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Business, Culture & Leisure

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Bharatanatyam on full display SAMARPAN 2025

Classical Indian dance and music brought life to the Belair Community Center last Saturday evening, when students of the Naatya Arts Center Foundation delivered spectacular performances in Bharatanatyam dance, and Carnatic music.

The gala was a culmination of months of training by nearly 50 students, ages four through 18, under the guidance of teachers Aparna Samaga and Inessa Careto. With these recitals, the foundation hopes to promote Indian cultural heritage in St. Maarten and encourage the younger generation to connect with and preserve classical arts.

Its director, Aparna Samaga, is a classically trained Bharatanatyam dancer and opened the non-profit centre to promote and share the expressive art form. SAMARPAN 2025 was well received by a captivated audience, and won praise of Culture Department Head Clara Reyes, who congratulated Samaga on her commitment to the arts and achievements of the foundation.



FTC, NEVADA SUE IM MASTERY ACADEMY Complaint alleges IML was a \$1.2 billion scam

Consumer News alert by Truth in Advertising.org

Introductory note:

IM Mastery Academy (also known as IMMA) is active on St. Maarten. It has rebranded a few times, and most recently, in November 2024, "reinvented" itself as IYOVIA. It was previously known as iMarketsLive or IML.

2017, the Centrale In Bank van Curaçao en Sint Maarten (CBCS) issued a statement warning consumers about iMarketsLive, stating that "consumers are not legally protected and may be at a higher risk of losing their money," as iMarketsLive does not fall under the supervision of the CBCS or under any other regulator in Curação and/ or Sint Maarten, while dealing in the Foreign Exchange ("FOREX") market, and that the programme it offers "has similarities with a pyramid scheme."

Authorities in the following countries have also taken similar actions, issuing strong consumer warnings on financial risks (specifying the lack of authorization/ regulation in the respective country and underscoring the dangers of pyramid schemes and similar scams) and/ or launching investigations into the company: the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Belgium, France, Columbia, Peru, Poland, and Spain.

TINA Consumer News Alert:

On Thursday [May 1 ed.], the FTC and the state of Nevada filed a lawsuit against IM Mastery Academy, a financial educa-MLM [multi-level tion marketing company - ed] that recently rebranded as IYOVIA for bilking more than \$1.2 billion from consumers in "a wide-ranging investment training and business venture scam" that dates back to 2018. Originally launched as iMarketsLive 12 years ago, the company has been the subject of an ongoing TINA.org investigation.

According to the complaint, which refers to the company as IML, the MLM used false and baseless earning claims to entice consumers to purchase financial training products costing as much as \$400 a month and to join the MLM's business opportunity. Often targeting young people through social media, IML claimed distributors could retire in their 20s, travel the world and make money in their sleep. The reality was quite the opposite, with most recruits earning no money or losing money, according to the FTC and Nevada Attorney General.

The lawsuit seeks a permanent injunction, monetary relief and other consumer relief against IML and nine other defendants:

- Christopher Terry – the CEO and co-owner of IML. - Isis Terry – the CFO and co-owner (and Chris Terry's wife).

- Jason Brown – a former top distributor, who most recently has been Vice President of Field Operations.

- Matthew Rosa – a top distributor.



Image: TINA.org

- Alex Morton – known as "Chairman Elite" and Executive Vice President of Sales for IML.

- Brandon Boyd – an IML distributor and financial training instructor.

- IM Mastery Academy Ltd. (IML UK) – an affiliate of IML, of which Isis Terry is the sole officer and shareholder.

- Assiduous, Inc. – an affiliate of IML, of which Isis Terry is also the sole officer and shareholder.

- Global Dynasty Network, LLC (GDN) – a corporate

entity that Brown and Rosa use for their IML business venture.

The 71-page complaint is a scathing indictment of defendants' actions, stating early on that:

"Defendants profit handsomely from the deceptive earnings claims of their salespeople, which have generated more than \$1.242 billion in worldwide sales since 2018. Instead of disciplining or terminating highearning salespeople when confronted with evidence of the deceptive earnings claims, IML and IML CEO Christopher ... Terry would often reward them with lucrative payouts. Defendants IML, Alex Morton, Jason Brown, and Matthew ... Rosa have even instructed IML's salespeople on how to make those claims while escaping the detection of IML's compliance program and law enforcement."

And the profits from this

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Doet 2025: Volunteer movement returns - sign up now

This isn't just a community event; it's the largest volunteer initiative in the Dutch Kingdom with hundreds of individuals, who show up year after year to make a tangible difference during SXM DOET. And now, with the 11th edition fast approaching, the call to action is louder and more urgent than ever.

n Friday, May 16, and Saturday, May 17, SXM DOET will once again take over St. Maarten. Powered by the "Be The Change" foundation in collaboration with the Oranje Fonds, SXM DOET will mobilise hundreds of volunteers across the island to support local non-profits in delivering meaningful community projects.

There are around 1,800 volunteer slots available this year, and they're filling up. That means there is plenty of room for you, your classmates, coworkers, and family to jump in. Don't wait until the last-minute to head to www. sxmdoet.com and find a project that speaks to you and sign up today.

From painting school walls and planting gardens to organizing youth sports or creating joyful moments for the elderly, there's a project for everyone. And the best part is you don't need experience just a willingness to help.

This is not just for individuals either; SXM DOET thrives on group efforts.

Offices, classrooms, sports teams, friend circles - everyone is welcome. Volunteering together builds bonds while building a stronger St Maarten. If your organisation has been looking for a meaningful team-building opportunity, this is it.

SXM DOET is part of a wider regional movement that began in the Netherlands in 2004 and has since spread to Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Statia, Saba and St. Maarten. It's not just about oneoff acts of kindness. It's about creating a sustainable culture of volunteerism that lifts communities. fills service gaps, and supports the people and organisations doing vital work year-round.

Young people!

