

# The Toledo Howler

Newspaper of the Toledo Chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association

NOVEMBER 2010

YEAR 4, ISSUE 2

**FREE**

## November in Peini

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We have come to that time of year again when Punta Gorda (Peini in the Garifuna language) becomes the centre for activities surrounding the November Garifuna celebrations. While the weekend of Friday 19 celebrates the reenactment of the arrival of the Garinagu on the coast of Belize, the previous weekend is the focus of musical celebrations with the fifth annual Battle of the Drums.

There is a new element added this year for the Battle of the Drums' fifth anniversary. Friday night at the PG Sports Bar will offer Garifuna food and music. The food will be prepared by chefs from Machac Hill Lodge and the Radisson Fort George in Belize City using traditional Gari-



*Lloyd Enriquez examines hand made soaps*

funa cuisine and adapting it to a contemporary style.

Live music performance will feature Paul Nabor, Mario and the Umalali Group, Lloyd, Nuru, Adrian the Doc and



*Ana Arzu sells herbal remedies at TOLTEX*

Lascelle Martinez.

The drumming contest on Saturday will take place on the Punta Gorda Football field, weather permitting. This year the contestants are back up to nine bands. Georgetown is a new entrant from Belize and the international bands are from Livingston across the pond in Guatemala and Baja Mar in Honduras.

This year in addition to the drumming prizes there will be awards for the best chumba performance, wanaragua dancer and the best costume for a band.

On Sunday the Parandero Top Ten will be part of a live music broadcast from the sunset terrace at Beya Suites.

During the daytime on Saturday BTIA will be hosting the fourth Toledo Tourism Expo (TOLTEX) in Central Park. TOLTEX coincides with World

Responsible Tourism Day which takes place in London at the same time as the World Travel Mart trade show.

Responsible tourism is about inclusion of the local population in tourism and its benefits. This means valuing traditions and cultures and reinforcing them through inclusion in tourism offerings. It extends to craftspeople, local ethnic cuisines, music and art.

So come to PG town on Saturday 13th November. Enjoy different foods, music and cultures and win a prize in the grand raffle, like an all inclusive trip for two to Am-



*Paul Nabor; Legendary*

bergris Caye staying in the Mayan Princess Hotel.

Transport is offered by Tropic Air and the Caye Caulker Water Taxi Association. There is a meal out offered by the Caramba Restaurant and a day tour generously donated by SEAduced by Belize.

See the Calendar of Events page 2 for more details.



BTIA's distinctive octagonal Information Center on Front street in Punta Gorda. All you need to know about Toledo is inside

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**Contact Toledo BTIA** at the Tourism Information Center, Front St., Punta Gorda Tel. 722-2531

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# Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Venue / Time	Other Info
7th Nov	<b>Wanaragua (John Canoe) Dance Contest</b> Showcase of talent from which judges will decide who performs at Battle of the Drums	Venue to be confirmed / 7pm start	For more information about all Battle of the Drums events, phone 621-0140
11th Nov	<b>Ms. Yurumein Contest</b> Garifuna women display their creative talents	Parish Hall / 7pm	Adults \$5 Children \$3
12th Nov	<b>Battle of the Drums Anniversary Food &amp; Fete</b> Celebration of Garifuna food and music	Rooftop, PG Sports Bar/ 7pm–2am	\$25 per person
13 Nov	<b>Toledo Tourism Expo TOLTEX</b> Displays of crafts, food, music and other tourism related products and services in Toledo	Central Park, Punta Gorda/ 9am–5pm	Free event
13 Nov	<b>Battle of the Drums</b> Exciting evening of entertainment as drumming groups from around the region compete for top prizes	Punta Gorda Football Field/ 7:30pm start	Adults: \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door. Students: \$7. Reserve seating: \$20
14th Nov	<b>Paranda Top 10</b> Live radio broadcast focusing on local Paranda music with live performances	Sunset Terrace, Beya Suites, PG	
19th Nov	<b>Garifuna Settlement Day</b>		
20th–22nd May 2011	<b>Toledo Cacao Fest</b> Opening night Wine & Chocolate evening		More information to follow in next Howler
21st May	<b>Cacao Fest</b> Taste of Toledo cookery and craft fair. Cacao for Kids, Sea Toledo and Cacao Trail tours, evening entertainment	Central Park, PG	
22nd May	<b>Cacao Fest</b> Mayan traditional dance, food and music	Lubaantun Mayan site	

## Toledo Cacao Festival 2011

Next year's Cacao Festival will be held from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May, with its winning blend of cacao and culture, including inland and marine tours, arts and crafts, archaeology and music. The Festival opens with its signature Wine & Chocolate evening, featuring chocolate delights from Belizean chocolatiers. Mark your diary now, and check out [www.ToledoChocolate](http://www.ToledoChocolate) for information, or contact the Toledo Tourism Information Centre. Cacao Fest is calling you! The Cacao Festival Committee includes volunteers from BTIA Toledo, Ya'axche Conservation Trust, the Toledo Cacao Growers Association, and other community groups and individuals. If you would like to be a part of Cacao Festival 2011, volunteering time and skills, please contact Sulma Hernandez at the Toledo Tourism Information Centre. 722-2531

