty", from Puerto Rico, anchored off our stern. She is a 1950 vintage ex-racing yacht built of wood and steel and the family is restoring her. It turns out they are big movie fans and we both looked forward to doing some VHS tape swapping. After clearing customs and stocking up on some new books we went for a snorkel. This time we went all the way to the end of Tony Gibbons beach near the caves and saw a sea snake. Cool!

Early the next morning we were off, this time choosing to try sailing along the windward side of St Vincent. Good plan but there was no wind and after trying to sail and merely wallowing we bagged it and fired up the engine. Sarge was thankful since it was very rollee; I had gotten a tip from Flying Fifty to give him a little Catnip for seasickness and my goodness it worked. Soon after rolling around in the Catnip he was fast asleep and never got sick. It was a long day since we powered in lumpy seas until finally getting into the lee of St Lucia. We had planned on stopping and taking a mooring off the Hilton at the foot of the Pitons but with still an hour of daylight left we decided to push on for Anse Cochon. We arrived just before sunset and the water was so clear that I could see our anchor hit the bottom in 20 + feet of water with the sun setting fast. What a sunset it was it lit up the sky like it was on fire. The bay was incredibly beautiful and we were the



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only ones there, on the south side was a high cliff dotted with guest cottages with a cliff walk path that lead down to the water and what looked like a little beach bar. The center of the bay had a tiny river that emptied into the bay and on the north, a national park with lots of greenery. There were moorings available but since we were all alone we just anchored for the night. In the morning there were a few local fisherman out snorkeling for lobster and we waved a friendly hello then got out of the way setting sail for Martinique. It was a beautiful sail just off the wind we enjoyed a broad reach all the way to the entrance of the bay to Fort de France, when the wind faded and the rainsquall was threatening, we struck sails and motored into the anchorage off of Anse Mitan.

We arrived late in the afternoon so we waited until morning to set up the dingy and head into Point De Bout for the ferry across the bay to Fort de France. In the morning we took the ferry and decided to try to see if the customs office at the cruise ship dock was opened. Also there was a 5 Masted sailing Ship tied up at the dock, Jeff could not resist going over to ask the crew what is the 5th Mast called? Fore, Main, Middle, Mizzen, and Jigger at last he got his answer. But our answer if customs was opened was no and so we walked the long haul to the main customs headquarters, where happily the same customs officer I had dealt with was on duty. To my surprise he recognized me and was happy to grant us both our clearance in but also our clearance out thus saving us another trip on the ferry. We stopped at the local Cyber Café and the supermarket then hopped the ferry back across the bay, wishing I had brought the camera since the 5 Mast Ship was heading out to sea and setting all sails. Once off the ferry we hurried back to the boat and Jeff managed to get some long distance photos. We enjoyed a relaxing weekend at anchor in Anse Mitan and finally got to try out the Chinese restaurant at the Marina, it was as delicious as we thought it would be and happily not too expensive. We were sad to see that the wonderful chocolate shop was closed, so Jeff had to suffer without his chocolate treat. Rhum Runner caught up to us, a Ketch from St John, USVI that we had played tag with both southbound and now north. Jeff and I got a chance to invite Mike and Chris over for sundowners and got some ideas on New Years in the Virgin Islands and we made plans to hook up with them for the holidays.

Although the trip back up the island chain has been a little faster than planned we have really enjoyed visiting the new places as well as revisiting the places we liked best from the trip south. Now we look forward to our guests coming to visit us in Guadeloupe, Steve and his new girlfriend Ricci.

So we end October in the French island of Martinique.