This is your chance to shine! Whether you are looking to earn community service hours, gain new skills, make new friends, or just want to be part of something positive, SXM DOET has a spot



for you. It's fun, it's social, and it feels great to give back. You don't have to wait for someone else to make a change, you can be that someone. So, grab your

crew, pick a project, and show St. Maarten what the next generation

can do! Let's make SXM DOET 2025 unforgettable!

Have questions?

Reach out to the SXM DOET team directly via info.sxmdoet@ gmail.com or call +1 (721) 581-6831

'NPO Spotlight' in collaboration with The Daily Herald offers you a glance into the varied and multifaceted world of Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) on St. Maarten. If you are a NPO and would like to be showcased please visit our website www.npowersxm.com to register.

Volunteering and teambuilding: The APS experience with SXM DOET

Giving back is a feelgood activity for people in all walks of life and can be a great opportunity for teambuilding as well - one that different companies and organisations can and should take advantage of. With SXM Doet coming up soon -Friday, May 16, and Sat-urday, May 17 – it's time to browse the projects available and see what might appeal to you.

lgemeen Pensioenfonds Sint Maarten (APS) team members are no strangers to volunteering together, especially with SXM Doet. The team has been taking part in a wide variety of projects



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for years and would recommend the same to other organisations. Here, APS Managing Director Oscar Williams tells us a little more about the fulfilling and collaborative opportunity that the team finds in banding together for a good cause.

1: What is your history in volunteering in general, and with SXM Doet in particular?

In general, I have volunteered at several organizations such as EPIC, Nature Foundation and SXM Doet. And with our organization (APS), we have been participating in SXM Doet. În addition to this, I also volunteered several times privately with my family for SXŃ Doet.

2: How did the group volunteering activity with APS come about, and when did it start?

We at APS always look at different events whereby we can contribute. We formally started participating in SXM Doet since 2018. We saw it as a good cause, as well as a teambuilding opportunity for the organization while contributing to the community and setting a right example.

3: What project will your team be doing this year, and how many are joining?

We will be working with EPIC in the perpetual Plastic Workspace, being a part of the team: weighing - sorting - cutting - shredding - moulding all the different plastic items; creating all new recycled reusable useful items for the workspace! We will participate with the entire APS team of 10 persons.

4: What types of projects do you gravitate to, and why? Is this connected to your professions in any wav?

We do not gravitate to specific projects per se. We try to participate in different projects every year and keep it dynamic. We participated in the painting of buildings, murals, beach dav with clients of the White Yellow Cross, fun day with pensioners and cleaning of hiking trails, to

name a few.

5: What does the group enjoy about volunteering together, and what are the social benefits of doing this?

The APS team sees the volunteering with SXM Doet as a way of giving back to the community; also emphasizing the importance of volunteering and setting a good example to the community at large. In my experience, our staffers always leave with a fulfilling feeling after a project has been completed.

6: Is volunteering as a group something you would recommend to other businesses/ organizations, and if so, why?

Yes, I would definitely recommend it to other businesses and organizations to participate in SXM Doet. Not only are you giving back to the community, but it also brings your staff together as a group and it is a nice and effective way for stimulating teambuilding.

7: Interested in joining DOET as a volunteer?



SXM DOET will take place on Friday, May 16, and Saturday, May 17. This will be its 11th year running, brought to you by Be The

Change Foundation and Oranje Fonds. Browse projects and register at: www.sxmdoet.com

Disclaimer: The viewpoints expressed by the various authors in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of The Daily Herald. While we apply due diligence, we often share the expertise of third parties (for example in interviews) but are not in a position to police their opinions or base of knowledge. As with our other Special Editions, some content is promotional and/or linked to advertisement. However, we aim to present this content in a transparent way, avoid sharing misinformation, and focus on what we think our readers . will find valuable

Looking up at the Night Sky

~ St. Maarten's Backyard Astronomy for May 9 - 11 ~

Sun rises at 5:40am Sun sets at 6:36pm Lunar phase: second quarter, waxing gibbous Moon sets at 4:08am, Saturday Moon rises at 4:05pm. Saturday

This weekend the meteor shower known as the Eta Aquarids will be lingering on. They generally run from April 15 to May 27, and the peak is likely just past for us, but still you can expect to see a few streaks of light showing that the earth is passing through their territory in the great wide solar svstem.

he moon is nearly full, so its brightness may lessen the clarity of stars and meteor streaks, but the moon itself is worth studying when it's at this phase. The terminator said. "I'll be back" – and indeed it is. In astronomy, the terminator line is the line that separates the sunlit side of the moon from the dark side of the moon. This weekend, its presence is curved and worth focusing on with a pair of binoculars. This is preferable to looking on a full moon when there is little shadow on the lunar surface. The shadows give a sense of the relief or texture of the land-

Let's spend time searching for two crowns in our night sky this weekend. The Northern Crown and the Southern Crown are both lovely circlets of stars, smaller than the average constellation, but easily spotted due to the halfcircle shape of bright stars. The Northern Crown, also called Corona Borealis, rises in the east just as the skies begin to darken with the oncoming night. By midnight, this delicate feature is near to directly overhead if you are viewing from St. Maarten. In the wee hours of the morning, the northern Crown is setting in the west.

The Southern Crown, or Corona Australis, is found low on the southern horizon and it rises fairly late. Around midnight, this C-shaped ringlet is rising just east of due south. You may recognize the teapot shape of Sagittarius and the curl of Scorpius' tail just above the Southern Crown. By three in the morning, you can see the Southern Crown at its highest point in its low arc. That is only about a third of the way up the sky from horizon to zenith (overhead) and after that, it reaches back down towards the southwestern horizon.