## The Lodge at Big Falls

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## Restaurant Guide

Name	Address	Cuisine	Phone	Opening Hours
Coleman's Cafe	Big Falls Village, near the rice mill	Belizean	720-2017	Daily: 11:30- 4pm & 6- 9pm [ Reservations Preferred ]
Earth Runnins' Café and Bukut Bar	Main Middle Street, PG	Belizean/ International	702-2007 600-9026	Wed-Sun: 7am-2pm & 5-11pm
Fajina Firehearth Food	Front St, PG	Local Mayan Food	666-6144	Mon–Sat: 7am–7:30pm. Closed on Sundays
Gomier's Restaurant and Soy Centre	Alejandro Vernon St, near PG Welcome sign	Local & international vegetarian / Seafood	722-2929	Mon-Sat: 8am-2pm & 6-9pm. Closed Sundays
Grace's Restaurant	Main St. PG	Belizean/ International	702-2414	Daily: 6am-10pm, including holidays
Hang Cheong Restaurant	Main St, PG	Chinese	722-2064	Daily: 10am-2pm & 5pm-midnight
The Lodge at Big Falls	Big Falls Village, near the rice mill	International/ Belizean/ Middle Eastern	671-7172	Daily: 11:30am – 2pm & 6:30 – 9pm [ Reservations Required ]
Machaca Hill Lodge	Wilson's Road	Pan Central American and International	722-0050	Lunch: noon-2:30pm. Dinner: 7:30-10pm. [Reservations preferred]
Mangrove Restaurant	Cattle Landing, by the curve	Belizean / International	722-2270	Daily: 5pm-10pm. [Reservations preferred]
Marenco's Restaurant & Ice Cream Parlor	57 Main St, PG	Belizean/Seafood/ Ice Cream/ Snacks & pastries	702-2572	Mon-Sat: 9am-2pm & 5-10pm. Sundays: 5-10pm
Marian's Bay View Restaurant	Front St, south of the market by the sea	East Indian/ Belizean	722-0129	Mon-Sat: 11am – 2pm & 6 – 10pm Sun & Hols: noon – 2pm & 7 - 9pm
Martina's Kitchen	BTL parking lot, PG	Belizean	623-3330	Mon-Sat: 7am-3pm. Closed on Sundays
Mom's Restaurant	Queen St, PG, by the park	Belizean	620-1607 661-1359	Mon–Sat: 6 am–2 pm & 4–9 pm Closed Sundays
Rainbow Cafe	Queen St, PG, by the park	Belizean	631-2309	Mon–Sat: 7am–2pm. Closed on Sundays
Rainforest Cafe	Big Falls Village, just south of the bridge	Belizean	669-0080	Daily: 10am–10pm
Reef Bar & Restaurant	Front St, upstairs by the market	International/ Belizean	625-8652	Daily: 10am-2pm & 4pm-midnight. Closed on Tuesdays
Sho's Local Restaurant	Entrance to Blue Creek Village	Belizean/ Catering	668-6540	Mon-Sat: 7am–8pm. Closed Sundays. Group reservations required
The Snack Shack	BTL parking lot, PG	Breakfast & lunch/ Snacks, shakes, juices & pastries	702-0020	Mon-Sat: 7am – 3pm. Closed Sundays
Waluco's	Opposite TIDE pier in Hopeville	Belizean/East Indian/Seafood/ Catering	670-3672	Mon-Thurs: 7am-2pm & 5-10pm. Weekends: 7am-late

## Wat's Cookin?

### Coco Yam Fritters

Ingredients	Quantity
Grated coco yam	½ lb
White flour	¼ cup
Whole wheat flour	¼ cup
Baking powder	1 tsp
Onion	1 medium
Garlic cloves	3
Sweet pepper	½
Celery	½ stick
Cilantro	4 leaves
Fresh basil	5 leaves
Spring onion	1
Curry powder	1 tsp
Garlic powder	1 tsp
Oregano	¼ tsp
Coriander powder	¼ tsp
Salt	1¼ tsp
Yellow ginger	¼ tsp
Water	1¼ cup

### Method

1. Finely chop the onions, sweet pepper, celery and spring onion (scallion) and place in a mixing bowl with the spices;
2. Grate the coco yam and add to the spice, herb and vegetable mixture;
3. Add the flour and baking powder last and mix Well
4. Slowly add the water and mix with the other ingredients to make a stiff doughy mixture;
5. Deep fry for two to three minutes. Test to make sure that the fritter is cooked through

Recipe contributed by Gomier Longville. Gomier's vegetarian restaurant is located to the right of the PG Welcome sign as you enter PG after crossing Joe Taylor Bridge.

See The Howler's interview with Gomier in Southern Voices on page 12.

**NEVER** *has roughing it felt so smooth.*



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## Punta Gorda

**Services**

- A Texaco filling station
- B James Bus Line
- C Police Station 722-2022
- D BTL office Public phones
- E Post Office
- F Customs & Immigration
- G Belize Bank
- H Tropic Air
- I Maya Island Air
- J Hospital 722-2026 or 722-2161
- K Toledo Travel Centre

**BTIA Members in Punta Gorda**

1. Beya Suites
2. Garbutts Marine investment
3. The Sea Front Inn
4. Toledo Ecotourism Association
5. Requenas Charter Service
6. Maya Bags, Belize Crafts Ltd.
7. Blue Belize Guest House & Tours
8. Coral House Inn
9. Hickatee Cottages 1m south of PG on Ex-Servicemen's Road
10. Scotia Bank
11. TIDE Tours

### BTIA Toledo Welcomes New Members in 2010

Membership in BTIA Toledo has grown in the past year and during that time we have welcomed:

- ◆ The **Maya Ant and Bee** craft group
- ◆ The **Fajina Craft Centre**
- ◆ **Seiko Vieira** and
- ◆ **Chrisbel Perez** as individual members

### How Do I Join BTIA?

Visit [www.btia.org](http://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 to Sulma Hernandez at the Tourism Information Center on Front St.

