

Salty Dawg Couple Missing Aboard Their Boat in Grenada

Thursday, February 22, 2024 03:40 PM

On Wednesday, February 21, the Salty Dawg Sailing Association Executive Director Tatja Hopman was alerted by a cruising skipper that a member's yacht, Simplicity, was anchored and abandoned off a beach on the south coast of the Caribbean island of St. Vincent.

The good Samaritan had boarded the boat and noted that the owners, Ralph Hendry and Kathy Brandel, were not onboard and found evidence of apparent violence. Contact information for the SDSA was posted and the skipper contacted the Association.

The good Samaritan contacted the St. Vincent coast guard alerting them of the situation; they in turn notified the local police. The Coast Guard took possession of Simplicity and the St. Vincent police are currently investigating with the U.S Embassy and the Grenada police department.

Kathy Brandel and Ralph Hendry are veteran cruisers and long-time members of the Salty Dawg Sailing Association from its earliest days. Warm hearted and capable, they both contributed to building the SDSA and Kathy sat on the association's board for two years.

Kathy and Ralph had sailed Simplicity in the 2023 Caribbean Rally from Hampton, VA to Antigua and were spending the winter cruising the Eastern Caribbean. The SDSA has a live member's tracking map where boats can be followed as they cruise and Simplicity's track shows that Kathy and Ralph were anchored in Grenada and then the boat moved directly to its last anchorage off St. Vincent.

Shortly after the incident was reported to police, news came out that three dangerous inmates had escaped from a Grenada prison and were at large. It is speculated that the escapees boarded Simplicity.

Wednesday afternoon, St. Vincent police reported that the three suspects had been detained.

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Bob Osborn, SDSA President, speaking for the whole Salty Dawg family, said, “This is a very upsetting event and details are still unconfirmed by the authorities, but this does appear to be a tragic event – our hopes and prayers are with Ralph and Kathy and the family who love them. I have spoken to the families and have offered our deepest condolences and our assistance in any way possible. In all my years of cruising the Caribbean, I have never heard of anything like this.”

For more information, please email info@saltydawgsailing.org