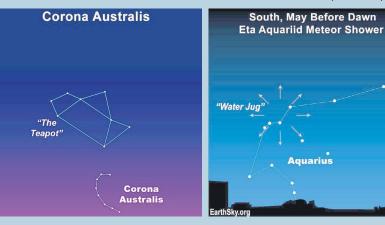
Meanwhile, we have planets to spot! At sunset Saturday, Mars is overhead, and Jupiter is just a bit farther to the west. Venus is currently the Morning Star, heralding the new day, and Saturn and Mercury are nearby, sitting

Thank you for keeping up with the Night Sky articles, backyard (or beach) astronomy designed for St. Maarten sky viewing. FYI: If you are out later on in the week, note that each star rises about four

closely together, in the brighten-

ing eastern sky.

minutes earlier each day than written here, and the moon rises 50 minutes later. Night Sky is researched and compiled by Lisa Davis-Burnett. Earthsky.org is a key resource for information and images. Questions or comments? Email davisburnettlisa@gmail. com



WOW! Ambassadors

By Bianca Peters, co-producer of the WOW! nature film

e are in the first online ambassadors' meeting for WOW! Some are wearing thick sweaters, with the lights already on in their rooms. Others are in T-shirts during their lunch break. Because yes, WOW! now has more than 50 ambassadors spread across the six Caribbean islands and the Netherlands! People of all ages and backgrounds have decided to dedicate their free time to WOW! Students, recent graduates, teachers, nature park employees, writers, directors, professors, people from the cultural sector, divers, photographers - all driven by one shared passion: Nature.

Each of them wants to share the WOW! Story - a story of wonder, admiration, and awareness about the unique nature of the islands in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The ambassadors spread



CONTINUED ON PG. 5





and who, out of love for nature,

voluntarily dedicate their time

as ambassadors for WOW!"

These words hit me straight in the heart. They express exactly

what I feel at that moment. I

swallow and try to push away

the lump in my throat. With a

smile, I invite the next ambas-

sador to introduce themselves.

waves, so it's quite dry

on deck," he adds. "But if

the wind is coming from

the stern, she rolls eas-

ily. The guests really enjoy

the cruises and they feel

part of the team. There's a lot of social interaction.

When they come on board

for the first time, they get a

welcome presentation and every evening a Captain's

presentation on what to expect, activities, weather

CRUISING ON CLIPPER 'STAD AMSTERDAM' THE TRADITIONAL WAY

By Robert Luckock

Around 40 invited guests enjoyed a mid-April morning sail on the threemasted Clipper Stad Amsterdam, thanks to an agreement established between the ship's directors and the non-profit Caribbean Sail Training Association (CST) for this unique experience.

nvitations went out to CST members and sev-Leral youngsters for the educational sail. The event was combined with an "Open Ship Day" for the public that afternoon, that attracted 560 visitors.

The ship had arrived in Marigot from Johannesburg, South Africa, after starting a round-the-world voyage in August 2023.

Unlike today's ubiquitous giant cruise ships, *Stad Amsterdam* offers guests the best of both worlds modern day comforts and amenities, safety features such as smoke detectors and alarms, while recreating the experience of sailing on an authentic 19th century traditional tall ship.

The three masts towering overhead, rigging, acres of sails, miles of heavy rope, teak decks and polished brass fittings were indeed impressive, capturing the imagination of how seasoned seafarers handled these huge vessels back in the day.

Owned by Randstad Holdings and the Municipality of Amsterdam, construction of Stad Amsterdam began in 1997/98 before its launch in 2000, and a major refit to its engines in 2020/2021. Stad Amsterdam offers a choice of ad-



venture and luxury cruises.

Swiss Captain Andi Manser gave a short safety briefing before the departure. "Please don't fall overboard as that will cause a lot of extra paperwork," he joked at the end.

At 76-metres in length, 47-metres in height, and width 10-metres, *Stad Amsterdam* carries 2,200 square metres of sail area (32 sails), but for this short cruise, only a few sails were used. She sails at an average speed of 10 to 15 knots.

Once the sails were hoisted by the crew, the ship was underway, gliding silently over the waves in Marigot Bay. Refreshments were served from a bar on deck by hostesses Tamara and Inez.

Guests were free to tour the ship (but not the crew quarters) and for some tasks guests could join in helping the crew, but not when there was a precise manoeuvre to be done involving all hands on deck.

On scheduled paid cruises, guests can take part in the watch system, choosing the time to participate with the

crew, to learn a lot about sailing the ship. Most of the crew work is manual, hauling in lines requiring muscle and fitness, although there are some modern winches too.

"I've been sailing on Stad Amsterdam for two years now," said 22-year-old crew member Sieme Boomstra, from Texel in the Netherlands. "I'm what's called an Ordinary Sailor, so my job is on deck, which includes sail handling, deck scrubbing, cleaning. I also take part in the watches at night sometimes. There is maintenance to do as well on woodwork, rigging and steel work. I love it. I wanted to see the world and in two years, I've already seen most of it. We have a great crew, super cool, lots of energy."

Head Housekeeper Geraldine van Harn gave a tour below decks, starting with the beautiful mahogany dining room and bar, called the "Long Room." She is also in charge of the merchandising boutique on board.

When we have an adventure trip, the crew also eat here, and if it's a luxury



cruise, the guests eat up on deck - tables set up

with white tablecloths, nice wines, lunches and threecourse dinners - the whole works," explained van Harn.

There are some 14 cabins with portholes for guests, equipped with telephone



Crew hauling in lines. Most manual tasks on board require physical fitness (Robert Luckock)

(satellite connection), air ish training vessels as well. conditioned and with heaters, bathrooms and shower, and on the lower deck cabins for 30 crew. The ship has its own laundry facilities on board too.

"I have been Captain of *Stad Amsterdam* since 2009 – that's 16 years – in fact, we are two captains, rotating every eight weeks at different legs of the voyvery special and I enjoy working with a young crew. The average age of the crew is 20-25 years old. The most important quality is that they are motivated. Prior experience isn't always necessary, and we do have experienced crew from Dan-

forecasts, fire drills, etc. After leaving Saint-Martin, age," Manser explained. "It's Stad Amsterdam completed a 10-day luxury cruise in the British Virgin Islands (BVI) with 26 guests. The ship is due back in its home port of Amsterdam in August, where she will take part in the Sail Amsterdam -Festival.