BTIA meets monthly on Wednesdays at the Tourism Information Center on Front Street. Be a part of BTIA and make a practical contribution to the economic development of Toledo District.

## Natural History of Toledo: Coral Reefs

Coral reefs are one of the most diverse marine ecosystems and they have frequently been described as the rainforests of the sea because of this high level of biodiversity. Thousands of species of fish, molluscs, sponges, echinoderms, and other invertebrates (animals without a backbone) live in close association with coral reefs, making them very complex ecosystems. Coral reefs occupy less than 0.001% of world's ocean surface yet they are home to over 25% of all marine species. In the Caribbean alone there are over 500 fish species and over 70 hard coral species associated with reefs. But what are coral reefs and how are they formed?

Coral reefs are large, underwater, wave-resistant structures made from the calcium carbonate skeletons of corals. Corals are actually living animals (not rocks or plants) and there are two types – soft corals (with no hard skeleton) and hard corals or reef-builders (with a hard skeleton). It is the skeletons of hard corals that build the reefs. Each

individual animal is called a polyp, which looks similar to a small sea anemone, and these polyps create hard carbonate cups or skeletons around their base for support and pro-

tection. Polyps often live together in groups and the skeletons of the polyps fuse together to form colonies. Coral reefs are the result of hundreds of coral colonies growing next to, and on top of, each other for thousands of years. Corals are very slow growing



*The bio-diversity of the coral reef matches the diversity in the rainforest on land*

Reef-building corals are only found within shallow water, usually less than 50m deep, due to a special relationship between the individual coral polyps and tiny plants called zooxanthellae. Each coral polyp contains zooxanthellae within its tissues and these tiny, single-celled plants use sunlight to photosynthesise and produce excess nutrients which are used as a food source by the coral polyp. Corals can receive up to 90% of their food supply from the zooxanthellae within their tissues; the remaining 10% is obtained by catching tiny animals from the water using their tentacles. Zooxanthellae also give corals their colour; without these plants, corals would appear white as the coral skeleton would be visible through the clear coral tissue.

*Continued on page 7*

## BTIA TOLEDO MEMBERS 2010

Business Name	Email	Phone	Contact Person
American Crocodile Education Sanctuary	acesnpo@hughes.net	665-2762	Vince & Cherie Rose
Belize Crafts Ltd, Maya Bags	belizeexecutivedirector@mayabags.org	722-2175	Desiree Arnold
Beya Suites	info@beyasuites.com	722-2188	Lisa Avila
Blue Belize Guest House & Tours	info@bluebelize.com	722-2678	Dan Castellanos & Rachel Graham
Coral House Inn	coralhousebelize@yahoo.com	722-2878	Rick & Darla Mallory
Cotton Tree Lodge	chris@cottontreelodge.com	670-0557	Chris CroWell
Chrisbel Perez	<a href="mailto:cuxlinha@live.com">cuxlinha@live.com</a>	630-7673	Chris Perez
Cuxlin Ha Retirement Village	cuxlinha@hotmail.com	501-614-2518	Dona Lee Scafe
Dem Dats Doin	demdatsdoin@btl.net	501-722-2470	Yvonne Villoria
Fajina Craft Center of Belize	fajina.craft.center@gmail.com	666-6141	Candelaria Pop
Garbutt's Marine Investment Co.	garbuttsmarine@yahoo.com	604-3548	Dennis Garbutt
Hickatee Cottages	cottages@hickatee.com	662-4475	Ian & Kate Morton
The Lodge at Big Falls	info@thelodgeatbigfalls.com	671-7172 / 614-2888	Marta & Rob Hirons
Machaca Hill Lodge	info@machacahill.com	722-0050	Brian Gardiner
Maya Ant and Bee Group	mayaantandbee@gmail.com	662-1139	Ofelia Cal
Requena's Charter Service	watertaxi@btl.net	722-2070	Julio Requena
Romero's Charter Service	rcharters@btl.net	722-2625/2924	Francis Romero
Scotia Bank	elvis.perez@scotiabank.com	722-0098/0099	Elvis Perez
The Sea Front Inn	larry@seafrentinn.com	722-2300	Larry & Carol Smith
Seiko Vieira	<a href="mailto:seikovieira7@gmail.com">seikovieira7@gmail.com</a>	665-5394	Seiko Vieira
Sun Creek Lodge	suncreek@hughes.net	600-8773/614-2080	Bruno & Melissa Kuppinger
TIDE Tours	info@tidetours.org	722-2129	Karel Kuran
Toledo Eco-Tourism Association	teabelize@googlemail.com	702-2119	Vicente Sackul / Reyes Chun
Toledo Tour Guides Association	<a href="mailto:ttgabze@gmail.com">ttgabze@gmail.com</a>	660-3974	Dennis Garbutt
Tranquility Lodge	info@tranquility-lodge.com	677-9921	Sheila & Rusty Nale
Tumul K'in Center of Learning	tumulkin_tourism@yahoo.com	608-1070	Rosemary Salam

