

SEARCH

SEARCH AND RESCUE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

901 S.E. 17TH STREET, SUITE 205
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33316-2955
TELS. (242) 362-1574 / (954) 524-4616
FAX: (242) 362-2044

<http://caribbeansearchandrescue.freeservers.com/>



NEWSLETTER

TO ASSIST VOLUNTARY SEARCH AND
RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT
THE S.W. NORTH ATLANTIC
AND CARIBBEAN

NUMBER 54

YOUR MONEY SAVES LIVES . . . MAYBE YOURS!

July 2007

★ **PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL.** The number above your name is the last year you donated. If a zero or no number is present, no donation has been received. **Please send your 2007 donation NOW.** Many thanks.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A big thank you to all our 2006 contributors, whose total reached nearly \$70,000!! This allowed SEARCH to make general donations to its volunteer SAR beneficiaries of \$48,000 and a reallocation of funds held for radio projects, no longer required, made another \$15,000 available to help beneficiary delegates attend the recent quadrennial, world rescue conference in Sweden.



SEARCH'S beneficiaries group at IMRF conference, Sweden. L to R: Adriaan van der Hoeven, Curacao, Ruben Croes, Aruba, Phil Aspinall & Rebecca Clarke, BVI, Jan Drost, St. Maarten, Nick Wardle, SEARCH, Bobby Velasquez, St. Maarten, Chris Lloyd, Bahamas, Leo Chance, St. Maarten and Rubert Breusers, Curacao. [Photo: Pim Korver]

So far in 2007, we have received over \$8,500 in donations before this first reminder of the year. We continue to generate new contacts for our list of potential donors from persons and yachts visiting the region, particularly The Bahamas and we're endeavouring to find out more about US yachts and their owners in other parts of the Greater Caribbean, in order to educate them towards helping the volunteer SAR groups, towards their own safety. This list, now over 8,000 strong, is totally private and never given or "sold" to anyone else. Each year's contributions are derived from only about 600 of these, which is a statistic that could advantageously be increased -- so -- everyone reading this, **if you have not already done so, please reach for your check book and make your generous, annual, tax-deductible donation for your safety and that of your fellow cruisers and aviators!** Thanking you in anticipation,

Sincerely,

Nick Wardle

President

REGIONAL NEWS

Bahamas Air-Sea Rescue Association



The hazards of relying on GPS were dramatically illustrated off the Exumas this last winter, when a 45 ft. sailboat and a motor yacht collided - fortunately with no serious injuries or loss of life. The owner of the sailboat described the situation and the lessons derived therefrom as follows:

"My wife and I left Big Majors about mid day headed north to Shroud. We were able to sail initially with just the main and genny, leaving the Sandy Cay wpt headed for Lightning Bore. We were using the autopilot and making about 6 knots with about 12 kts of breeze off the stb'd quarter. As is our practice we do not have the autopilot interfaced with the GPS but usually just adjust the autopilot course to that of the GPS. In most all cases this has us off to one side or the other of the rhumb line.

"As the afternoon went on the wind died, requiring that we start the engine and furl the genny. Now at that point the autopilot was having problems maintaining a good course. During our last trip to the boat yard we had a new chartplotter installed at the binnacle and had it interfaced with the autopilot. Having never used the Nav function of the autopilot, I got the manual and set it up and sure enough our course straightened out. Up until this point we had seen several power boats all headed south to Sampson or the Bell Is. area, all coming across our bow but none close to our course. I went below to check the radar on several occasions as it is at the chart table. On one occasion I noticed a target about 6 miles out just off our stb'd. bow... I went up top and after initially seeing nothing, I later saw a sailboat under main alone headed south. I continued to sit behind the helm keeping an eye on the other boat while reading the autopilot manual.

"I also continued to look forward as well. Over the next 20 minutes or so the other sailboat motorsailed and tacked down our stb'd side. Again, I continued to think that this was my radar target but continued to look about forward. What I was actually seeing was only from the fw'd stanchion aft on either side and not what was immediately behind the mast and chartplotter. Next thing I see is a large green bow directly in front of me; I was able to disengage the autopilot but not alter course before we hit . . . he was traveling about

(Continued on next page)

I wish to make a **tax-deductible donation*** to SEARCH of \$ _____ for this calendar year.