> CST President Jan Roosens said there are possibilities in the future for Stad Amsterdam to become a CST member.

"We would hope to reach agreements that the ship will take Caribbean youngsters as trainees from time to time and continue to cooperate in organising a Maritime Experience Day at a Caribbean island. That does not mean they will receive all the free advantages everywhere, but certainly some," Roosens said.

"Even if a commercial vessel cannot receive all the free advantages in the ports, etc., Caribbean Sail Training will look at the possibility to reimburse some costs to the ship when they want to cooperate with CST. The future will tell what is possible and what is not. This will all be under discussion with Stad Amsterdam."





"Other crew such as house-

keeper, officers, technicians

and chief engineer are older

and of course experienced.

The Quarter Master is the

leader of a group on deck,

and Officer of the Watch is

on the bridge in charge of

"The ship is not that heavy,

navigation.

AirSXM Expands Charter Services to USVI and Puerto Rico

AirStMaarten,

known as AirSXM.com, continues to redefine air travel in the Northeastern Caribbean by expanding its shared charter services to new destinations: St. Thomas and St. Croix, USVI; and San Juan, Puerto Rico. With this expansion, AirSXM now connects St. Maarten with these vibrant new hubs in addition to its already established routes to St. Barths, Anguilla, Antigua and Tortola.

also

ounded and operated by aviation entrepreneur Terrance Rey, AirStMaarten is St. Maarten's first and only virtual airline, specializing in personalized air charter solutions. The airline's innovative shared charter model offers passengers the convenience and exclusivity of private aviation without the high cost of booking an entire aircraft. Passengers simply pay for the seat they occupy - ideal for solo travellers and small groups.

While shared charter prices are higher than scheduled commercial flights, the experience mirrors private jet service. Passengers are typically processed through FBO terminals [Fixed Base Operator] – private avia-tion facilities – allowing for faster customs and immigration clearance, a more relaxed boarding process, and extra luggage allowance at affordable rates.

Planning ahead pays off. The earlier a shared charter is booked, the more likely additional passengers will join, reducing the seat price for everyone. AirSt-Maarten usually operates 7- to 8-seater aircraft for these charters, but with sufficient advance notice, larger planes - up to 19, 30, or even 47 seats – can be sourced to meet demand and lower costs.

Charter from St. Maarten start at the following rates: US \$375 per seat to St. Thomas (STT) US \$450 per seat to St. Croix (STX) US \$700 per seat to San Juan (SJU) (Prices exclude airport taxes and fees. Maximum 8 passengers per flight.)

Booking is simple via www. AirSXM.com, and VIP handling is part of the ex-

a business traveller or on a leisure trip, AirSXM provides a seamless connecperience. Whether you're tion between St. Maarten and neighbouring destinations with style, speed and efficiency.



WOW! Ambassadors CONTINUED FROM PG. 3

this message in their own way. Some share stories on social media, others give lessons in schools, organize local help events, find new partners, or inspire young people to take action for nature themselves.

Since this is the first meeting, we are aligning everyone. Where do we stand with WOW! right now? What is our vision? And most importantly, what are we collectively working towards? We discuss the exciting period ahead. In May, we will be filming for the documentaries and the movie in Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire. At the same

time, we will bring the WOW-ies project to life there, just as we did earlier on the Windward Islands (read more about this in my previous column).

In June, we will also start a special auction. This achieves two goals at once - on the one hand, we give local artists the opportunity to showcase their work (inspired by nature and WOW!) to an international audience; and on the other hand, we hope to raise additional funds for our projects with the proceeds.



The group responds enthusiastically and even comes up with new ideas. One of the ambassadors, #1 international bestselling author Charlotte Doornhein, offers a unique copy of one of her books for the auction. She wrote the bilingual children's book "De roep van de shoco / E grito di e shoco" over 10 years ago. The story encourages children to protect nature, with special attention to the shoco, Aruba's endemic owl. The book was the official gift for Aruba's Children's Book Week in 2014 and has not been available for some time, making it a wonderful collector's item!

Another ambassador, Nadina Galle, shares that from April 25 to 28, the first-ever City Nature Challenge will take place in Curaçao. During this event, people can use the ObsIdentify app to take photos of plants, animals, and other organisms. These images will be added to a shared database that helps scientists monitor changes in nature. "How amazing would it be if WOW! could get involved in this in the coming years so that we can strengthen each other," she asks enthusiastically.

We close the session in high

spirits and agree to meet again at regular intervals. This way, we stay informed about each other's projects and can work together on WOW!'s continued growth.

Afterwards, I receive several messages and phone calls from people who want to express how special it was to be in a session with such a diverse group. Everyone felt the same positive energy. It gives me goosebumps and to be honest, makes me a little nervous. There's no turning back now, and

I don't always know if I'm doing it right. But fortunately, we have an amazing group of people who believe in WOW! and what we are building together, based on shared values.

Whenever I have doubts about our progress, I am certain that the answer will be found among these extraordinary people. My life motto is Dream, Dare, Do, and Share, and for WOW!, it is now time for that final step: Sharing. And I am ready!

Would you like to become an ambassador for WOW!? Send an email to nathalie@wowthenaturefilm.com and join this incredible movement!



WEEKENDER

FTC, NEVADA SUE IM MASTERY ACADEMY CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

scheme appear to be astronomical. According to the lawsuit. Chris and Isis Terry have received at least \$20 million, Rosa and Brown have pocketed more than \$33 million combined, and Alex Morton has gotten more than \$76 million from IML. According to the complaint, this money has been obtained by scamming "hundreds of thousands of consumers in the United States and worldwide. Defendants focus their marketing on young people, many of whom are Black and Latino. The scheme has disproportionately harmed young Black consumers." As part of the evidence to substantiate these allegations, the complaint quotes Chris Terry informing Brown, "That's the great thing about network [marketing] ... They keep making new 18-year-olds every day."