### TOLTEX Raffle Prizes

- ✦ Vacation Package for Two
    - ◆ Round trip flights from PG to Belize City - *Tropic Air*
    - ◆ Round trip water taxi from Belize City to San Pedro Caye *Caulker Water Taxi Association*
    - ◆ 2 night's accommodation at the *Mayan Princess Hotel*
    - ◆ 1 day sailing to Caye Culker - *SEAduced by Belize*
    - ◆ \$100 gift certificate - *Caramba's Restaurant*
  - ✦ 2 Night's B&B for 2 - *The Lodge at Big Falls*
  - ✦ 2 Night's B&B for 2 - *Coral House Inn*
  - ✦ Guided kayaking on Joe Taylor Creek for 2 - *TIDE Tours*
  - ✦ Gift package - *Dreamlight Computer Center, PG*
  - ✦ 1 Return Ticket PG-Puerto Barrios - *Requena's Water Taxi Service*
  - ✦ \$100 Gift Certificate - *Mirage International Ltd.*
  - ✦ Basket of Tumul K'in Products - *Tumul K'in*
  - ✦ 1 mixed case of 12 bottles: red wine, ginger wine and campari - *Premium Wines and Spirits, Belize City*
  - ✦ 1 Smart Phone package - *SMART Speednet*
  - ✦ \$150 Gift Certificate - *Chateau Caribbean Hotel, Belize City*
- Raffle to be drawn November 13 at TOLTEX

### Library Lecture Series

#### Welcomes Visitors

A great way to find out what's on local people's minds is to attend one of the monthly lecture events organized by the PG library.

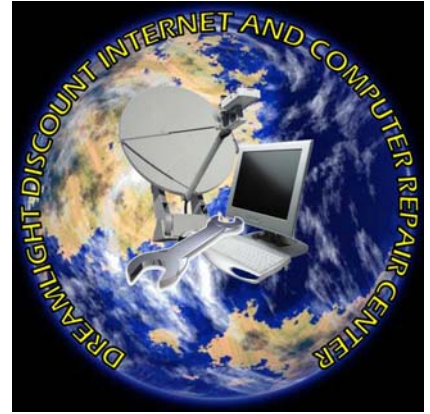
Each month, the library invites speakers to explore topics ranging from the meaning of Belizean celebrations, the importance of Belizean holidays, and contemporary issues of concern to the people of Toledo.

In September, Dr. Joseph Palacio discussed the significance of the Independence Day celebrations. In October, high school teams debated the relevance of studying the "discoveries" of Christopher Columbus. On November 28<sup>th</sup>, the youth and elders of the Garifuna community will discuss what it means to be Garifuna in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### WHAT IT MEANS TO BE GARIFUNA IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Sunday, November 28, 4 pm  
Old Doctors' Quarters, Front Street (next door to the Tourism Information Centre).

**TOLTEX Sponsorship** BTIA Toledo would like to thank the following businesses and organizations for their generous sponsorship of TOLTEX 2010



REQUENA'S CHARTER SERVICE



**Coral Reefs**

*Continued from page 5*

In return for the food source, coral pol-

yps provide zooxanthellae with protection and food (waste products from the coral).

Coral reefs are extremely important ecosystems for a variety of reasons and they provide a number of functions and services. Coral reefs provide habitat and food source for thousands of species of fish, plants and invertebrates, including commercial species such as the Caribbean Spiny Lobster, snappers and groupers. Coral reefs also protect coastlines and communities from the impacts of waves, storms and hurricanes by providing an offshore barrier that absorbs the energy from the waves. Coral reefs are also very important in generating economic benefits through tourism by attracting SCUBA divers, snorkelers, fly-fishers, etc. The

value of reef-related fisheries, tourism, and shoreline protection services in Belize is estimated to be US\$221-\$310 million per year (Cooper et al. 2009). However, coral reefs are fragile ecosystems due to their sensitivity to environmental conditions, and many coral reefs are under threat from climate change, overfishing, pollution and



Coral polyps (Courtesy www.noaa.gov)

nutrient run-off from the land.

Reference:

Cooper E, Burke L, Bood N (2009) *Coastal Capital: Belize. The Economic contribution of Belize's coral reefs and mangroves*. WRI Working Paper, World Resources Institute, Washington DC

Contributed by Dr Nicola Foster, formerly of TIDE

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# Kayaking in Toledo

Toledo District offers a variety of kayaking opportunities both inland and at sea.

In this feature the Howler brings together for the first time the trips on offer by tour operators around the district.

Kayaking is one of the best ways to explore the Toledo District, which is rich with rivers and waterways. Not only are kayaks an easy way to travel through the jungle, they also have little to no environmental impact.

A number of important rivers empty into the Gulf of Honduras. These are from south to north, the Sarstoon river on the Guatemalan border, the Temash, Moho, Rio Grande, Golden Stream and



*Kayaking on Joe Taylor Creek*

Deep River.

For reasons of accessibility most inland kayaking trips run the Rio Grande or Moho or closer to town Joe Taylor Creek over which you pass on the single lane bridge as you arrive in Punta Gorda.

Visitors to Punta Gorda town may hire kayaks from TIDE Tours on Front Street opposite the Tourism Information Centre to explore Joe Taylor Creek. This same trip is also offered by Garbutt's Marine whose office and equipment are right on Joe Taylor Creek itself.

This creek flows down out of the hills into the ocean right in the middle of town. Leave civilization behind after paddling just a quarter of a mile upstream. The creek constricts down to a mangrove tunnel then plunges into high bush where it feels like miles from anywhere and magic is possible. Keep an eye out for black howler monkeys in the trees and gibbon on the ground. This trip can be extended by paddling out of the river mouth and following the coast in either direction.

TIDE Tours also offer full-day trips on the lower reaches of the Rio Grande. The kayaks are launched at Wilson's Landing just down stream from Machaca Hill Lodge. Guests can enjoy an hour of tranquil early morning pad-

dling listening to and observing wildlife such as kingfishers, howler monkeys, coatimundi and tapirs.

TIDE owns and conserves many acres on the banks of the Rio Grande and guests can stop and stroll through one of TIDE's mahogany plantations and learn about sustainable re-forestation projects that are going on around the area. Spend some time at the Water Hole Ranger Station's Visitor Center.

