

St Vincent Update

14 AUGUST 1993

A long overdue Hello!

Thought we had dropped off the edge of the world? Not so. After a summer vacation of avoiding the typewriter, we resume a monthly schedule of correspondence. In the past two months we have been busily involved in traveling both in our own 'backyard' and in the West Indies. On with our travel-log....

Way back in June we had the wonderful opportunity to sail down through the Grenadine Islands aboard a 44 foot yacht the "Shawndarie" with a British couple and a French couple (plus Child). Day one took us back to Mustique which we had visited only a few weeks before.

The trip was rough- you cross the Atlantic, rough and windy, between most islands and Judith, one of our French 'crew' and one month pregnant, spent most of the time at the railing. Though we avoided the "worst", we had 'uncomfortable' moments from time to time. That night we had our only uncomfortable nights sleep: a rolling anchorage and very little cool breeze.

Next day it was off to the Tobago Cays. They are a group of four beautiful islands surrounded by a horseshoe-shaped reef of elkhorn coral.

The snorkeling was excellent and I brought up a couple of small conch which our multi-talented skipper, Joe, made into a tasty snack.

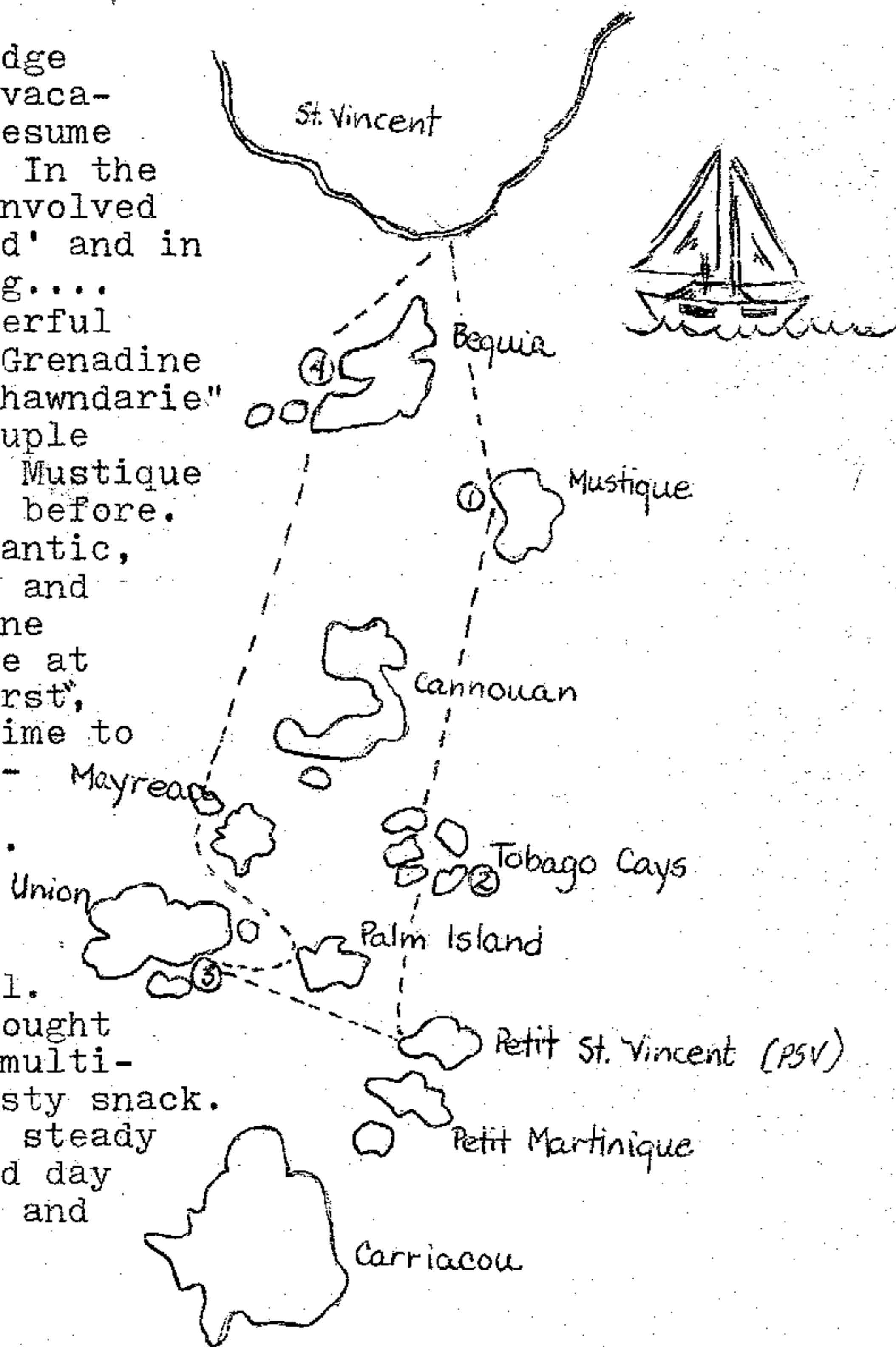
That night was ideal. Anchored into a steady breeze, we slept comfortably. Our third day was spent partly at Petit St. Vincent and partly at Union Island. PSV is a very small resort Island but very nice.