The complaint lays out 10 different counts against defendants, including a count for making false or unsubstantiated earning claims regarding defendants' trading training services, another for false earnings claims related to the business venture, a third for other misrepresentaearnings tions regarding defendants' services, a count that defendants violated the Telemarketing Sales Rule by making deceptive telemarketing calls, a count against IML and the Terrys that they violated the Restore Online Shoppers' Confidence Act (ROSCA), and five corresponding counts under Nevada's Deceptive Trade Practices Act.

The lawsuit also details the lengths to which these defendants have gone to manipulate and deceive young consumers. According to the complaint, Brown "hired a third party to post fake positive reviews about IML under a pseudonym." The complaint goes on:

"[Brown] has directed IML's compliance consultant to find ways to disable the social media accounts of individuals who have criticized IML's practices online. And he has advised top salespeople at IML on how to post deceptive earning claims online in ways that will evade law enforcement."

With respect to Morton, the complaint alleges:

"[Morton] ... makes deceptive earning claims to lure consumers into the IML scheme... Morton is aware of deceptive earning claims made by other salespeople and IML instructors. He has advised top salespeople on how to post deceptive earning claims online in ways that will evade IML's compliance program and law enforcement."

Rosa is alleged to have engaged in the same sort of conduct as Morton. And perhaps most damning of all, the complaint makes clear that defendants are well aware that what they have been doing violates the law and that they simply refuse to stop engaging in deceptive practices. As the complaint highlights, Chris Terry wrote in a November 2021 group chat that included Brown, Morton and Rosa, "our risk is extremely high from these income claims.... I am sure if [the FTC] investigates us, the chairman10's and above will face legal issues. We do not want to swim in their waters as we will all lose ... Should FTC come down on us. [sic] Expect \$20-30m in fines."

And according to the complaint, Brown, Rosa and others echoed Terry's concerns, with Rosa suggesting they make a video containing deceptive earnings claims private so it can only be seen by individuals with a link to it. That way, he said, TINA.org "can't find what they can't find."

Which brings us to ...

TINA.org sounds the alarm

In the summer of 2018. TINA.org warned consumers about IML after an initial investigation revealed that the company, Chris Terry and top distributors like Morton were making deceptive earning claims to market the business opportunity. At the time of this investigation, IML Chief Operating Officer Frank Gomez stated the company 'absolutely agree[d] that unrealistic income claims, as well as any income claims on social media is not good," that all IML distributors would "be trained with 'Do's and Don'ts' in regard to any social media posts," and that Morton and Chris Terry in particular "ha[d] made errors in comments or posts from the past, ha[d] been notified to eliminate any communication that is considered any type of income claims."

But a year after this statement was made, TINA. org readily gathered more than 200 new deceptive income claims. As a result, in December 2019, TINA. org filed a complaint with the MLM industry's selfregulatory group known as the Direct Selling Self-Regulatory Council. In its letter to the council, TINA. org wrote:

"iMarketsLive ... and its

and continue to claim – that participants make five-figures per month and millions of dollars per year, travel the world, and buy luxury vehicles and other expensive items, among other things. claims completely Such contradict iMarketsLive's 2018 Income Disclosure Statement, which indicates that the vast majority of the company's distributors – 95 percent – averaged an income of less than \$300 in 2018, and that is without accounting for expenses, including, but not limited to, any monthly costs required to earn commissions?

distributors have claimed -

Nine months later, in September 2020, the DSSRC issued a case decision acknowledging the company's efforts to promptly remove the earning claims at issue, counselled the company with regard to the marketing of deceptive earning claims and closed its inquiry.

Unfortunately, the DSSRC's action appears to have had little impact on IML. Since that time, TINA.org has continued to collect dozens of inappropriate income claims being made by the company and its distributors. And the FTC complaint also makes clear that the company's CEO was well aware that deceptive earning claims continued to be published on social media after the DSSRC decision - Chris Terry is quoted as stating in a June 2021 message to top IML distributors:

"I've been going through a lot of people's accounts, and I'm mortified by the lifestyle claims that we have. We're going to end up getting shut down by the feds. I promise you. This is horrible what's going on out there. It's not a good thing ... I'm looking at myself, I'm looking at a lot of top leaders' Instagrams. The jets, the watches, the diamonds, the cars ... we got to [sic] adhere to certain laws that are in place. And if we don't, then there are consequences. The consequences are that we will be shut down."

The company's regulatory woes

IML is no stranger to runins with regulatory authorities. Since at least 2017, the company has been critically examined by governmental entities around the world. According to the FTC complaint, "[n]o fewer than 21 international government agencies have issued warnings about the scheme, and Canadian law enforcement has taken legal action against IML." 23 year old college dropout homeless 1 year ago 🕵 🚶



Now making 2.5 million Pesos a year in Mexico 🕉 📈

An example of a social media post by an IML representative. The company was under scrutiny for making deceptive earnings claims.

Over the years, TINA.org has alerted consumers to financial actions against IML by a number of foreign countries, including Colombia, France, Spain, Belgium, the U.K., Canada and Peru, each of which have warned investors and the public that the company is not authorized to operate in their countries. In 2022, Poland issued a consumer warning notifying the public that it had charged IML with operating a "pyramidtype promotional system."

As the complaint points out, IML has also faced regulatory scrutiny at home by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which in 2018 reached a settlement with the company over allegations it acted as an unregistered commodity trading advisor.

Abandoned by its top distributor

Up until a few months ago, Alex Morton was IML's top earner. Morton got his start and rose to fame in the MLM industry as a young distributor for Vemma Nutrition Company, which reached a \$238 million settlement with the FTC over allegations that it was a pyramid scheme in 2016. In fact. Morton was one of the FTC's key witnesses against Vemma at the preliminary injunction hearing as the FTC showed a video of him making inappropriate income claims. (Here's one of TINA.org's favourites from Morton's Vemma days.)

Just before the FTC sued Vemma, Morton left the company and moved to another MLM that sold skin cream products, Jeunesse Global, where he continued to make inappropriate income claims.