Here you can check out reconstructed manatee and dolphin skeletons, learn how to identify poisonous snakes, feel the slick shell of a hawksbill and green sea turtles and learn about local crocodiles.

Walk the Dan Campbell nature trail. Remember to take binoculars! This well maintained trail is an excellent place to view wildlife.

From the Ranger Station guests may paddle the river out to sea.

Experience the change of eco-system as you continue paddling down river into mangroves. Keep a lookout for egrets, manatee, or the giant goliath grouper. Watch local fisherman cast their lines at the mouth of the river in hopes of a red snapper or a barracuda. Turn south and follow the coast back to town.

Machaca Hill's prime location on the Rio Grande provides the perfect setting for a scenic kayak tour. The river gently winds through the rainforest providing a leisurely paddle either up or downstream as guides point out a variety of flora and fauna. The diverse vegetation flanking both sides of the Rio Grande is home to a variety of wildlife – iguanas, monkeys, tapir and jaguar to name a few. Paddlers often see fish, such as tarpon rolling alongside their boats as well. However, the numerous birds are always one of the highlights of a kayak tour, from herons on the riverbanks to hawks in the highest trees, there is always something interesting to watch. Machaca Hill provides all top-of-the-line equipment – single and double Ocean Kayak brand kayaks with back rests, life jackets in multiple sizes and comfortable paddles. The



*Near the mouth of the Rio Grande*

guides will also provide paddling instruction if needed.

The Lodge at Big Falls offers kayaking tours on the upper reaches of the same Rio Grande. The Lodge has eight sit-on-top kayaks, both singles and doubles. Their most popular half-day kayaking tour begins with a put in at the bridge in the village of San Miguel and is then a float downstream back to the Lodge at Big Falls. Even this far upstream there is no real white water so novices can relax and enjoy the scenery. The river meanders through gallery forest that line the banks for most of the way.

A large variety of birds like kingfishers, herons, sungrebe, hawks and wood storks can be seen and occasionally white-tailed deer, coatimundi and cats as well as numerous large iguana that dive from the trees into the river at the sound of the approaching boats and people. This belly flop into the water is the iguana's natural flight mechanism. From there they can stay still on the river bed for as long as twenty minutes, making them vulnerable to being caught by locals for bush meat.



*The upper Rio Grande*

Further south on the Moho river Cotton Tree Lodge offers kayaking trips for overnight guests or day visitors.

Kayaking on the Moho River is an appealing way to spend an hour or a full day. The river is clean and gentle, and even first-time kayakers will enjoy paddling upstream and floating back to



# Kayak The Rivers & Cayes

Cotton Tree, or just staying around the docks and observing birds, turtles, and iguanas along the river banks. They have seven complimentary kayaks available, six single and one double, for guests to use anytime. Traditional wooden dugout canoes are also available. They will drive guests with kayaks to different access points along the Moho River and let them paddle back. A five mile float downstream takes visitors to the small village of Boom Creek on the banks of the Moho.

Kayak downstream approximately five miles, enjoying the wildlife along the riverbanks and passing Mayan neighbors in dugout canoes along the way. The lodge arranges collection from boom Creek village. Another trip will take guests and their kayaks up to the village of Santa Ana from where they can float back down to the lodge. The route passes Mayan women doing their laundry in the river and hand-line fisherman catching the family's dinner.

About half a mile upstream from Cotton Tree, large rows of submerged stones cross the river in several places. Some think these are ruins from an ancient Mayan bridge, but no one knows for sure. Guests may borrow a snorkel and mask from the lodge, explore the site, and draw their own conclusions. Paddle a half-mile further upstream and tie your kayaks to the base of Kite's Hill. This land used to be owned by Kite Powell an expatriate who taught jungle survival skills to British clients on his property. It is now abandoned but visitors might find some traces from his past as they climb the steep hillside. It takes approximately twenty minutes to reach the summit, where there are views of the Caribbean, the Belizean countryside, and the hills of Guatemala.

The clear blue water flowing from Blue Creek Cave is one of the sources of the Moho River. After exploring Blue Creek cave or completing the Blue Creek hike guests may paddle the fifteen miles back to Cotton Tree. Cotton Tree does not say how many guests choose that option.

SFI Tours offers semi-white water kayaking on the Moho river from the remote village of Aguacate about three miles beyond Blue Creek village down to Jordan. The Aguacate-Jordan stretch is a half day which can be extended to a full day by continuing downstream past the Jordan bridge to the village of Santa Ana. The road to Barranco and Crique Sarco crosses the river here. Depending upon the volume of water in the river SFI will use either hard kayaks or inflatables.

free use of the kayaks but day visitors may also hire them. They can be used



Guided kayaking from San Miguel to Big Falls

to explore the cayes from Lime Caye to Hunting Caye and Nicholas Caye or used to fish on the flats around those same cayes.

Cuxlin Ha also has kayaks available for guests at their facility on Tom Owen's Caye just at the northern end of the Sapodilla Range. They offer free sit-inside kayaks to their guests who can use them to paddle between their two island which lie about five hundred yards apart.

Safety is an important starting point for all enjoyable kayaking adventures. Licensed tour operators and guides are trained in first aid and provide buoyancy vests for each guest. Only experienced kayaking guides are able to accurately judge when weather and water conditions are safe for a trip. Always make sure the company or individual you choose is properly licensed.

For more information contact the Tourism Information Office in PG on 722-2531.



Large male iguanas are a common sight along Toledo's rivers, both in the trees and on the ground.