My geographic area of interest is _____

My check is enclosed.

Please send my certificate and recognition decal.

I hereby pledge an annual donation of \$ _____ for the next _____ years.

Please send me information about Legacies Special projects.

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Yacht's Name/Aircraft Type & Reg. No. _____

***Contribution categories range from "\$50" to "more than \$75,000".**

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE DEDUCTIBLE FOR U.S. TAX PURPOSES

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REGIONAL NEWS (Continued)

10 kts and we at 6 kts. We hit port to port with his rub rail severing all of our port side shrouds, and then the mast came down.

"Points I have learned from all of this are:

(1) Do not program the GPS to head exactly to a wpt, either published or calculated (Monte Lewis actually says this in one of his chart books and it was also the cause of the large motor yacht taking out NW Channel Light some years ago);

(2) If you have the option, do not install any large instrument at the binnacle that may obscure your vision;

(3) Consider sitting off to one side or the other of your binnacle while underway;

(4) If you have the option, have the radar read out in the cockpit as well;

(5) When rigging your boat, do NOT open the cotter pins more than 1/4", we were able to pull all the rigging pins within 10-20 minutes, so the rig would fall away and we did not have to cut any rigging.

(6) Do not assume that large motor yachts have anyone on watch, as this one did not and who actually told us later that he thought he had hit a reef when he heard (not saw) the collision.

"This has been a nightmare for us both. We are thankful that nobody was hurt. It will take a long time to get our lives and boat back to where we were that April 1st day. You cannot be too careful and if it can happen to us with all this electronic help, nothing takes the place of a good watch....4 eyes are better than 2. If this could happen to us on a beautiful calm sunny clear afternoon, think what might happen when it is dark and visibility is limited."

**Citizens Rescue Organization,
Curacao, Netherlands Antilles**



CITRO saves the lives of 3 people at Caracasbaai in Curaçao.

On Friday afternoon June 15 there was high drama at Caracasbaai, at the SE end of Curacao, where three people (two from the US and one local) had to be rescued from a perilous situation.

Two American, visiting youngsters on a Sea Doo got into a jam at the West side of Caracasbaai. The sea was as rough as the North shore usually is, making it easy for anyone on a Sea Doo or in a boat to find themselves rapidly in trouble.

The youngsters were riding the Sea Doo too close to the lee shore in rough seas and were thrown from the Sea Doo in the direction of protruding rocks. They were able to swim towards a rock but were stuck in a dangerous area with

high breakers.

High waves beat them back and forth and no one could get close to them by boat. A boat was immediately made available by the owner of 'Downtown Diving' and sent to try and pick up the two youngsters. Although their intentions were good, they were unable to handle the situation properly and it soon turned from bad to worse when one of the people on board the boat also found himself in the water with the two youngsters. They managed to recover the Sea Doo but now 3 people's lives were in danger.

Once they sounded the alarm **CITRO** quickly got into action together with the NA Coastguard. They immediately dispatched the Coastguard's super-rib as well as **CITRO's** new rescue boat "Griend" to Caracasbaai. The location of the victims was not accessible by boat so a trained **CITRO** diver was sent to reach the 3 stranded victims and help them out of the perilous situation they were in. Tied to long lines and safety gear the **CITRO** diver jumped into the rough sea and started the rescue operation. Following a few tense and dangerous moments he managed to reach the victims and give each a safety vest. All this was, of course, carefully planned and orchestrated considering the danger involved. Strong back-up and close cooperation from units on scene, both **CITRO** and the Coastguard were mandatory. Care had to be taken not to turn a disaster into an even worse disaster.

With the lifevests and safety lines, all three were carefully taken off the rocks, brought back to the **CITRO** rescue boat and taken to shore, only suffering some superficial bumps and bruises. A very dangerous situation had been successfully averted, with a happy ending.

Take the time to be informed and aware of sea conditions before you venture close to shore, on the sea, in the sea or underwater.

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