In July 2016, a class-action lawsuit was filed against Jeunesse naming Morton as a defendant and co-conspirator and alleging the company was a pyramid scheme. Morton signed up with IML the very next month.

Morton used his personal brand to promote IML with particular attention paid to young people. On his personal Instagram page, Morton regularly posted videos promoting his lifestyle with the promise that hard work in network marketing will yield the same results for others. In this video from 2018, he explained the IML business opportunity to a room full of young adults with a focus on recruiting them as distributors - the same business practice that ultimately brought Vemma to the attention of the FTC.

In another video from 2018, Morton pledged to "make anyone that wants to" be one, a millionaire in IML:

"I told these two dudes yesterday at Applebee's, I said ... I am going to act as if personally brought you in and your account is my account. Until these guys are both making at least \$25,000 a month, which is gonna happen very quickly, in the next 60 to 90 days, I am going to be here for you 24/7, 365, and that's my commitment to all of you on this call right now ... my goal is to have as many people as possible [making] \$10,000 a month and that's what we're doing ... anyone that wants to I'm going to make sure they become millionaires in iMarketsLive."

But not long after it rebranded from IM Mastery Academy to IYOVIA, after eight years with the company, Alex Morton jumped ship and moved to yet another MLM – JIFU, an Idaho company launched in 2019 that sells health, travel and educational services. Not surprisingly, in March 2025, the DSSRC initiated

workwithaustingodsey - Follow

workwithaustingodsey When I first met Fernando Madero Rios less than a year ago, he messaged me through Facebook asking if we partnered could I mentor him and work with him directly....*

he barely spoke any English, was living out of a suitcase and backpack, was living off some savings he had, jumping around from some savings he had, jumping around from mother in months because he wanted to come back when he was in a better financial position, had never seen much success before... If Now he's making 2,448,000 (\$121.000/mothly) peoso per year, MULTI MILLIONAIRE in Mexico where down here the average wage is \$200 a month, speaks banging English, is heiping thousands of people an his team winning, less than 100 people away from smashing Chairman

C Q 126 likes AUGUST 29, 2017

> an inquiry into the use of – wait for it – deceptive earnings claims by JIFU and its distributors. (Rosa and Boyd have also recently left IML.)

However, this time around, it is clear that Morton is not going to be able to escape the attention of the FTC when it comes to his marketing of IML.

What's next

According to the complaint, Nevada and the FTC are seeking "preliminary injunctive and ancillary relief as may be necessary to avert the likelihood of consumer injury during the pendency of this action and to preserve the possibility of effective final relief, including but not limited to, a preliminary injunction and the appointment of a monitor over Corporate Defendants."

What does this mean? Sometime in the not-toodistant future, after many, many pages of legal briefings are filed, there will be a hearing before a judge in Nevada to determine whether or not IML's wings should be clipped and, if so, how short pending the trial of this case.

But perhaps more importantly, with this current action against IML, the FTC has once again put the MLM industry on notice that they must stop using unsubstantiated income claims to market the business opportunity.

For more information on IM Mastery Academy and its history, as well as other shady MLM practices and cases of deceptive marketing, visit truthinadvertising, org. The original news alert contains links. TINA.org is a consumer watchdog, it takes legal action against deceptive marketing and reports on and tracks various lawsuits.

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FRIDAY/ SATURDAY

Draft basic bank account law tabled

Finance Minister Marinka Gumbs presented the draft National Ordinance on Basic Payment Account in a meeting of Parliament's Central Committee on Tuesday, outlining a proposed legal framework to ensure financial inclusion for individuals who currently lack access to basic banking services in St. Maarten. The proposed legislation stipulates that individuals must demonstrate a vested interest in the country to qualify and will not be permitted to deposit more than Cg. 3,000 per month into the account.

Court rules in favour of Beacon Hill residents

The Court of First Instance has ruled in favour of the Pride of Beacon Hill homeowners Association (PBHA) in its challenge against the Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure VROMI. The case centred on the controversial reissuance of a building permit for a high-density apartment complex in a quiet residential cul-de-sac, despite an earlier revocation and critical advisory opinions. The dispute revolves around the construction permit granted on September 8, 2022, to Sasha Management N.V. for a five-storey apartment complex known as "Villa Sasha", complete with a rooftop swimming pool. The development, located in an already densely built and narrow cul-de-sac in Beacon Hill, was granted a residential permit with several exemptions hidden in the fine print, effectively enabling a commercial development in a residential-only zone.

Daylight shooting in Middle Region

A man was shot in broad daylight on Wednesday afternoon, near the intersection of Middle Region Road and Romeo's Drive. St. Maarten Police Force KPSM has launched an investigation into the incident. The shooting took place around 2:40pm. Central Dispatch of KPSM received multiple reports of gunfire in the area. Several police patrols and detectives were quickly sent to the scene. Preliminary information indicates that the victim was approached by two unidentified individuals who opened fire before fleeing the area on a motorcycle in the direction of A.Th. Illidge Road.

Dutch Defence to expand Coast Guard

The Dutch Ministry of Defence is stepping up efforts to combat international organised crime in the Caribbean by significantly expanding the Caribbean Coast Guard. Seventy new positions will be added this year to enhance maritime surveillance and enforcement across the region. The move comes amid a surge in drug-trafficking, arms-smuggling, and hu-man-trafficking, particularly around the waters of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao Intelligence reports show increasing volumes of illegal shipments, with many drugs arriving from Colombia and Venezuela beneath the radar of current patrol systems

MONDAY

Young man fatally shot at gas station

A young man was shot and killed on Saturday night, May 3, at the Petrol Plus gas station on Bush Road, prompting a full investigation by detectives of St. Maarten Police Force KPSM. At approximately 9:45pm, Central Dispatch of KPSM received several reports of a shooting at the location. Patrols and ambulance personnel were dispatched immediately and discovered the victim on the ground with multiple gunshot wounds to various parts of his body. He was pronounced dead shortly after.

Testing solutions to curb armed violence

In response to the alarming rise in armed violence in Saint-Martin, Association Numérique et Innovation Sociale (ANIS) has launched an unprecedented response with the FABNUM Saint-Martin programme. FABNUM is a contraction of two words: Fabrication Numérique. This innovative project, supported by the Orange Foundation and run in partnership with the homeless shelter Le Manteau de Saint-Martin managed by Association Laïque pour l'Education, la Formation, la Prévention et l'Autonomie (ALEFPA) comes at a critical time when local authorities are stepping up efforts to curb increasingly organised crime.

Hydroponics pilot project The Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication (TEATT), with the support, of the Ministry of Education,

 Bit Productions had one of the largest troupes on the road during the 2025 Carnival Parades, winning the Best Adult category for the second year running. Photo by John Halley.

Culture, Youth and Sport (ECYS), has announced the successful completion of Phase 2 of the building phase of the hydroponics train-thetrainers pilot project in schools. Hydroponic systems have now been installed in nine schools across St. Maarten – seven primary schools and two secondary schools.

TUESDAY

Shooting in Pic Paradis home

The Fire Brigade (sapeurspompiers) responded to a shooting at a house on the lower part of the Pic Paradis road, below the entrance to Loterie Farm at a little after 4:00am Monday. On arrival the pompiers found the husband had bullet wounds to his thigh and abdomen. His situation was classified as an "absolute emergency". The wife had a suture wound to the jaw, classified as a "relative emergency". According to the pompiers, the couple were aged in their 50s. They were transported to hospital immediately in a medical convoy.

It's OK Not 2 B OK: theme

Minister of Public Health, Social Development and Labor VSA Richinel Brug reaffirmed his commitment to promoting mental health and emotional well-being across all sectors of society as Mental Health Awareness Month is being celebrated this month. Brug said in a press release that he joins others locally and globally in recognising Mental Health Awareness Month. "As we move forward, in the coming months the Ministry will sharpen its focus on youth, parents, and teachers," Brug said. To mark this year's Mental Health Awareness Month, the Ministry has adopted the theme "It's OK Not 2 B OK." "This theme is both a reminder and a reassurance – mental health struggles are real, and seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness," it said.

Tenn shot by police aquitted in robberv case

The Court of First Instance has acquitted a nineteenyear-old man of being the getaway driver in the armed robbery of a Chinese supermarket on September 16, 2024. The teenager denied any involvement in the night-time attack during his trial on April 24. He told the court that he had been getting a lift to Simpson Bay with an acquaintance he only knew as "Jack Boy". He said the man suddenly wanted to stop at the Welfare Road supermarket and he claimed he had had no idea the man was planning to commit a robbery with an alarm pistol.

Firearm amnesty extended to May 16

St . Maarten Police Force KPSM and the Prosecutor's Office have extended the "Stop, Drop, and GO" firearm amnesty campaign until Friday, May 16, 2025, in a continued effort to curb gun violence and remove illegal firearms from the streets. Originally scheduled to conclude on May 7, the programme now allows additional time for citizens to surrender firearms safely and anonymously. Drop-offs can be made on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays between 9:00am and 12:00pm at the Opal Building on Union Road, Cole Bay.

WEDNESDAY

Joint Court ended 2024 with budget deficit The Joint Court of Justice overspent its budget by more than Cg. 1.15 million in

2024, according to the court's annual report published on Tuesday. This comes on top of a Cg. 971,000 deficit in 2023, pushing the total loss over the past two years to a little more than Cg. 2.13 million. The Joint Court - the shared court system for all six Dutch Caribbean islands - covered the consecutive shortfalls from its reserves, which have now decreased to Cg. 1.38 million and are under "severe pressure," it was stated in the 57-page report.

THURSDAY

Mental health cases

for minors spike Minister of Public Health. Social Development and Labor VSA Richinel Brug has raised the alarm over a sharp rise in mental health cases among children ages 15 years and under, revealing a 159% increase in treated patients between 2021 and 2024. "I would like to draw ... attention to the fact that there has been a 159% increase in the number of treated patients in this group between 2021 and 2024," Brug told Parliament on Wednesday, highlighting the need for urgent focus on youth mental health. The figures show that 51 persons under age 15 were treated in 2021, 102 treated in 2022, 108 in 2023 and 132 in 2024.

Tackling hands

validation to SOAB Minister of Justice Nathalie Tackling has announced a significant shift in the handling of the long-delayed placement process for justice workers, stating that independent governthe ment audit bureau, Stichting Overheidsaccountantsbureau (SOAB), will now oversee the validation process. The move aims to ensure objectivity, restore trust in the system, and alleviate the strain on the Ministry of Justice, which currently lacks sufficient financial controllers.

First emergency alert system

Prime Minister Dr. Luc Mercelina has signed an agreement to implement St. Maarten's first Cell Broadcast System (CBS), a critical step in enhancing public safety and disaster preparedness infrastructure. The agreement, formalised through a memorandum of understanding (MOU), was signed between the Government of St. Maarten, Bureau Telecommunications and Post St. Maarten (BTP), Radcomm Corporation NV (Flow), and TelEm Group of Companies. The initiative is funded by the World Bank-managed Trust Fund under the Emergency Recovery Project (ERP-1) and is coordinated by National Recovery Program Bureau (NRPB).

VROMI, NRBP, GEBE, sign deal

The National Recovery Program Bureau (NRPB) and NV GEBE have signed a US \$5.1 million agreement to begin underground placement of mid-voltage electrical cables and potable water pipes in four areas: Cole Bay, South Reward, Pointe Blanche, and parts of A.Th. Illidge Road. The works fall under the Emergency Recovery Project (ERP1), which will expand the island's underground utility network and reduce vulnerability to

Sergio Blomont SVOBE's new Education Director

extreme weather events

Foundation for Secondary Education SVOBE has appointed Sergio Blomont as its new Education Director, effective May 1, 2025. In his new role, Blomont will be responsible for the overall educational direction and daily operations of Milton Peters College (MPC) and Sundial School.

8% rise in court filings

A total of 3,621 legal cases were filed at St. Maarten's Court of First Instance in 2024, an increase of 280 compared to the previous year, according to the Joint Court of Justice's annual report published on Tuesday. Exactly 1,145 of these were civil lawsuits and 243 were administrative and tax cases. Criminal cases accounted for another 2,233.

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FRIDAY/ SATURDAY

The Collectivité, Saint-Martin Tourism Office and the Chamber of Commerce CCISM announced that Saint Martin is taking part in the Paris Fair at Paris Expo from April 30 to May 11. This not-tobe-missed annual event, which attracts more than 400,000 visitors every year, is an exceptional opportunity to showcase the know-how, local products and entrepreneurial spirit of Saint-Martin, showcasing original craft creations, local flavours, local brands, and innovative services.

Five labour stalwarts were honoured for their impact and dedication to workers rights in St Maarten during the annual Labour Day ceremony, held at the Government Building on May Dignitaries included Labour Minister Richinel Brug, Governor Ajamu Baly, Prime Minister Dr. Luc Mercelina, and representatives from various labour unions. Recognised for their contributions included Ludson Evers of the St Maarten Communications Union (SMCU); Melissa Fleming of the Windward Islands Teachers Union (WITU); Reignald Bakari Arrindell of the Windward Islands Civil Servants Union/Private Sector Union (WICSU-PSU); Marguerite Priest of the Windward Islands Health Care Union Association (WIHCUA) and Rogerrel Maurica of the ABVO-St Maarten police union, who was not present at the event.

MONDAY

The Social Economic Council submitted its advice on the proposed Visitor's Tax to Minister of Labor Richinel Brug on April 23. Copies of the advice were also sent to Ministers Marinka Gumbs and Grisha Heyliger-Marten. The advice follows the review of two national draft ordinances submitted to SER, which aim to establish a legal framework for the introduction of a Visitor's Tax and to regulate the allocation of the generated funds. The legislation is designed to enhance the preparedness and resilience of St. Maarten's public health and tourism sectors in response to economic disruptions.

Motorworld has been awarded the "Progress of the Year" award by Changan Auto for the second year in a row. The 2025 "Progress of the Year" award was presented during the 2025 Changan Automobile Overseas Partner Conference held at the company's Global R&D Center in Chongqing, China.

By Merl Reagle

TUESDAY

The Central Bank of Curaçao and St. Maarten (CBCS), together with Kadaster St. Maarten, officially launched the Property Price Index (PPI) dashboard for St. Maarten on their respective websites. The user-friendly online tool tracks real estate price developments across the island, helping individuals, businesses, policymakers and researchers make informed decisions.

Car dealership Socié-té Général de Marque (SGDM), inaugurated its new showroom and aftersales department in Hope Hill, Hope Estate, on Friday evening, April 25, with a cocktail party for invited guests to present its new Chinese brands. SGDM, with headquarters in Guadeloupe since 1984, was previously located on Route de L'Esperance in the commercial zone close to Grand Case Airport in 2022, where it introduced brands such as Mercedes-Benz Cupra Seat Skoda Mitsubishi, Piaggio Commercial and Smart.

As part of its 65th anniversary celebrations, the Windward Islands Bank Ltd. (WIB) launched a new initiative designed to ignite the potential of St. Maarten's next generation of leaders and homeowners. The Young Professionals in Progress Seminar will take place on Saturday, June 7, 2025 at the JW Marriott St. Maarten Beach Resort, and promises an action packed day of insight, inspiration, and practical takeaways. The free, in-person seminar is designed to provide young professionals with the tools they need to move forward.

Dutch visitor arrivals to St. Maarten have surged over the past five years, according to statistics provided to "The Daily Herald" by the St. Maarten Tourist Bureau (STB) covering the period from 2020 to 2024. In 2020, during the COVID pandemic, 7,470 travellers from the Netherlands visited, a number that has steadily increased each year. Arrivals grew to 20,302 in 2021, then to 27,675 in 2022, and reached 29,502 in 2023. The sharpest rise came in 2024, with a total of 34,522 Dutch stay-over visitors recorded.

WEDNESDAY

Minister of TEATT Grisha HeyligerMarten has announced a package of measures aimed at protecting St. Maarten's food security and economic stability in light of global tariff tensions. The announcement was made during a meeting of Parliament's Permanent Committee of Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry (CA-FAH) on Monday. At the centre of the measures is the launch of an Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Agency (ALF) to support farmers, promote local production, and coordinate regional food security efforts through the Dutch Caribbean Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Agency (DC-ALFA).

The Temporary Work Organization (TWO) has approved a g 1.1 million subsidy for the 'Advanced MSME Education Programme,' designed to enhance entrepreneurship and build capacity for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in St. Maarten. The St. Maarten Entrepreneurship Development Center Foundation (SEDC) will oversee the programme, which will run for three years.

THURSDAY

Local contractors could soon have a better shot at securing reconstruction projects via the National Recovery Program Bureau (NRPB), following recent changes to World Bank procurement regulations. Prime Minister Dr. Luc Mercelina said talks were held with the World Bank about the matter and with the retraction of the original contractor selected for the reconstruction of the Charles Leopold Bell School, St. Marie Laurence School and the Library, coupled with the adjustment of the procurement rules, local contractors have a better shot at these projects.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE Homophone Hospital ...Don't worry—it doesn't sound serious

This puzzle is part of Merl's best of series

Thi	s puzzle is part of Mer	l's be	est-of series					0	Gift g	ivers	s! Fo	r info	o on
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Gift givers! For info on Merl's books, visit www.sundaycrosswords.com. 117 Skilled 126 Break off 118 Tax 127 Some ratings 128 Toolshed tool 119 Actor Richard 120 "____ digress" 121 Examples 124 Fond du