Out on the cayes Garbutt's Marine offer kayaking on the Sapodilla Cayes. They are based on Lime Caye and have half a dozen kayaks, both doubles and singles. Guests on packages have the

## Toledo Kayaking Options

### Cotton Tree Lodge

**Kayaking Locations** Along the length of the Moho river from Blue Creek village to Boom Creek village

### Cuxlin Ha

**Kayaking Locations** Tom Owen's Caye in the Sapodilla range

**Kayaks** Sit-inside

### Garbutt's Marine

**Kayaking Locations** The Sapodilla Cayes and Joe Taylor Creek

**Kayaks** Sit-on-top and sit-inside, singles and doubles

### The Lodge at Big Falls

**Kayaking locations** Upper Rio Grande and Joe Taylor

Creek

**Kayaks** Hobie sit-on-top, singles and doubles

### Machaca Hill Lodge

**Kayaking Locations** Lower Rio Grande

**Kayaks** Ocean Kayaks, singles and doubles

### SFI Tours (Sea Front Inn Tours)

**Kayaking Locations** Moho river from Aguacate to Santa Ana

**Kayaks** Sit-on-top and inflatables

### TIDE Tours

**Kayaking Locations** Joe Taylor Creek, the lower Rio Grande and coast

**Kayaks** sit-inside Sea Kayaks, mainly singles

## TRANSPORT SCHEDULES

### Schedule of Flights from Punta Gorda To Belize City and from Belize City To Punta Gorda

Flights stop at Placencia & Dangriga

Depart Punta Gorda	Arrive In Belize City	Service Provider	Depart Belize City	Arrive In Punta Gorda	Service Provider
6:45am	7:45am	Maya Island Air	8:00am	9:00am	Maya Island Air
7:00am	8:10am	Tropic Air	8:30am	9:30am	Tropic Air
9:30am	10:30am	Maya Island Air	10:00am	11:00am	Maya Island Air
9:40am	10:50am	Tropic Air	10:30am	11:30am	Tropic Air
11:30am	12:30pm	Maya Island Air	12:30pm	1:30pm	Tropic Air
11:35am	12:40pm	Tropic Air	2:30pm	3:30pm	Tropic Air
1:35pm	2:45pm	Tropic Air	2:30pm	3:50pm	Maya Island Air
4:00pm	5:00pm	Maya Island Air	4:30pm	5:30pm	Maya Island Air
4:00pm	5:00pm	Tropic Air	4:50am	6:00pm	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 & From Puerto Barrios , Guatemala

Service Provider	Dep. Punta Gorda	Arrive in Puerto Barrios	Dep. Puerto Barrios	Arrive in Punta Gorda
Requena's Charter Service	9:30am	10:30am	2:00pm	3:00pm
Pichilingo	2:00pm	3:00pm	10:00am	11:00am
Marisol	4:00pm	5:00pm	1:00pm	3:00pm
Memo's	1:00pm	2:00pm	3:15pm	4:15pm

**Boats to Livingston depart on Tuesdays and Fridays at 10 a.m.**

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# Arzu on Medicinal Plants: Neem

Even though Neem is not indigenous to Belize, it's here, its queer, and its wonderful! Science has yet to identify a botanical that meets the definition of a true panacea other than the Neem tree. Many medicinal plants have been tried and tested throughout time. But few have withstood modern scientific scrutiny like the sacred Neem. For this and all the reasons stated below, this medicinal plant warrants more than honorable mention.

The Neem tree is native to tropical South-East Asia, where it is recognized as a sacred medicinal plant. Neem is a broad leaved tropical evergreen related to mahogany. It is fast growing, extremely drought resistant, and has been cultivated for a long time in arid zones of Asia, Africa, and Central America for timber, among other uses.

From ancient to modern times, every part of this fascinating tree has been used to treat hundreds of different maladies and diseases. Neem is used medicinally to destroy viruses, kill bacteria and fungi; alleviate fever, reduce inflammation, reduce tumors, alleviate pain, kill and expel parasites, support digestion, and as a natural form of birth control FOR MEN.

Neem is a powerful blood purifier and detoxifier that works by destroying the growth of disease-causing organisms in the blood, and has the added intelligence of allowing friendly bacteria to remain unaffected. The chemical constituents of Neem boost the immune system on all levels while helping the body fight infection. It is so effective that it is now being used to treat HIV infections and AIDS. Healthy cells require a more alkaline environment. The alkaline nature of Neem helps change the

blood pH from acidic to alkaline, making it difficult for viruses and the like to survive. Unlike synthetic antibiotics, Neem does not destroy beneficial bacteria, or any other micro-organisms needed by the human body. Irritating skin conditions can be successfully treated with Neem leaves added to bath water or by applying Neem oil on to the affected area.

Taking a mild Neem leaf tea will enhance antibody production and the body's immune response, helping to prevent infection.

In cases of fever, Neem is used traditionally to lower body temperature, and to reduce inflammation in the case of swelling. Traditional healers use it as an anti-tumor remedy to reduce tumors. It is also used to relieve pain, and for expelling or destroying parasitic worms. Midwives use it to clear the uterus after a difficult birth.

Even though Neem is used to prevent nausea and vomiting, it also induces abortion and for this reason is not to be used by pregnant women or by women wishing to become pregnant. At no time during a pregnancy should Neem be used. Because Neem prevents implantation it is used in some countries as a form of birth control, and is taken mostly by men as the male birth control pill.

Preparing Neem is really easy. You just dry the harvested leaves and store for later use. Alternatively, the dry leaves can be powdered and filled into gelatin capsules. Each



The neem leaves and flowers

capsule is equal to one cup of tea. The best way to use Neem is to take as a nutritional supplement daily.

While there are herbs that are far better known, comprehensive scientific research has proven that Neem has a wider range of uses than any other herb known to man. Before there were doctors, hospitals, and clinics; over 5000 years ago, native medicine people were using Neem. Ongoing scientific research is validating what indigenous healers have known for thousands of years; that medicinal plants work just fine, and their properties address the many health problems of the human body.

This brief overview shows that Neem has been of great medicinal value to humankind for thousands of years. Science continues to demonstrate uses that will certainly increase over time balancing the thousands of years of Neem's helpfulness to humanity.

**Contact** Arzu Mountain Spirit at arzu@arzumountainspirit.com or 600-3873

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## Southern Voices Gomier Longville

Gomier Longville owns and runs Gomier's Restaurant in Punta Gorda offering vegetarian and seafood cuisine.

**Have you always lived in Toledo, Gomier?** I came to PG in January of 1996 and opened the restaurant in December 1997. I was born in St Lucia. I had read about the ancient Maya healing and I wanted to become a healer and to do practice traditional medicine. I came with my wife Michelle who had been teaching art in a girl's centre where I had been teaching agriculture.

**What are the most significant changes you have seen in Toledo in your time here?** There have not been too many. There are more people arriving from our Central American neighbours, there is the new customs building and the highway of course. There seem to be some small changes in attitudes.

**Are you optimistic about the development of tourism in Toledo?** We have so many natural resources from the sea, to Mayan ruins and waterfalls. I think it is just a matter of marketing Toledo and making it happen.

**Reef or rainforest, Gomier?** Rainforest because without the rainforest I believe we would not have a reef. There would be a lot of erosion and with so much soil leaching into the sea the fish and corals would be messed up.

Life comes from the rainforest and everything originates from it. Without that we would have nothing. There would be less water in the rivers and that in turn would have a negative effect on the reef.

**And if a tourist can only visit one place in Toledo which would it be?** First I would send people to the Rio Blanco park and waterfall there and if I had a second choice I would recommend Blue Creek.

**Which is your favourite month or season?** I like August because it is my birthday on the twelfth and it is like a re-birth and November because that is the month when much of the fruit starts to get sweet and the oranges, grapefruit and pine-



apples are coming in.

**What is your favourite Belizean dish?** Hudut and fish serre.

**Why do you recommend a vegetarian diet?** I think many people around here think that if you don't eat meat you are going to die. We don't understand how rich a vegetarian diet can be when it includes fruit and vegetables, seeds, nuts, grains and legumes like lentils.

**In that case, why do you eat fish?** Well there was a time when I was completely vegan but I grew up in a small fishing village in St Lucia and fish was an important part of the diet. Fish contains omega oils which are helpful in preventing arteriosclerosis and heart attacks.

**How can you change people's attitudes to their diet?**

I think you have to start by educating the children at school about the importance of eating fruit and vegetables. Many people do not have enough fibre and roughage in their meals; just starch and meats.

**Since people are unlikely to completely change their diets overnight what would be a first step you would recommend for a healthier diet?**

Adding at least one serving of fruit and vegetables a day to the diet would be a good start. We have plenty of fruit and vegetables here but people don't eat them.

**Do you have any plans to develop the restaurant?** My most recent innovation is the introduction of vegetarian cookery classes which can be individual tuition or in small groups of up to a maximum of eight.

*Thanks, Gomier, I feel in need of a fruit smoothie.*

*You're Welcome, Howler.*

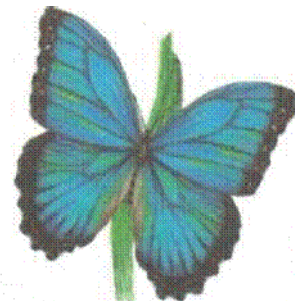
**Gomiers Restaurant** Open on Monday-Saturday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

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### Where to get your copy of The Toledo Howler

- ◆ BTIA Tourist Information Center, Front St in Punta Gorda
- ◆ Tropic Air and Maya Island Air terminals throughout Belize
- ◆ Business premises of BTIA members in Toledo (see list page 6).
- ◆ Tropic Air office in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala.
- ◆ Requena's Charters office in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala.
- ◆ Placencia Tourist information Center, Placencia Village
- ◆ Gas stations on Southern and Western Highway
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### Archaeology in Toledo:

## New Three Year Project for Paynes Creek

The ancient Maya wooden buildings preserved below the seafloor in Paynes Creek National Park are a great discovery for archaeology and have unrealized potential for education and archaeological tourism in the nearby communities in southern Belize. With funding from the National Science Foundation, National Geographic Society, and FAMSI (<http://www.famsi.org/reports/05032/>), archaeologists found and mapped some 4000 wooden posts defining buildings, and tons of briquetage—salt making artifacts. The Underwater Maya sites in Paynes Creek National Park were part of a massive ancient Maya salt industry supplying salt to the inland cities of the Classic period where this basic biological necessity was scarce (<http://www.ga.lsu.edu/mckilloppdfs.html>). The Paynes Creek sites are contemporary with Maya cities in southern Belize such as Lubaantun, Uxbenka, and Nim Li Punit—places where salt was in short supply.

Beginning in spring of 2011, archaeologists from Louisiana State University, led by Heather McKillop, will carry out a three-year program of public outreach to share information about the Paynes Creek discoveries (locally in southern Belize and through various media worldwide) and to engage the



PhD student Brett Somers at Total Station to map posts

local communities in preservation of the Paynes Creek sites through archaeological tourism. The project is funded by a Site Preservation Grant from the Archaeological Institute of America and has received approval from the Belize government Institute of Archaeology, with whom McKillop will continue to consult closely

throughout the three year project. She has consulted with TIDE and will continue to work closely with TIDE, who co-manages both Paynes Creek National Park and Port Honduras Marine Reserve.