Much like Mustique, but smaller, it caters strictly to tourists.

As the southernmost St. Vincent Grenadine island, you look across to Petit Martinique, which is the

island of Grenada. We anchored that afternoon at Union Island where we had our first mis-hap of the trip. Our anchor didn't "bite" and we drifted up on some reef. Fortunately, we were able to quickly remove ourselves with no damage to the boat. It was an anxious few minutes, though. Our fourth day we sailed the long stretch back up to Bequia (about 30 miles, to put it all in perspective). We visited and were visited by one of Debbie's ex-patients who does scrimshaw on the boat he lives on in Port Elisabeth, Bequia. Of course, we spent plenty of time swimming, diving and snorkeling at each one of the places we stopped over in. I also forgot to mention our brief morning stop at Palm Island across from Union. After Bequia, it was a short hop back to St. Vincent where we became landlubbers again. But the memory of those glorious days of sun, swim and sail still remains close to our thoughts.

Our next bit of travel came as we joined our old EC*33 training group in St. Lucia for our "mid-service" conference. Much like a high school reunion, we spent four days reliving the horror of our training, talking about our in-country experiences and remorsing over the loss of our



friends who had found living or working conditions unsuitable enough to early terminate (ET). Of the 73 people who sat uneasily at our first welcoming meeting in Miami back on Oct. 25th, 58 still carry on (though one is currently in Wash, DC on a medivac for a compound fracture). That is not too bad. The new EC-34's have had 11 ET's out of 48 in just two months. We call the ET-34's. What we did learn in St. Lucia was that we are all in diverse situations on diverse islands. I was hoping to hear that others in my group were similarly frustrated with being underworked. To some extent that expectation was met: PCV's must be the most underutilized human resource in the world. But each situation was different. Some considered themselves busy if they were busy for three hours a day. Some, like me, wanted a consistent workload 6½ hours per day and felt uneasy about not having that. Even volunteers in Dominica had complaints about not being worked enough. So a positive aspect of our trip was that I learned that I was not alone in my frustration, but that each situation was so different it was also difficult to generalize about what could be done to rectify the situation.

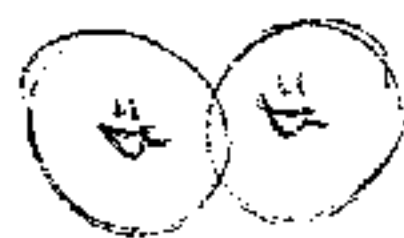
Dominica was a mixed bag. Deb and I were not feeling great when we left St. Lucia. We arrived in Dominica (though our suitcase remained in St. Lucia) still feeling out of sorts. We took a bus to Portsmouth to visit with some PCV's we knew there (north end of island). We dined that night on Mountain Chicken (known locally as Crappaud-frogs legs). After an uncomfortable night's sleep we returned to Rosseau to find lodging and do some sight-seeing. Deb however was feeling so poorly that we sought out some fellow PCV's to find a place to rest. We ended up with some strangers (to us, at least): some new EC-34's that lived near some friends of ours. Deb spent the next two days in bed with a high fever. I did some hiking to a place called T-2 gorge. So I at least got to see some of Dominica. We cancelled our trip to Martinique and flew straight home to St. Vincent to see a doctor - virus, she said. Deb is now back on her feet, one week later.

As a quick aside. One of the most interesting aspects of our travel was the airline and airports we flew in to. LIAT is the regional airline that has a virtual monopoly on inter-island air transportation. Some say that LIAT stands for Look Immediately for Alternative Transportation. That's not too far fetched. Especially for us folks who are used to the Air-conditioned, wide-bodied jets with stewardesses to fill every need. LIAT flies twin-propelled, 25 seat De Havilland twin otters that are a cross between a VW van and a private plane. The pilots have separate doors and get out and stretch and have a sandwich between hops. St. Lucia has a pedestrian walkway across its airfield - "Do not cross when light at tower is Red!!". Cane Field in Dominica has a wrecked plane at the end of its runway (not very reassuring), and its terminal resembles a tin storage shed. Its runway surface is only slightly better than the well-cratered roadway which runs parallel to it. How the pilots tell them apart is anyone's guess.

Well, I promised to keep this one to two pages. We are well, happy and anxiously looking forward to our visit this Christmas, A scant four months from now. You all often fill our prayers and we certainly thank you for all the mail. May God richly bless you. Till next month..

Hello... he did keep it short but only because I made him take out all the sex and violence... all the exciting stuff... just kidding. He summed up our traveling and our work hasn't changed all that much so I really don't have much to add. All the BIG news is at home... Gramma Hein celebrated her 80th and there will be a mess of weddings soon (Vikkie Mills, Jeni Timmerman, & Holly Helgren).

Hope you're all well... cheers!



Love to all,
Debbie & Ted

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