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To: Members, AACBNC

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From: Gwen V. Childs, Ph.D.
President, AACBNC

Re: Adventures in Curaçao:

Gary and I wanted to take some time to introduce you to some of the events and sights in Curaçao, as you think about scheduling your trip.

The Curaçao Marriott Beach Resort and Emerald Casino. This is a cozy resort right on the beach. It is only a short (15 min) cab ride from the airport and the trip to town (Willemstad) is even shorter (7-10 min). You can see some of the photos on our website, or at <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/hotel-photos/curmc-curacao-marriott-beach-resort-and-emerald-casino/>

Besides a lovely pool, spa, and casino, the Resort has a PADI dive and water sports center for all kinds of water sports. The private beach is only a few steps from the hotel grounds. There is an exercise facility.

Some of the highlights of Willemstad are:

The glorious colorful colonial architecture and cobblestone streets will entice you to shop, explore or just walk. The architecture has won this city the UNESCO World Heritage Site and it is fun to see the ornate buildings. There is a city tour that will give you an overview before you venture out on your own. One way to do this is by a Trolley tour, which leaves at 10 or 11 AM, beginning at Ft Amsterdam by the Pontoon Bridge. See pictures of Willemstad on our AACBNC website (in my PowerPoint presentation)

Kura Hulanda Museum: This museum exhibits will be fascinating to those of you interested in history, or art history. It traces the African roots of the Curaçaoans and describes the early slave trade, having restored actual sites where slaves were held and sold. Exhibits also include African Art. Check out this site for reviews of this unusual and moving museum. It is within walking distance of other city sights.

http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g147278-d184815-Reviews-Kura_Hulanda_Museum-Willemstad_Curacao.html#REVIEWS

Along the Waterfront, there are interesting Waterfort Arches, which are 30 ft high. Through the arches you can find restaurants and boutiques. There are romantic restaurants right on the dock where you can dine on the terrace and enjoy the wildlife.

The oldest synagogue (Mikve Israel-Emanuel Synagogue), housing the oldest Jewish congregation in the new world is found in this area. It was built in 1732 by settlers who came to the island in 1651. Adjacent to this building is the Jewish Cultural Historical Museum.

The Floating Market is also in the area. It consists of schooners tied up along the dock which sell tropical fruits and vegetables and handicrafts.

The pontoon bridge is fascinating, opening up the water way when boats require passage. When there are no boats, it provides a way for tourists to walk from one side of the city to the other. At night, it is lighted, like a fairyland.

West of Willemstad you find:

The oldest Caucasian burial site in the Western Hemisphere, the Beth Haim Cemetery, with fantastic carving on tombstones

The Country House Museum, which is a restoration of a 19th century manor house.

A Seaside cavern called Boca Tabla.

Playa Forti, which has 200 year old Dutch land houses, which were mansions for former slave owners. Also, see very tall cacti.

At the Western tip of the island, there is a place for hiking and nature lovers. This is Christoffel National Park where you can see rare orchids, wild goats, birds and Curaçao deer. The shortest trail is about 5 miles long. There are some Arawak paintings on a coral cliff near two of the caves. Next to the park, they have opened a turtle sanctuary with a cave, with pounding waves. This is the National Park Shete Boka.

North of Willemstad, you find:

Fort Nassau, which was built in 1797 on a hill overlooking the harbor entrance. It has had several names, but today, it houses an International restaurant with a fantastic view of the harbor.

Curaçao Liqueur Distillery, where the cordial named after the island is made. This is a distillate of the dried peel of an orange found only on Curaçao. Tours are available and a free sniffer of the aromatic liqueur is the perk.

Curaçao Sequarium, which has more than 400 species of marine life in a natural environment. Here, you can also have seal lion and dolphin encounters. If you are brave, you can swim among stingrays, grouper, sea turtles and other marine life. It also has a white sand beach and sounds like a great place for the family.

Seaworld Explorer, which is a semisubmersible submarine that will take you on hour long tours of submerged wrecks and coral reefs. The submerged section has wide glass windows to allow underwater views.

Curaçao Underwater Marine Park, which was established in 1983 and is a strip of about 13 miles of untouched coral reefs. One can view this park via snorkeling, scuba diving or in a glass-bottom boat.

Hato Caves, which are a mystical world of stalagmites and stalactites. Formerly coral reefs, they were formed when the ocean water fell and the landmass was lifted. They have a museum display of Indian petroglyph drawings as well.

South of Willemstad you find:

An Ostrich Farm, which is one of the largest breeding, farms outside Africa. Because Curaçao is too humid to hatch the eggs, they have had to create a temperature controlled environment for the incubation and nursery. There are other animals on the farm to serve as a supportive eco system for the Ostriches. Also, there is an African Art shop and the Zambezi restaurant, where you can dine in African style. This appears to be another wonderful place to take kids of all ages.

Traveling to Curaçao.

I looked for some sample non-stop airfares. From Miami, there are two American flights leaving at 10:30 AM and arriving at 2:20 PM or leaving at 4:45 PM and arriving at 8:40 PM. Both are \$347.00 round trip (Travelocity.com). What Gary and I did last year was to fly to Miami on a late flight, stay overnight in the airport (hotel) and then take the 10:30 flight the next day getting us to Curaçao early afternoon. However, there are a number of flights from different cities connecting with the later Miami flight. We have recently explored different routes and found 4 different carriers offering a Little Rock to Miami flight for 214.00, round trip, changing planes in Houston, Atlanta or Memphis (depending on the carrier). So, this brings the total price down significantly. Whatever you do, it would be good to book your flight as soon as you can, because the American flights could fill up that week. I understand that American Airlines has a desk in the Marriott, which can make your check-in and departure easier.

I hope these nuggets of information have provided an enticing look at our venue. I know that Bill Rhoten will send out more information about the registration as well as keep you updated on the status of the hotel rooms. Gary and I look forward to seeing you! Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Gwen V. Childs, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair