



The Toledo Howler

Newspaper of the Toledo Chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association

AUTUMN/WINTER—2013

YEAR 7, ISSUE 1

FREE

Coastal Water Taxi Planned

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

New Boat Service	1
Reef CI Celebrates Ten Years	1
BTIA Toledo Members List	2
Maroon Creole Drum School	3
Calendar of Events	4
TIDE Fish Fest	4
Reef Conservation International	5
PG Town Map	6
Birding with Lee Jones	7
Christmas Bird Count	7
Barranco the Dugu Capital	9
Battle of the Drums preview	9
Transport Schedules	10–11
Chocolate Festival Cooking Competition	13
ProWorld Belize	15
Word on the Street	16
Arzu Mountain Spirit Medicinal Plants	17
Southern Voices: Dr Joseph Palacio	18
Map of Toledo District	20

As Toledo Tourism continues to grow so does the number of registered tour guides in the District and the Toledo Tour Guide Association now has over 50 members. The Association undertakes training and registration of tour guides and conducts workshops to allow for continuous professional development and further specialist training. The Association also seeks and develops new opportunities for their guides and for the expansion of the Toledo Tourism product.

One project currently in the pipeline is the introduction of a weekly boat service to Punta Negra and Monkey River village and a second weekly service to Barranco – three villages which are currently more difficult to access.

Punta Negra is a small coastal community with beautiful beaches and cool Caribbean breezes, nestled between two protected areas - the Port of Honduras Marine Reserve to the front and Payne's Creek National Park to the rear. It's a perfect destination to enjoy a day on the beach, combined with a little hand-fishing and preparing one of the freshest lunches you could hope to taste.

Monkey River village is the northernmost village in Toledo, a small Creole



village situated on the southern bank of the mouth of the Monkey River. Many of the villagers are fishermen but they are also well-known for their tour guides who take visitors on boat tours on the Monkey River. Trips wind through mangrove channels and broadleaf forests where visitors can see the troops of Howler Monkeys that live in the area, as well as iguanas, crocodiles and many different bird species in the riverine forests.

Conversely, Barranco is the southernmost village in Toledo and famed for its Garifuna culture. A new weekly boat service would allow for visitors to take cultural tours, learning more about the Garifuna way of life including preparing cassava bread and hudut – fish cooked with coconut and served with mashed plantains. The Tour Guide Association hopes to launch this new service early in 2014 and you can be sure we will be shouting about their progress with this great new initiative.

Reef CI Celebrating 10 Years of Operation with Recognition

As we go to press, we have just learned that Reef CI has been shortlisted for the World Responsible Tourism Awards for the “Best Responsible Wildlife Experiences” category.

The Awards were founded in 2004 to recognise the “best of the best in responsible tourism – tourism that creates better places to live in and visit” and they are designed to recognise those ventures around the world that make positive contributions to nature and heritage conservation and to the economies of local communities.

The awards are unique in that organisations are initially nominated by

their guests and then a rigorous judging process is undertaken by a panel formed by some of the leading experts on responsible tourism and from the tourism industry.

The judges’ decision will be announced on 6th November at the World Travel Market in London, one of the world’s largest travel shows, on World Responsible Tourism Day. We wish ReefCI every success in the awards and - having reached this stage of the competition - they are already winners of well-deserved international recognition for their work.



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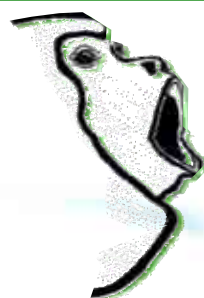
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Distribution points include:

- ♦ Tourism Information Centres throughout Belize
- ♦ Tropic Air and Maya Island Air terminals
- ♦ BTIA Toledo members
- ♦ Requena's Charters, Puerto Barrios
- ♦ Major gas stations

As well as a wide online presence in electronic format

Please contact the Toledo Howler team at 722-2531 if you would like to become a distributor for the voice of tourism development in Belize's deep south!





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The Lodge at Big Falls	Rob Hirons	732-4444 /671-6677	info@thelodgeatbigfalls.com
Tide Tours	Delonie Forman	722-2129	info@tidetours.org
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Warasa Garifuna Drumming School	Ruth & Ronald McDonald	632-7701	warasadrumschool@gmail.com
Yum Kax Women's Group	Concepciona Coc	662-8539/636-9586	cocconcepciona@yahoo.com



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Maroon Creole Drum School



We welcome the Maroon Creole Drum School as a new member of the Toledo BTIA. Based in Punta Gorda, the school is owned and run by Emmeth Young. Emmeth comes from Gales Point Manatee, a narrow peninsula in the Southern Lagoon between Dangriga and Belize City. Emmeth says this is the only community of Maroon Creole in Belize, a group who trace their origins back to the Ebo tribe in Nigeria. The Maroon Creole started as an isolated group of runaway slaves, ‘marooned’ in various parts of the Caribbean.

The Maroon Creole share some drumming



rhythms with other Caribbean and African cultures but also have unique sounds and drums designs. The different types of drums have names like jun-jun, kinkinni, sangba, sambai and djembe. The sambai drum is unique to the Gales Point community. On the other hand, the djembe is one of the most popular styles of hand drum played around



the world because of its versatility and powerful sound. Emmeth makes and sells all types of traditional drums, both to interested beginners and professional musicians. He uses a variety of tropical hardwoods for the bases. Goat skin is pre-

ferred for the head of the djembe; the sambai drum from Gales Point traditionally has a deerskin head.

Emmeth started his drum school in Gales Point in 1997 and moved it to Punta Gorda two and a half years ago. He has been drumming since the age of eight, following a family tradition since both grandfathers also played. Emmeth has made drums and taught for over twenty-five years .

Those of you who have been to P.G. may know the Driftwood Café on Front Street, owned by Emmeth and his wife Jill. There are drums for sale along with other colorful crafts and paintings. Jill also offers tasty hot and cold coffee drinks and home-made meals.

The drum school itself is located along Joe Taylor Creek, a half mile inland from the sea in a jungle setting. Here, Emmeth gives lessons and instructions in drum making while Jill rustles up tasty Creole meals for the students. Jill also offers traditional Creole cooking lessons for interested visi-

tors. The visit also includes a presentation about Creole culture, its mythology and medicinal plants. Emmeth is what’s known as a ‘griot’ or oral historian, a skill passed on from his father. Students will learn about the unique Sambai rhythm, which traditionally accompanies a fertility dance around the time of

the full moon. Apparently, a couple who participated in the Sambai dance at Emmeth’s school, returned home to the United States to find that they had conceived a child after years of trying!

Emmeth has always loved teaching children and nearly five years ago, started a mentoring program called Drums Not Guns. He wanted to teach young

people about drumming to give them an alternative to joining gangs. He says the drumming gives youths a sense of purpose and teaches discipline and focus. They can be proud of their accomplishments without having to prove themselves with a gun on the streets of Belize City.

Emmeth and Jill were awarded a small grant in 2012 by the Sustainable Tourism Program of the BTB which has allowed them to develop and improve the drumming school facilities. They now have a solar panel, composting latrine, traditional



fire hearth kitchen, dining room, palapa and stage. The grounds also include outdoor art installations, illustrating the history and beliefs of Belize - from mythical creatures like Ixtabai to Mayan artifacts and Creole cultural scenes. Jill is the resident artist. Emmeth and his school are endorsed by the National Kriol Council of Belize as an authentic Kriol (or Creole) experience. The Maroon Creole Drum School is a magical place to spend a few hours immersed in this fascinating culture.



Preparing tasty Creole food on the fire hearth

For more information and to book a visit to the drum school:

Phone: 668-7733 or 632-7841

Email: methosdrums@hotmail.com or pricklypeartat2@hotmail.com

Website: www.marooncreoledrumschool.com

Facebook page: Maroon Creole Drum School

Or just drop by the Driftwood Café if you’re already in PG and talk to Jill. Opening hours are: 8am—4pm, Sunday through Friday.

Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Venue/Time	Other Info
11 October	TIDE Fish Festival—Seafood Gala	Father Ring Parish Hall (sea front entrance)	Tide Tours - info@tidetours.org or call 722-2129
12 October	TIDE Fish Festival—Youth Conservation Competition	Father Ring Parish Hall	Tide Tours - info@tidetours.org or call 722-2129
13 October	TIDE Fish Festival—Finale	TIDE Headquarters, Cattle Landing Village	Tide Tours - info@tidetours.org or call 722-2129
14 October	Bank Holiday - Pan American Day		
25 October	Organic Fair Symposium	Punta Gorda Town Council Conference Room 09:00	Free
26 October	Organic Fair	Central Park, Punta Gorda Town 09:00	Free
15 November	Battle of the Drums Food and Fete	Social Security Building 20:00-01:00	
16 November	Battle of the Drums	Sports Complex, Punta Gorda Town, 19:30	Beya Suites - 722-2188
17 November	Paranda Top 10: live radio broadcast on Love FM focusing on the distinctive Paranda sound. Music performed by local PG Paranderos.	Beya Suites	Beya Suites - 722-2188
18 November	Live Garifuna Drumming	Central Park 22:00-04:00	
19 November	Yurumein—Garifuna Settlement Re-enactment followed by parade through PG (Bank Holiday)	PG Cooperative Wharf 06:30	
25 December	Bank Holiday - Christmas Day		
26 December	Bank Holiday - Boxing Day		
1 January	Bank Holiday - New Year's		
4 January	Christmas Bird Count	Various areas in Toledo. Pre-count meeting on 3rd January, held 7pm at Nature’s Way Guesthouse	bzbirdman@gmail.com
23— 25 May	Chocolate Festival of Belize	Punta Gorda and Toledo District	Www.chocolatefestivalofbelize.com

TIDE Fish Festival - 11th to 13th October 2013

Belize is developing a reputation for its range of vibrant festivals and celebrations, and the TIDE Fish Festival was one of the first festivals to be established in Belize. While other districts may have their lobsterfest and fishing competitions, TIDE’s fish fest is a celebration of all things marine, and is the only festival to be staged by a conservation NGO.

Toledo is famed for its world-class marine resources – not only a rich source of food for the local fishermen, but more recently a source of alternative livelihoods, as more fishermen train as fly-fishing guides for the visitors who come here to try their hand at the fabled grand-slam catch of tarpon, permit, and snook.

TIDE – the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment – is very conscious of the need to balance protection of the environment with sustainable practices, and this year’s Festival theme is “Sustainable Fishing, Secure Livelihoods” which flows throughout the weekend events.

Events kick-off on Friday 11th October with the Seafood Gala, offering a selection of seafood canapés and finger food, specially themed cocktails, and live music from some of Toledo’s finest talent. TIDE believes investment in education is key to fostering a sense of appreciation and understanding of our natural resources, and their Youth Conservation Competition on Saturday 12th October sees talented students competing for a number of tertiary level scholarships. The Sunday finale is held in the TIDE grounds where the winners of the early morning fishing competition will be announced, and a whole range of fun-filled activities will be on offer, from traditional coconut husking and cast net throwing, to volleyball and kayak competitions and cultural entertainment.

For more details, please visit the www.TIDEbelize.org website, the TIDE Fish Festival facebook page, or email info@TIDEtours.org
Tickets for the Seafood Gala are BZ\$40 in advance from TIDE, or BZ\$50 at the door subject to space available.



Reef Conservation International



Reef Conservation International was founded by Polly Wood ten years ago when she left her corporate life in Britain to pursue her passion for diving and marine conservation.

A diving trip to Roatan in 1999 first sparked Polly’s interest in marine conservation but she quickly found that there were few short-term opportunities. Most conservation projects and placements were for gap-year students or other longer-term commitments.

Realising that there were others who felt as she did and who could help contribute meaningful data to scientists, she started to explore the idea of a marine conservation organisation which could offer opportunities to a much wider group of people. Polly told us, “I wanted to create something unique, where anyone of any age could come and help contribute towards data collection, whether it was for one week or three months and for any level of diving experience, from beginners to experts.” She attended numerous seminars on citizen science and marine conservation, explored various locations, talked to scientists and developed her business plan.

One of the major factors was financial sustainability and, having looked at operations that relied on funding, she wanted to use what was at that time a fairly new concept, the voluntourism approach. Many scientists rely on a limited pool of funding and grants and their ability to collect data is often limited to short visits. With ReefCI being funded on a non-profit basis by the volunteers themselves they are able to operate year-round and conduct regular monitoring to

contribute meaningful data to the scientific community without taking funds away from existing studies.

ReefCI has a number of programs, including the Queen Conch study, lobster surveys and turtle nesting monitoring. They have also developed their own ReefCI Check, a coral reef monitoring protocol focussing on the unique marine ecosystem of Southern Belize. This includes the monitoring of indicator species and the mapping of the condition of the reef.

But, perhaps one of the biggest draws is Polly’s growing reputation as something of a whale shark “whisperer”. Whale sharks are the largest fish in the ocean (up to 46 feet long and weighing up to 15 tons for those of you interested in statistics) and the Belize Barrier Reef attracts one of the largest concentrations of whale sharks in the world. The Sapodilla Cayes lie along one of their migration routes, meaning that they are often seen for up to nine months of the year. Polly is modest about her ability and says they are easy to spot if you know the signs. These include boobies and terns feeding on the small fry in the water which are aided by the usually calm conditions at the Sapodillas. She also says that her secret weapon is Roland, her husband who grew up fishing the southern Belize waters and “has eyes like a hawk”. ReefCI provides all whale shark data to the Belize Fisheries Department. Guests also feed data into the Project AWARE Whale Shark Project, reporting whale shark sightings and providing pictures for a public photo identification database – whale sharks each have a unique pattern on their left-hand side about the pectoral fin akin to a human fingerprint.

The Sapodilla range consists of eight cayes forming a hook shape at the southernmost end of the Belize. Hunting Caye – reputed to have the

most beautiful beach in Belize – is a base for the Fisheries Department and Coastguard and also has an immigration post. Other cayes include Nicholas Caye, the Garbutt family’s Lime Caye, Franks Caye and Tom Owen’s Caye where ReefCI is based. The cayes are right on the continental shelf so offer amazing wall dives with sheer drops and other dives with a gradual slope. These provide an amazingly varied environment with sponges and corals, pelagic fish, rays, turtles and sharks. ReefCI has between 15 and 20 dive sites that they regularly visit. As well as finding new sites divers will revel in the fact that there are no other dive boats in the area.

Tom Owen’s Caye is many people’s idea of a perfect castaway island and is great for novice divers offering diving from the shore, warm water with few if any currents and good visibility. Polly is a certified dive instructor, having trained over 300 divers and more than 5000 dives under her belt. The island is an acre of sand and palm trees with eleven guest rooms in cabanas and a main building which also serves as the restau-



rant, training centre and meeting place. ReefCI offers diving conservation trips staying on Tom Owen’s Caye from Monday to Friday, including all diving (typically two to four dives a day), diving equipment, training in survey techniques and methodology, accommodation and meals. For more information, visit www.reefci.com and www.facebook.com/reefci

ReefCI’s Lionfish programme

Lionfish are indigenous in the Indio pacific oceans and the Red sea. In their natural habitat they are not considered a threat, but in the Atlantic Caribbean belt they have no natural predators and can consume huge quantities of fish and crustaceans that are key to our marine environment. One lionfish was observed eating more than twenty fish in half an hour.

Lionfish were first seen in southern Belize in 2009 and are potentially the most destructive threat to the Sapodillas. They are now seen on almost every dive at every depth. Lionfish reach sexual maturity at just one year old and females release up to 20,000 eggs every four days and they can live up to fifteen years. On top of that, they have developed strong survival techniques, able to go without food for three months and yet only lose 10% of body mass. ReefCI has observed their ability to camouflage themselves according to



their environment. It is easy to see why some describe them as the cockroach of the ocean. Polly is the Belize record holder for spearing the largest lionfish, a whopping 44 cm – only 3 cm short of the largest recorded lionfish speared in

Florida. ReefCI’s lionfish programme removes many lionfish each week – 263 in the first week of September - analysing and dissecting a proportion of them to provide data to the Belize Fisheries Department. They collaborate with EcoMar (www.ecomarbelize.org) and also offer training to dive shops and fishermen on how to safely spear, dissect and prepare the fish (they have toxins in their spines). Lionfish make for very tasty eating (see ReefCI’s lionfish ceviche recipe in the autumn 2012 edition of the Howler) and many local restaurants are now requesting lionfish for their menus – a tasty way to help save the Reef. ReefCI is also working with local artisans on a project to incorporate the use lionfish tails and fins spines in jewellery.

Sketch map of PG Town



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Joe Taylor Creek
Punta Gorda Town
Toledo District
Belize C. A.

Toledo “Big Day Birding”: Lee Jones

Victor Bonilla, Emmanuel Chan, Wilfred Mutrie and I were perched atop an old fire lookout tower deep within the rainforest at BFREE (Belize Foundation for Research and Environmental Education). It was 4:30 a.m. What had brought us to this remote perch a hundred feet above the forest floor at such an ungodly hour was our quest for a record. And money.

The record: to tally the largest number of birds recorded by one team of birders in one calendar day. This quest is known as a Big Day. The money: pledged donations to the Belize Raptor Research Institute, or BRRI. A Big Day that is also a fundraising event is called a Birdathon.

Here’s how it works. People pledge money, say \$1, in this case, to BRRI for each bird we are able to correctly identify by sight or sound during a 24-hour period. Our goal is 205 species, one more than the record set back in 1999 by the late Sam Tillett, Marcus England and myself. It is a fun way to raise money for a worthy cause.

By starting well before dawn, we were hoping to hear, or with a little luck, see the rare Great Potoo, a bird we had heard in this very spot the evening before. Alas, the bird did not cooperate, but we did hear Vermiculated Screech-Owl, Mottled Owl and a few other night birds before first light. We had planned our day carefully. We allowed ourselves four hours at BFREE, two hours for the 6-mile drive out through the pine savanna, one and



Mottled Owls

a half hours at Aqua Mar Shrimp Farm, an hour at Nim Li Punit and two hours in and around Punta Gorda. Factoring in driving time and short stops along the way, that should put us at the Dump, a low marshy area and former rice field, by 5 p.m. That would give us plenty of time at the end of the day to pick up the rails and other marsh birds that we would not get anywhere else. The day we had selected for our Big Day was 24th March 2013.

When we left BREE at 8:45, we had already logged an impressive 112 species. We were more than

half way to our goal with nearly ten hours of daylight left. But were already fifteen minutes behind schedule, thanks to a leisurely but delicious breakfast at the BFREE “café”.

We arrived at Aqua Mar Shrimp Farm at 10:40, cautiously optimistic for a record-setting day. But we had not done as well as expected along the road from BFREE back to the Southern Highway. By the time we reached the pines the temperature was already well into the 80s and bird activity had dropped precipitously. Nevertheless, we had 142 species when we reached the first pond at Aqua Mar. Because we would not have time to visit all seventy ponds, only a few of which would have the congregations of shorebirds, waders and waterfowl that we were looking for, we had scouted Aqua Mar the day before. We had tallied thirty-eight species, most of which were birds we were not likely to pick up anywhere else. If we were able to pick up just twenty-five new birds in the time we had allotted, we would be pushing 170 species, well on our way to a new record.

The first drying pond with suitable mudflats where we expected to see a mixed congregation of shorebirds was utterly devoid of birds. So was the second...and the third. But we still hadn’t reached the one pond that was loaded with birds the day before. Nevertheless, we were concerned. Where were all the Black-bellied Plovers? We had seen 250 yesterday. And the 500 coots we had counted yesterday? And the 110 Blue-winged Teal. So far we had recorded only a fraction of the coots and teal and *no* Black-bellied Plovers. We were anxiously awaiting the plethora of birds that would be feeding in the mud and shallow water in the large, drying pond that had been so fruitful less than 24 hours earlier. That would get us back on track.

As we topped the levee that gave us our first views of this pond, four sets of trained eyes peered eagerly across the large pond through four pairs of high-powered binoculars. No shorebirds. Only a couple of tern and a few Laughing Gulls. We had exhausted our search. There were no more ponds. We left Aqua Mar with only 18 new species, seven short of even our most modest goal. We had only 160 species and it was already half past noon. How would we possibly get 45 more species by day’s end? The temperature was now well into the 90s, record-breaking heat for this time of year—and it was going to get even hotter by the time we reached Nim



Boat-billed Heron

Li Punit.

Our new goal was simply to break the 200 barrier. We recorded a few new species at Nim Li Punit and elsewhere along the way. We did OK in P.G. but missed a few obvious ones. By the time we reached the Dump at 5:20, only 20 minutes behind schedule, we were still missing a few ubiquitous species like Groove-billed Ani, Great Blue Heron, Gray Hawk, Yellow-billed Cacique and—incredibly—Blue-black Grassquit, one of the most common birds in Belize. How was that possible? On the drive to the Dump from Cattle Landing I had come up with a quick count of 189 species while at the same time scanning the landscape for anis, Gray Hawk and a few other roadside species we still needed.

At the Dump we got our anis, a Gray Hawk, a Great Blue Heron, Yellow-billed Cacique and Blue-black Grassquit (whew!). At sunset, a Sharp-shinned Hawk flew over, easily our best bird of the day. It was a fitting end to a long hot day. But had we gotten the sixteen species needed to break the record? It was going to be close. I counted the list while the others held their collective breath...100, 150, 180, 200 and *I still hadn’t reached the last page*. I must have counted one page twice. ...205, a new record. ...210, 215....219. Impossible! I counted again. 219 again. We had *smashed* the old record.

A few days later, Victor discovered that we had failed to include the Philadelphia Vireo that he and Wilfred had seen close to dusk. We had already alerted our donors of the 219 total, so it was too late to add it to our fundraising total, but not too late to add it to our official Big Day total, which now stood at an even 220.

We could never have achieved this remarkable total without the incredible eyes and ears of Wilfred, Chan and Victor. Job well done guys! On to next year. 230? 235? We’ve already started planning.



Groove-billed Ani

Punta Gorda Christmas Bird Count - 4th

January 2014 **Everyone is welcome regardless of experience.**

The objective of the CBC is to count (by sight or sound) as many birds as possible in one calendar day within an area encompassed by a circle 15 miles in diameter. The results of this and more than 2,000 other CBCs are published annually by the National Audubon Society. The P.G. count circle includes all of Punta Gorda and extends north to Big Falls, east to the Rio Grande, west to Santa Anna and south to the Moho River. Each year anywhere from six to ten groups, depending on the turnout, are assigned specific areas to cover within this circle. Every team is led by at least one expert, so this is a great opportunity for those of you who are a little rusty, or perhaps just getting started in the world of birding, to learn from the experts. We meet every year at 7:00 p.m. the evening before the count at Nature’s Way Guest House to get acquainted, assign teams and figure out the transportation and other logistics. At the end of the count day around dusk we again congregate at Nature’s Way to tally our results. I look forward to seeing you on the count. Spouses, siblings, children and friends are also welcome, as long as they have an interest in birds and don’t mind getting their feet wet. If you have any questions, you can e-mail me at bzbirdman@gmail.com.

BTIA Toledo and the Toledo Howler

What is BTIA?

Vision

As the leading national private sector tourism association, BTIA represents a unified voice which advocates for issues that benefit its members, influences tourism policy, legislation and marketing for the sustainable development of the industry and improved quality of the visitor experience.

Mission

To develop a robust and professional membership association which promotes, advocates and represents the interests of its members for the benefit and sustainable development of the tourism Industry.

Together we're stronger! Become a part of BTIA and make a practical contribution to the economic development of Toledo District and benefit from our promotional work. We meet monthly at the Tourism information Centre on Front Street.

How Do I Join BTIA?

Visit www.btia.org to read about BTIA and all

the membership benefits and to download an application form. Complete the form and hand it in at the Tourism Information Center on Front St.

What does BTIA do in Toledo?

BTIA manages the Tourism Information Centre on Front Street and ensures that all our visitors have up to date and accurate information about accommodation, restaurants, transport and activities within Toledo.

BTIA produces The Toledo Howler for a national and international audience showcasing our cultures and opportunities for nature and adventure travel in Toledo. It tells stories to attract visitors from within Belize and abroad and is distributed nationally in hard copy and overseas in electronic copy. If you would like to regularly receive an electronic copy then send an e-mail to Dilma Cano at the e-mail address below.

BTIA organizes the annual Chocolate Festival of Belize in partnership with the Toledo Cacao Growers' Association and other stakeholders.

nature, adventure, culture!



BTIA Toledo officers

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Barranco – the Dügü Capital

There probably has not been as much public attention in Belize on the dügü ceremony as within the past two weeks, thanks to the statement said by a high level manager within the Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) about the “dügü dance”. What was said at a joint press conference between the Government of Belize and NCL about the Memorandum of Understanding on the proposed investment at Harvest Caye opened the floodgates for opinions on the dügü ceremony and its potential insertion into large scale cruise tourism.

This certainly was not the scenario in southern Belize when the Cayetano twins – Sebastian and Fabian – and their siblings decided to build a dabuyaba, which they called the Marcelo Cayetano Complex a short distance from the cliff in the village of Barranco in 1996. Most of the materials came from the surrounding bush.

The main circumstances leading to the construction were not unusual compared to the preparations for other dügüs in Garifuna communities. The family members had been having recurring bad experiences, such as illnesses and car accidents. The spirits of the ancestors appeared in dreams stating that they wanted a celebration. Some spelled out the details of what they expected at the feast. Buyeis were consulted and through their divination confirmed that indeed a dügü lasting a few days was needed by given ancestors. But where would this take place for there was no dabuyaba in the village at that time. The spirits directed that a new one should be built. Hence the beginning of the Marcelo Cayetano Complex (MCC)!

As the largest, best built and best appointed dabuyaba in Belize, the MCC attracted much attention from within Belize and neighbouring Guatemala. After 1996, dügüs have been held there almost every year usually between June and late August, a period which has now been dubbed as the yearly village dügü season. Interestingly, the ceremonies are getting bigger from the sheer numbers of participants. Nobody keeps an exact count but in what was certainly one of the largest, taking place this year, villagers estimated that between 300 to 400 persons came, certainly quadrupling our normal population of 100. At least for its small population Barranco can boast of itself as the Dügü Capital of Belize.

Why is this so? Because dugus are a function of history, the reason has to be found in the life pattern of our ancestors, who had lived in Barranco three and more generations ago. Many of those honoured had lived in Barranco, even if their descendants had migrated afterwards. Our research has shown that between the 1860s and the early 1900s several men and women had moved to the village. The in-migration was again repeated during the 1930s pulled by the banana boom. Unlike other Garifuna communities, Barranco was not first settled on a Carib Reserve or immediately adjoining large private



landholdings, such as estates near New Town, the precursor of Hopkins. Barranco was first settled, according to accounts by the British themselves, on lands not owned or used by them. Land availability, therefore, became a beacon attracting many to the village from Guatemala and Honduras as well as further north in Belize.

Land is a major resource needed for a successful dügü to produce cassava bread, pigs, chickens, leaves, dyes and other accessories that are needed. Although most of these prerequisites have to be brought into the village at this time, it was the reality of a previous era of abundance that continues to remain in the memory of the ancestors being honoured.

Another main attraction of the village to the living as well as the spirits of our ancestors is the small face-to-face nature of the village setting. Having driven into the village, one can leave one’s vehicle and walk around, going house to house chatting with the residents as they sit by their verandahs. In other words, the overall ecosystem that lends itself for the dügü extends from the available land together with its bounty to the small rural village setting. A dügü in the village absorbs the attention of everyone, resident and visitor alike.

This brings us back to the debacle of the NCL allusion to the “dügü dance” they would like to feature at their property at Harvest Caye. The historicity embedded into the MCC and the intimacy of the small rural community cannot be repeated within the artificiality that NCL will re-construct at Harvest Caye.

On the other hand, the NCL incident has opened

the larger debate on the role of culture within large scale tourism, which is taking place all over the world, especially where indigenous peoples are found. In the case of the Garifuna we have a self-conscious culture that is diverse, vibrant and photogenic, which we have been sharing with others, including visitors to our shores. But as a nation we have the capacity to define what we will share with what visitors. The press release from the office of the National Garifuna Council President said it quite clearly, “The dügü is a sacred ceremony and is not performed as entertainment for any audience.”

Indeed, it was the combined work of many of us that led to the UNESCO 2001 Proclamation of Garifuna language, dance and music as masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity. In accepting the Proclamation the government of Belize re-affirmed its commitment to maintain the dignity and integrity of Garifuna culture. Fortunately, the Garifuna have not waited for the government but have gone ahead to articulate their position.

To a large extent the basis for this has been the dedication of our people in communities, such as Barranco, that has given all of us the collective strength to uphold the dügü as the most sacred component of our spirituality. The MCC and other dabuyaba are performing a function extending far beyond our communities; and reaching out to all indigenous peoples and similarly marginalized peoples wherever they are.

Contributed by Dr. Joseph Palacio

The Battle of the Drums! 15th and 16th November

This drumming competition and show allows groups to compete and display their musical art-istry in playing five different categories of Garifuna drumming. The first Battle of the Drums was held in Punta Gorda Town on November 17, 2006 and was well received by spectators from home and abroad. In 2007, there was an even larger audi-ence and greater enthusiasm. In 2008 the event evolved into an international drumming competi-tion and show involving drumming groups from various parts of Belize as well as from neighbour-ing Guatemala and Honduras. This competition

and show has become a major local and interna-tional tourist attraction and a catalyst for signifi-cant economic activity in the Punta Gorda Area during the period when it is hosted.

Food and Fete is the opening night of the Battle of the Drums weekend festivities, held on Friday, November 15, 2013 from 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

This event brings people together from all walks of life to socialize, network and enjoy an evening of good food and great Garifuna music. It will show-

case Garifuna Cuisine fused with contemporary cooking styles, dishes and menus prepared by ex-ecutive chefs from Belcampo Lodge of Punta Gorda.

It will also feature local and national Garifuna mu-sical performers performing great paranda and other Garifuna music. Performers will include Paul Nabor, Mario and the Umalali Group, Godfrey Sho and the Culture Dynamics and Lascelle Martinez and the PG Vibes.

TOLEDO VILLAGE BUSES

<i>Service</i>	<i>Depart PG</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>Calling at...</i>	<i>Days</i>	<i>Return to PG</i>
Kan	11:30	Aguacate	Dump, Mafredi, Blue Creek	Mon to Sat	05:20
J ‘n’ L	12:00	Barranco	San Felipe <i>(for Ixcacao)</i> , Santa Ana, Midway	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	06:00
Garcia	11:00	Big Falls	Dump, Jacintoville,	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	08:00
Chub	11:30	Crique Sarco	San Felipe, Santa Ana, Midway, Conejo, Sunday Wood	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	05:15
Ack	12:00	Dolores	Dump, Mafredi, Jordon, Santa Teresa, Mabilha, San Lucas, Corazon Creek, Otoxha	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	03:00
Pop	10:30	Golden Stream	Dump, Big Falls, Indian Creek	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	06:45
Pop	13:00	Golden Stream	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee, Indian Creek <i>(for Nim Li Punit)</i>	Mon to Sat	07:30
Pop	17:00	Indian Creek	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee	Mon to Sat	12:00
Pop	21:00	Indian Creek	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee	Mon to Thurs	15:30
Bol	06:00	Jalacte	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz, Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo	Mon to Sun	05:00
Chunny	11:30	Jalacte	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz <i>(for Rio Blanco)</i> , Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo, Jalacte	Mon to Sat	03:00
Bol	16:00	Jalacte	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz <i>(for Rio Blanco)</i> , Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo, Jalacte	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	15:00
Shol	12:00	Laguna	Elridgeville	Wed/Fri/Sat	
Pop	11:30	Medina Bank	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee, Indian Creek <i>(for Nim Li Punit)</i>	Mon to Sat	05:30
Chunny	11:30	San Antonio	Dump, Mafredi	Mon to Sat	06:00
Coc	12:00	San Antonio	Dump, Mafredi	Mon to Sat	06:30
Coc	12:00	San Antonio	Dump, Mafredi	Mon to Sat	13:30
Teck	12:00	San Benito Poite	Dump, Mafredi, Blue Creek <i>(for Hokeb Ha)</i> , Santa Teresa	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	04:30
Sho	11:30	San Jose	Jacintoville, Dump, Mafredi, Crique Jute, Nah Lum Ca	Wed/Sat	04:00
Choc	12:00	San Jose	Dump, Mafredi, Crique Jute, Nah Lum Cah	Mon/Fri	05:00
Chen	11:30	San Vicente	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz <i>(for Rio Blanco)</i> , Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo, Jalacte	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	02:00
Chen	05:30	San Vicente	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz, Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo, Jalacte	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	14:00
Bobby	11:00	Santa Ana	San Felipe <i>(for Ixcacao)</i>	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	07:15
Cal	04:30	Silver Creek	Dump, San Pedro Columbia, San Miguel	Mon to Sat	13:00
Cal	11:00	Silver Creek	Dump, San Pedro Columbia <i>(for Lubaantun)</i> , San Miguel	Mon to Sat	06:00
Cukul	11:30	Silver Creek	Dump, San Pedro Columbia <i>(for Lubaantun)</i> , San Miguel	Mon to Sat	07:00
Cukul	16:00	Silver Creek	Dump, San Pedro Columbia, San Miguel	Mon to Sat	12:30
Cukul	21:00	Silver Creek	San Pedro Columbia, San Miguel	Mon to Thurs	16:00



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Flights							
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06:45	07:55	Maya Island Air	08:10	09:15	Maya Island Air		
06:30	07:30	Tropic Air	07:50	09:00	Tropic Air		
09:30	10:35	Maya Island Air	10:10	11:15	Maya Island Air		
09:20	10:20	Tropic Air	10:20	11:30	Tropic Air		
11:30	12:35	Maya Island Air	12:20	13:30	Tropic Air		
11:35	12:35	Tropic Air	14:20	15:30	Tropic Air		
13:35	14:35	Tropic Air	14:40	15:45	Maya Island Air		
16:00	17:05	Maya Island Air	16:40	17:45	Maya Island Air		
16:00	17:10	Tropic Air	16:40	17:40	Tropic Air		
James Bus Line Schedule							
Departs P.G.		Arrives Belize City		Departs Belize City		Arrives P.G.	
03:50		10:30		05:15 Express (except Sun)		10:30	
04:50		11:30		06:15		12:45	
05:50		12:30		07:15		13:45	
06:00 Express		10:45		08:15		14:45	
07:50		14:30		09:15		15:45	
09:50		16:30		10:15		16:45	
11:50		18:30		12:15		18:45	
13:50		20:30		13:45		19:45	
14:50		21:30		15:15		21:45	
15:50 (except Sat)		21:15		15:45 Express		20:30	
Boats to and from Puerto Barrios , Guatemala							
Service Provider		Dep Punta Gorda	Arrive Puerto Barrios		Depart Puerto Barrios		Arrive Punta Gorda
Requena’s Charter Service		09:30	10:30		14:00		15:00
Pichilingo		14:00	15:00		10:00		11:00
Marisol		16:00	17:00		13:00		15:00
Memo’s		13:00	14:00		15:00		16:00
Boats to Livingston depart on Tuesdays and Fridays at 10 a.m.							

BTIA Welcomes More New Members

Ixchel Women’s Group

The Ixchel Women’s Group in Indian Creek village is one of the longest established women’s groups in Toledo having been in operation for the past fifteen years. Its ten members from the community of Indian Creek make and sell crafts and show guests how they grind and make corn tortillas, extract raw sugar from the cane and other traditions of the Maya. We wrote about the Ixchel group in a previous issue of The Toledo Howler and now welcome them as one of the newest member of BTIA, working together to promote



the rich cultural diversity we offer visitors to the south.

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Chocolate Festival of Belize

Chocolate Cooking Competition

The following two recipes were entered into the chocolate cooking competition as part of the Taste of Toledo celebrations on Front Street in Punta Gorda on the Saturday of this year’s Chocolate Festival. We are pleased to reproduce them below for our readers with thanks to Katarina Polonio and Jill Burgess Young

Sweet Category

Dark Temptation Cake by Katarina Polonio

Ingredients

- Pre-baked brownies for center
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 ¾ cups of flour
- 1 cup cocoa powder
- 1 ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla essence
- 1 cup hot dark coffee

Method

1. Heat oven 350F. Grease and flour two 9-inch round pans or a 13”x9” baking pan
2. Stir together the sugar, flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl. Add the eggs, milk, oil and vanilla. Beat on a medium speed for 2 minutes. Stir in hot coffee. Pour the batter into the prepared pan.
3. Bake for 30-35 minutes for round pans and 35-40 for the 13”x9”pan or until toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.



- Cool for 10 minutes then remove from pans.
- Cool completely
- Then frost with your favorite frosting and garnish with cocoa nibs and chocolate bar chunks.
- The brownies that are baked into the center of the cake...
- 1 box of Hershey's brownie mix
- Mixed as said on the box
- Baked in a rectangle pan.
- Cut into 1 inch square bites.

Roll the baked square bites into a ball by using your hands. Wedge a chocolate bar chunk into the brownie bite. Then place them into the greased and floured pan before pouring in the cake mix.

Savoury Category

Chocolate Chili by Jill Burgess Young

Ingredients

- 2 medium onions
 - coconut oil
 - 3 tomatoes
 - 1 head of garlic
 - 3 quarts water
 - ½ cup chili powder
 - ¼ cup of cumin powder
 - 1 teaspoon black pepper
 - 1 teaspoon cinnamon powder
 - Ground chili pepper from PG Market
 - 1/8 cup of sugar
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 2-3 cups of black beans, boiled and pureed
 - 3 small cans tomato paste
 - ½ to 5/8 cup grated cacao beans
 - Plantain (optional)
1. Sauté the onions in a tablespoon of coconut oil and soften them. Add chopped tomatoes and chopped garlic, sauté. Add the water, chili powder, cumin, black pepper, cinnamon, big pinch of ground chili pepper, sugar and salt.

2. Simmer then add the black bean puree, tomato paste and grated cacao and stir until well mixed. Simmer slowly until it thickens.
- Note: Although it is nice and thickens it up a little, the tomato paste is optional and I sometimes omit it because it gives me heartburn! Highly recommend the beans pureed or whole and squished a bit, not only to thicken it but to add protein. The plantain is a texture substitute, not a protein substitute. The plantain will thicken the chili after simmering a few minutes.





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URVAN

ProWorld Belize

Exactly fifteen years ago, the idea of ProWorld started to ferment in Richard Webb’s mind, a born Peruvian. He met Nick Bryngelson while working at an NGO in the Sacred Valley, Peru. Both shared the same philosophy and ideas and started making plans to start ProPeru.

ProPeru’s goals were to help Peru with capacity building, co-create projects within the community and help the local economy, by having these interns stay and eat at local establishments. In 2000 ProPeru had their first group of students visit Cusco.

In 2003, Nick visited Belize and fell in love with the country. ProPeru was now called ProWorld and Belize was the second country where ProWorld visitors could come and learn about the Belizean people and its different cultures and at the same help with workshops and projects within the community. ProWorld’s first office was operated by Grey Powell in Hopkins village. Three years later it was moved to San Ignacio, a more central town and easier to access other areas of the country; ProWorld Belize had become very popular and it was a huge success. There was a need for expansion.

ProWorld has offices in over ten countries. Their philosophy is service learning or in other words visitors experience and learn about the community they are visiting and at the same time help via teaching and sharing in the same community. Visitors give something back to the communities where they stay. Internships offered by ProWorld are: Health, Education, NGO management, Media, Environment Conservation and Economic Development.

Nicole Andrewin, who now heads the office in Belize, first started to work at the San Ignacio office seven years ago. She saw potential in the Toledo district and three years ago, with the help of Cherri-Mae Avilez, the second office in Belize was opened in Punta Gorda.

The interns that ProWorld brings to Toledo stay with families or family run establishments and work in various projects and workshops around the district. ProWorld brings between 500 to 700 guests to Belize each year. The average intern stays for four weeks.



ProWorld guests building a clean burning stove with Sustainable Harvest International

Projects accomplished by ProWorld’s guests include a septic tank that was built this year for the Toledo Community College. Many health education fairs have been organized in Punta Gorda and surrounding villages focusing on balanced nutrition. Workshops in Health Education have also been delivered in a lot of schools. A library was established at St. Benedicts school in Indianville where the volunteers put up all the shelving and and organized and catalogued the books. At St. Peter Clavier School sheds and tables were constructed.

ProWorld has also assisted and worked with the PTA of Barranco village in rebuilding and re-thatching guest house in the village. Profits gained from this guest house goes towards the children’s education.

Other examples of community projects are: organizing workshops for Toledo Business Association. Building a biogas digester at Columbian River Co-op. Help construct Tumil Kin’s radio station and toilets. Proworld has also collaborated with Sustainable Harvest International in construction of solar latrines and clean burning stoves.

ProWorld is not only about bringing in tourism into Belize but also about empowering and inspiring Belizeans to appreciate their country and community.

As Nicole puts it, "Our Staff at ProWorld works for the community and participants coming from abroad to ensure that both share and learn from each other in a way that benefits everyone."

For more information about ProWorld please contact Nicole Andrewin at 610-1063 or email her at Nicole@proworldvolunteers.org



Canadian high school students digging massive hole for Biogas digester at the Columbia River Co-op

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Word on the Street: The Visitor’s Perspective

Kim and her husband Bob are from Missouri and first came to Belize in 1999 when they wanted to visit a country that was “warm, but not too developed or touristy”. Kim recalls that they got hooked on Belize and they’ve made several return visits since then, bringing with them a number of family members and friends on their various trips.

We tracked Kim down on her travels around the District to get a visitors’ perspective on Toledo.

What attracted you to Toledo?

My first visit south was in 2003 when I wanted to get "off the beaten path" and was interested in learning more about the various cultures. It seemed Toledo was the perfect place to do this and I love the cultural diversity that you find here.

How does Toledo compare with other places in Belize?

Geographically, it's similar to Cayo in terms of waterfalls, rivers and ruins but without the crowds and with the added bonus of the cayes. Toledo's various cultures are much more intact than elsewhere and you often get the feeling of witnessing something for the very first time. Finding a licensed guide in Toledo is more challenging than in other areas. I don't mean that to sound dismissive as Toledo has some truly exceptional guides but they don't advertise as heavily as some other areas in Belize which is why they're more challenging to find.

[Editor: Visitors are advised to book tours through one of the licensed tour operators, who are legally responsible for ensuring your guide has a valid license and that you are covered by public liability insurance in case of accident . See list of tour operators on Page 19]

How did you travel to Toledo? what was good and bad about the journey?

I've not made the whole journey by bus – I love bus travel in Belize, but I'm always keen to try and maximize our vacation time, so we've both flown and rented a vehicle on different occasions. Flying from Belize to PG is an experience – the views are wonderful and by the time you reach Placencia most of the passengers have de-planed and you can get acquainted with the few remaining travellers, which has led to some really great conversations, as well as tips on things to do. If you're in a group of four or more and share the

costs, renting a vehicle has its advantages and one of the biggest for me is the beautiful Hummingbird Highway, closely followed by stopping at Coleman’s Café for lunch. Having said that, the weather doesn’t always behave and although it seems pretty pointless driving along the most scenic highway in the country in the pouring rain, you can't see the hills and the knuckles on the steering wheel are white, it’s still worth taking that chance! (But do drive cautiously)

How long are you staying?

I've met lots of people staying only three or four days but, in my opinion, anything less than a week is barely worth it. It takes a day or two to become acclimated, a few more days to see the sights, then another day or two to let the relaxation sink in. Personally, the first two times I visited Toledo, I stayed longer than I'd originally planned.

What was the most surprising thing about your visit?

The newly paved road west of Dump heading into the Maya villages – it was quite startling to have a faster, smoother journey up to San Antonio and I can see that when it's finished it will rival the Hummingbird Highway for beautiful views. The other eye-opener was the lack of snakes on West Snake Caye!

What were the highlights of this trip?

My first successful visit to Uxbenka and Rio Blanco falls.

What did you like the least?

The temperature! We were surprised by a “cold front” and when jumping into a river after a day of hiking and visiting ruins doesn't sound the least bit appealing, you know it's cold!

Favourite food?

Seafood! It's so fresh and it's prepared in so many ways. But cohune cabbage comes a close second.

Reef or rainforest, cayes or culture?

I think more research is needed! Let's just say, you can do it all from here.

Favourite activities and tours?

Strange as it might sound, my favorite activity in Toledo is to listen. There are so many people with amazing stories (tour guides, care-takers, etc). My most memorable experience in Toledo was staying in San Miguel village, where we hiked to Tiger Cave and returned by a dug-out canoe. I know there have been changes in the

past ten years, but I'd love to try it again. Spending a day in Barranco is a favorite, too. The road can be rough, but it's worth the trip. The House of Culture holds a historical record of the Garinagu in Belize and Alvin who acted as our guide is a true gem. Be sure to try hudut and visit Andy Palacio’s grave.

Ya'axche's Ranger for a Day program isn't a tour, but it's a great activity. We accompanied a Ranger on his daily transect to document recent wildlife activity. As the Golden Stream Corridor Preserve isn't open for general tourism, we felt privileged to have been given a glimpse of the area and to have played a small part in its preservation.

Travel tips?

Be polite!! Ask your hotel staff, other visitors and tour guides about their favorite tours or any new tours available. If you pre-plan every day of your trip you may miss out on a once-in-a-lifetime experience. ALWAYS hire someone to guide you through the Maya sites; there's a huge difference between taking photos of a pile of rocks and learning about the site.

Will you be coming back?

There's a pretty good chance :)



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Check out this Comprehensive Online Directory of Business & Organizations for the Southern District of Toledo

www.facebook.com/dreamlightpuntaorda

Arzu Mountain Spirit: Natural Solutions for Low Libido

Many healing traditions interpret a low libido as a sign of declining health and not necessarily a sign of old age. The “loss of passion” condition is not exclusive to men, as it affects both men and women. It is called frigidity in women and impotence in men; both labels refer to the same low libido condition. Frigidity in women is a sexual unresponsiveness and inability to achieve orgasm during intercourse. Impotence in men is where you can perform sexually some of the time..., but not always, even when you have the best of intentions. Impotence is also recognized as a symptom of a medical condition called Erectile Dysfunction, or ED. We hear mostly about the male side because low sexual vitality and loss of libido is more noticeable in men. Men don’t have the benefit of being able to fake sexual performance; and when they can’t perform, they need help.

Traditional medicine balances the libido in the same manner regardless of gender. Nature does not discriminate. There are a variety of treatments for impotence available today; both natured and denatured. There are different non-invasive, drug free things people can do to enhance their libido. But few are exercising that option. Most people (mostly men) are using denatured pharmaceuticals such as Viagra, Cialis and Levitra to enhance their libido regardless of the risks involved.

Viagra is currently the most popular drug for impotence and the sexually active alike. Only qualified doctors can prescribe this drug and it sells at around \$10 per pill. Viagra takes anywhere from 30 minutes to over one hour to take effect and warns of adverse drug reactions which include: sneezing, dizziness, headaches, flushing, dyspepsia, photophobia, palpitations, priapism, heart attacks, strokes, and sudden death and there are more recent findings that link Viagra to blindness. These serious side effects can happen and have happened and there are many news stories about men who have fallen victim to these side effects.

Cialis is another drug that does the exact same thing as Viagra, even though they have different chemical structures. Cialis is five times stronger than Viagra. It can cost up to \$22 per pill and last over 36 hours (compared to Viagra which lasts 4 hours). It is called the "weekend pill" due to its long-lasting “benefit”. Some of its side effects include back pain, flushing, muscles aches, headaches, stuffy/runny nose and loss of vision.

Another impotence drug recently on the market is Levitra; very similar to Viagra and Cialis and does the exact same thing they do. Levitra effects last from 4-5 hours in total and takes more than 40 minutes to take effect. It has a more powerful effect than the other two only because the dosage is bigger. Levitra even has more side effects. In addition to causing nausea, abdominal pain, back pain, eye pain, rash, palpitation and heart attacks, Levitra has the added side effect of causing permanent penile tissue damage along with

permanent loss of potency.

There are alternative remedies for enhancing the libido made with natured ingredients that have similar effects as the chemical drugs, except they have no side effects. The benefits of these herbal alternatives are that: they are safe, cheaper to obtain, more readily available and there is no prescription or consultation fee required. Every country grows their native libido helper. Africa has their native Yohimbe, a hormone stimulant effective in the production of testosterone.



Strongback

It has been used in Africa for thousands of years to heal impotency and to strengthen sexual desire and vitality. North America has the mild aphrodisiac Damiana, an herb used to balance male hormones and treat impotence. It contains properties to stimulate the male hormone testosterone and is used for the female reproductive organs and aids to energize and stop frigidity. And Belize has the “Strongback”, aka Amor Seco. The name says it all.

Strongback has been used by traditional healers as a tea to calm people with edgy nerves (nervousness). It grows wild all over Belize. It has been used for thousands of years by people for a variety of health issues. The Garifuna Buyei believe the plant has magic powers in love matters and magically improves love making in marriages; they prescribe an herb tonic made of Strongback to couples to rekindle a waning romance. Throughout Central America Strongback is used to restore moisture in lovemaking, hence the Spanish name Amor Seco (dry love). Not a bad herb to have as an ally when re-claiming your potency. This herb works only when you love the person, as it will “awaken” only what is already there; a great relaxing herb for impotence. It also works to alleviate muscle pain and backaches, by the way.

Science has determined the primary physical cause of impotence is nutritional deficiency due to a poor diet. Natural cures for low libido involve restoring the biochemical balance of your body and making the dietary and lifestyle changes you need to make to improve your overall health. So let’s start by making sure you

are eating the right “libido raising” foods and getting the proper amount of daily nutrition.

In your greens, you can include a little known food used traditionally to balance the libido; the ladyfingers. Ladyfingers, more commonly called okra, is a very useful vegetable and inexpensive vegetable medicine that is available practically year-round and easy to grow. Okra contains soluble fiber which helps control the cholesterol level in our bodies. It is used in traditional medicine to boost sexual vigor; due to its aphro-

disiac qualities. It good for the body and its good for ladies too, especially those close to menopause. Okra promotes friendly bacteria (probiotics) of the intestinal tract and helps in biosynthesis of vitamin B. It is a rich source of many nutrients, including fiber, vitamin B6 and folic acid. It does not hurt to include it in your diet, even if not for your libido. Do it for your overall health.

Zinc deficiency is common in people who suffer from a sexual dysfunction. Raise your zinc level. Wild Yam, a Belizean native, is an herb that balances hormones and stimulates the production of natural steroid hormones, as in precursors of progesterone and it contains high amounts of zinc. Shellfish, seafood and crabs, which are in abundance in southern Belize, are very high in zinc. Bukut Tea (Stinking Toe) increases sexual and physical energy. It also strengthens endurance, blood circulation and builds blood. There is an ancient aphrodisiac made from chaya now coined “Chayagria”. You have to ask the men about that as I have only heard tell.

Eliminate high fattening and high cholesterol foods that only send plaque and cholesterol to your arteries. Choose high fiber foods that are low in fat instead. This means adopting a diet that includes more green vegetables, ground foods, seasonal fruits and more seafood (not fried) and less dead meat. Strongback is best used if mixed with wild yam and/or saw palmetto berries.

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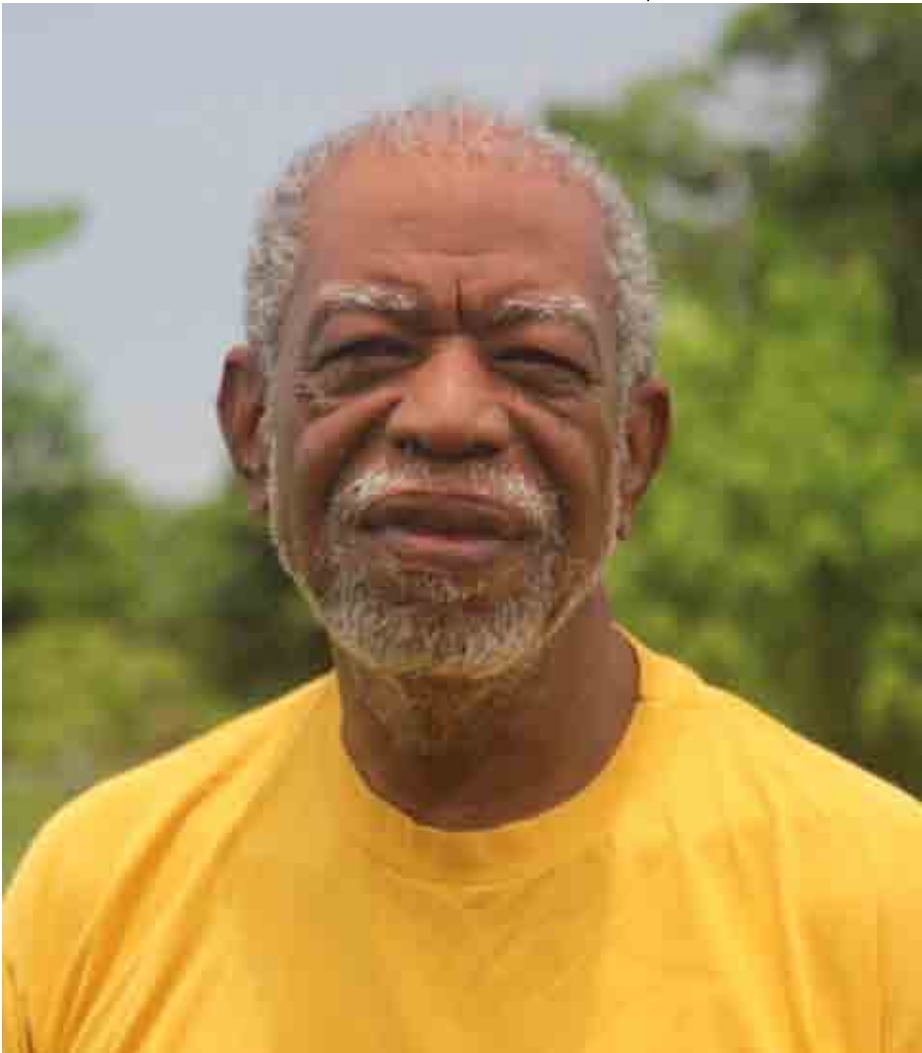
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Southern Voices: Dr Joseph Palacio



Dr Joseph Palacio has a doctorate in anthropology and is a well-known and respected figure throughout Belize. He was born in Barranco but moved within a year to live and grow up elsewhere. He was educated at the University of Toronto, The University of Manitoba at Winnipeg and the University of California at Berkeley. He was the first Belizean Archaeological Commissioner. He has recently moved home to his birthplace and was elected Chair of the Barranco Village Council in May.

Have you always lived in Toledo? I was born here in Barranco but left before I was year old. I lived in San Antonio, Toledo where my brother was a teacher and other places around Belize. I think it was this movement, introducing me to the Maya and Creole cultures and growing up in them, that sparked my interest in anthropology. It was what I might call a “patchwork” growing up that is not at all unusual for the Garifuna. I did not return to Barranco until I came back to conduct my doctoral fieldwork and it was this that really marked my full-time entry into the community.

Now that you are the Chair of the Barranco village Council can you share your vision for Barranco in the years ahead? We were only elected on 19th May and so are just four months into our

term. We are trying to develop an action plan for things that need immediate attention and a development plan with a longer term strategy. Whatever the plan, you are constrained by the nature of the village council; that it is voluntary work with no remuneration; the council has no sources of revenue and the village has high expectations. Our first actions were to reclaim the Community Centre from the dogs that had moved in and to restore it to its intended use. We have done that by establishing relationships with the Ministry of Works and also the logging concessionaires along the road to Midway village who provided lumber for the work. The longer term development plan would address issues with the roads and access and sanitation. We would also like

to help the craft makers in the village develop their market. And a fitting monument for Andy Palacio is essential for the village.

One of our over-riding concerns right now is the viability of the village school with such a small resident population.

What are the most significant changes you have seen in the district in your lifetime? The highway is probably the single most significant change but the development of local environmental and cultural consciousness through SATIIM (Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management), the Ya’axche Conservation Trust and Maya Leaders’ Alliance are encouraging. In education the University of Belize Toledo campus, Toledo Community College, Julian Cho Technical High School at Dump junction and the new high school in Corazon are all major factors in bringing change.

How do you see the development of tourism in Barranco? It is important that we put a signature or mark on what it is that we are marketing. We have not yet exhausted the potential for cultural tourism. For example, our Garifuna sisters and brothers visit in large numbers at least twice a year to participate in the ancestral ritual called dügü. We have large groups visiting Barranco

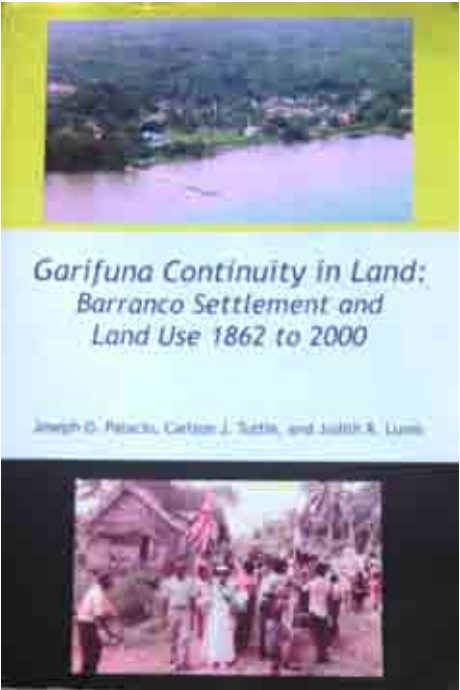
twice a year for pilgrimage and ceremonies as well as other smaller groups throughout the year. If tourists are interested in cultural experiences then I would definitely include Barranco. . They could get involved in cassava bread making that is a process that stretches over two days. Or they could go fishing or take a boat tour along the Temash River where there are the sites of earlier plantations. The Toledo Ecotourism Association (TEA) guesthouse has now been turned over to the Parent Teacher Association and the revenue received from visitors goes to the PTA and the school. (To book call Antoinette Zuniga on 605-0215). Tourists could get involved in cassava bread making that is a process that stretches over two days. Or they could go fishing or take a boat tour along the Temash River where there are the sites of earlier plantations.

Barranco is the “dugu” capital of the Garfiuna world. The “dugu” is a ceremony for the placation of the elders and healing of the sick. It takes place in the “dabuyeba” (temple) now known as the Marcel Cayetano Complex. Marcelo Cayetano was the grandson of Juan Pedro Cayetano who was among the first Garifuna to be born in Central America according to records from Livingston in Guatemala. These are baptismal records from a Belgian Roman Catholic mission established there around 1840. The availability of land around Barranco attracted people from Seine Bight and Punta Gorda and as they arrived and settled the religion and culture deepened leading to Barranco’s pre-eminence as a ceremonial centre.

Do you prefer the reef or rainforest? The rainforest because we are surrounded by it but the village has looked both ways - to sea and inland - during its history. The banana industry flourished during the Twenties and Thirties along the Temash River but when it declined commercial fishing became more important.

What is your favourite Belizean dish? Afoo, it is a yellow yam that tastes a little bitter. It is pounded as hudut, which is usually made from green plantain. And “tikin” is the sauce that it is eaten with. That has a flour base that is sautéed with onion, garlic and other seasonings. Of course, the sauce contains some fresh fish.

Well, thanks for your time Dr Palacio. We wish you every success in developing Barranco. You are welcome, Howler.



Dr Palacio’s most recent publication is “Garifuna: Continuity in Land: Barranco Settlement and Land Use 1862 to 2000” *Joseph O Palacio, Carlson J Tuttle, Judith R Lumb* 2011 Producciones de la Hamaca, Caye Caulker. The book is available from Amazon.

“The Barranco story shows the capacity of the Garinagu to organize themselves firstly and afterwards within the framework of British colonial legislation....explores every nook and cranny of the numerous aspects in which land and land tenure are linked together in Barranco from 1860 to the present...” Odile Hoffmann, Institut de Recherche pour le Developpement, Universite Paris Diderot, France

“ This fascinating study ...is at once a searing portrait of the birth and persistence against all odds, of a particular Garifuna community; an account of the conflictive relations between that community and the state power, whether colonial or nationalist;...We learn how they were formed, developed, ravaged by war, forced into exile and how they rose out of the ashes of military defeat and expulsion from their homeland to preserve themselves triumphantly as a nation across borders....” Assad Shoman, Prensa Latina, Havana, Cuba.

Toledo Online

There is an increasing number of sites with information about Toledo from web sites for hotels, guest houses and tour operators , non-governmental organizations and blogs. This issue we feature three.

Find out about cacao growing by visiting www.tcgabelize.com the home of the **Toledo Cacao Growers’ Association** that has done great work encouraging the development of cacao organic cacao farming in Toledo and representing the interests of the local cacao farmers who make up the membership of the association.

www.yaaxche.org Ya'axché Conservation Trust is a Belizean organization which aims to maintain healthy forests, rivers and reefs for the benefit of all. Through protected area management, advocacy, and working hand in hand with communities Ya'axché strives to develop capacity for the wise use of land and natural resources in and around the Maya Golden Landscape in Toledo.

<http://blog.warasadrumschool.com/> **Living Life to my Own Drumbeat** is the personal blog of Ruth McDonald the Scottish wife of Ray McDonald a local Garifuna drummer. Her latest post begins “Some visitors to Belize may leave with the illusion that many of its residents are, shall we say, under-worked. Stores that close for two-hour lunch breaks, people lounging around in hammocks in the middle of the day, people that extend even the Belizean definition of “right now” to seemingly endless stretches of time. But just as you wouldn’t judge the overall productivity of Spain by observing their lunchtime siesta, or assume they never eat dinner just because none of the restaurants have opened by the time you go to bed at 10pm, take a pause for thought before you judge a country without knowing or understanding the culture and economic realities.... Now visit her blog and read on.



Toledo Tourism Information Centre
Front Street, Punta Gorda Town

Mon to Fri 8am to 4pm, Sat 8am to 11.30am

Tel: 722-2531
Email: BTIA-toledo@btl.net

Licensed Tour Operators in Toledo District

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- Cotton Tree Lodge - 670-0557
- Garbutts Marine & Fishing Lodge - 722-0070/604-3548
- The Lodge at Big Falls - 732-4444/610-0126
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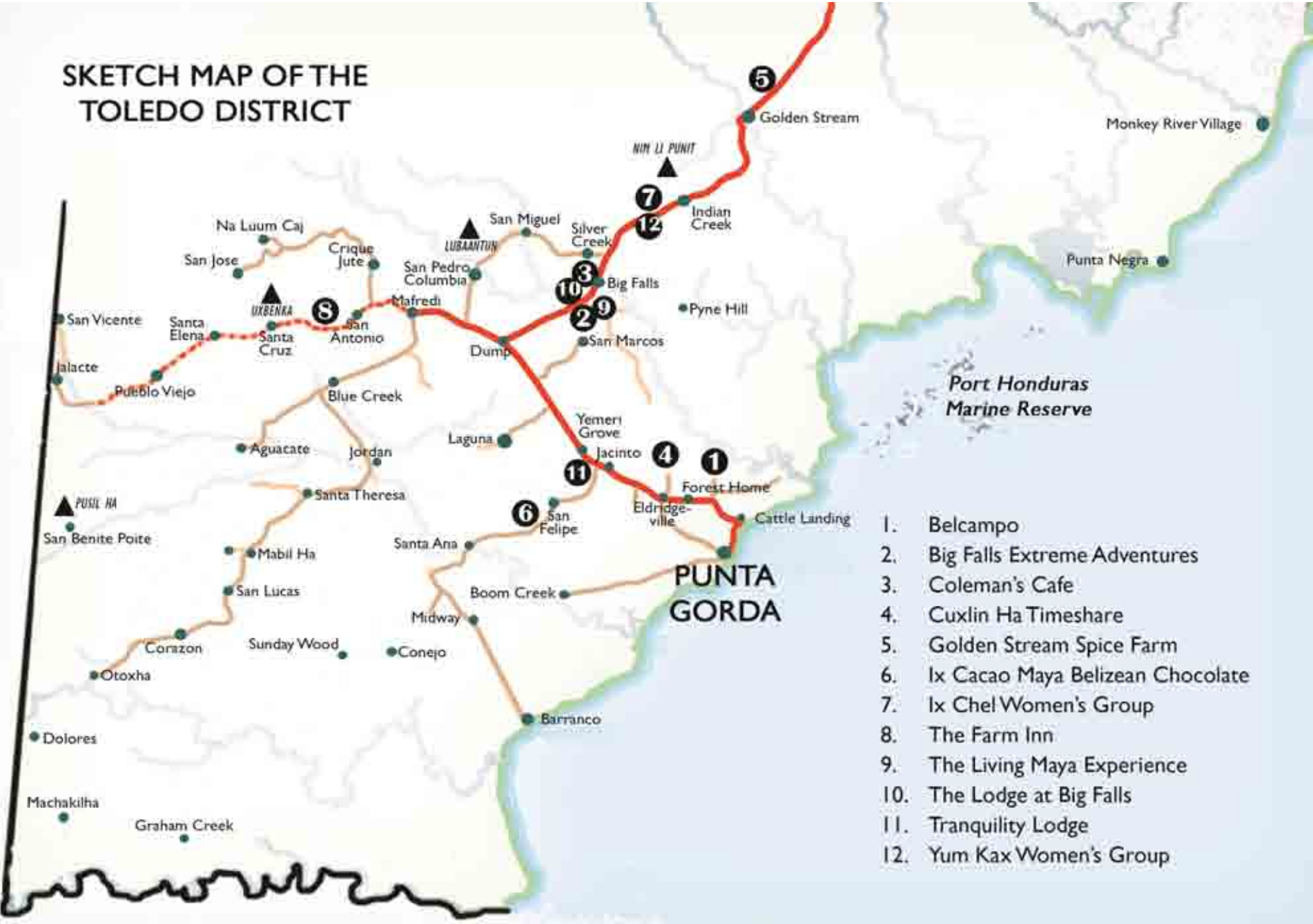
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SKETCH MAP OF THE TOLEDO DISTRICT



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2. Big Falls Extreme Adventures

3. Coleman's Cafe

4. Cuxlin Ha Timeshare

5. Golden Stream Spice Farm

6. Ix Cacao Maya Belizean Chocolate

7. Ix Chel Women's Group

8. The Farm Inn

9. The Living Maya Experience

10. The Lodge at Big Falls

11. Tranquility Lodge

12. Yum Kax Women's Group



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