In the first phase of the project, beginning in spring 2011, the team will have workshops and talks targeted to schools, tour guides, tour operators, and other interested groups. In the second phase of the project, they will develop a display in Punta Gorda featuring some of the Paynes Creek archaeological discoveries. For those wanting to see the underwater sites, the archaeologists will be working with TIDE in the third phase of the project to construct an observation platform, where small boats can moor and visitors can view artifacts through Plexiglas. Tour guides will be able to take visitors to displays at the TIDE ranger stations in Paynes Creek National Park and Port Honduras Marine Reserve.

The idea for the Observation Platform comes from McKillop's previous excavations at Wild Cane Cay and Frenchman's Cay. Tour guides knew that when they brought visitors by boat to the islands, the archaeologists would tour them around the excavations. That enhanced the tourism experience and put money in the pockets of the local tour guides. Tour guides taking people for fishing, snorkeling, or birding could add archaeological sites to their destination. But the guides also knew that when the team left the sites, that tourism experience was gone. The excavations had been back-filled and there was no archaeological tour.



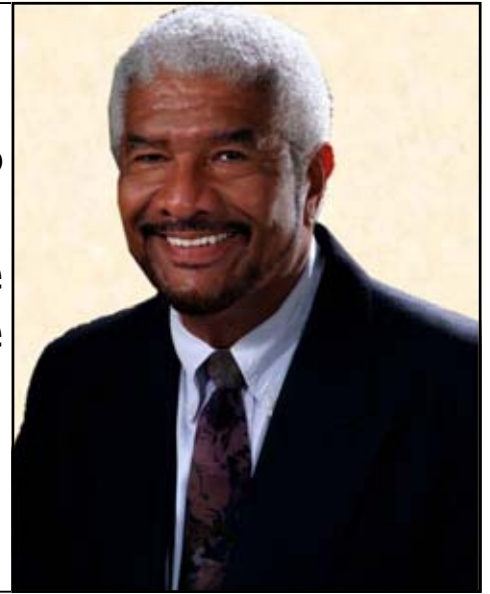
Local guide Jackie Young holds prism pole

Continued on page 15



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# Toledo's Changing Birdscape Part 2 by Lee Jones

In the last issue of *The Howler*, I wrote about “invasions” of certain species into southern Belize primarily from Mexico and Guatemala. All the birds mentioned in the last issue are native North American species that have expanded their range on their own as the landscape of the continent has been altered by man over the years. Other species have been purposely introduced by man to regions where they never occurred naturally. The Tricolored Munia, an agricultural pest from Southeast Asia with an insatiable appetite for rice, was introduced into the New World (most notably, Puerto Rico), probably through the pet trade, and has now spread apparently without the aid of man westward into Central America. In Costa Rica, three individuals were found in



the Guanacaste region in 1995. This “seed” population grew rapidly, and by 2003 had spread northward into commercial rice-growing areas where it has the potential to become an agricultural pest. In Belize, a small group showed up on Caye Caulker on 4 August 2003, and they are now being seen with increasing frequency on the mainland in Orange Walk and Corozal districts. Luckily, they have not yet invaded in large numbers and their impact on rice cultivation has been nil.

One interesting foreigner that should have little impact on the native flora and fauna is the Eurasian

Collared-Dove. Originally from Europe and Asia, it was introduced by the pet trade to the Bahamas in the mid-1970s. A pet burglar released some of the birds shortly thereafter, and they spread rapidly to other islands and eventually to Florida on the U.S. mainland. Once they reached the mainland they spread like wildfire across the continent, making it all the way to California in less than two decades. However, it has not yet colonized Central America in significant numbers, perhaps because it does not favor the tropical heat, but a few have recently reached Costa Rica and Belize, a pair even breeding in Belize City last year.

Closer to home, the House Sparrow, another Eurasian species that was introduced into the New World by man, can be found at and within a few blocks of the Punta Gorda police station. It reached P.G. in the early or mid-1980s, perhaps arriving on a barge from Puerto Barrios, but it has never spread very far.

Thought to be limited to nest sites that cannot be reached by grackles, such as under the eaves of the police station, it has remained strictly within this two-block section of town. More recently, it has made it independently to Dangriga, again most likely by boat from Guatemala or Honduras. Interestingly, the few birds in Dangriga are also found only around the police station. It has not colonized Belize City or other urban areas in Belize; however, a small population persisted around the citrus processing plant in the Stann Creek Valley for a few years.

So, all these recent additions, ex-

cept maybe the munia, must be a



*Eurasian Collared Dove*

good thing, right? Well, it certainly means more species to add to your “life list”. But remember, most of these species would not be here if the rainforests had not been replaced by expanding urban and agricultural corridors along the Northern, Western, and Southern highways. But because much tropical forest remains in Belize, most rainforest birds are still doing reasonably well. The most obvious exceptions are game birds such as Great Curassow, Crested Guan (quam), and Ocellated Turkey. All three still thrive in protected areas, but unsustainable and largely unregulated hunting has seriously reduced their numbers in many other areas. The most recent, and perhaps most attractive species to take a hit due to anthropogenic intervention is the Scarlet Macaw. The subspecies in Belize is globally endangered. The flooding of the lower Raspaculo drainage in western Cayo District by hydroelectric projects, most recently the Chalillo Dam, has inundated most of its nesting habitat. Whether or not it will survive in what is left of its habitat has yet to be determined but scientists are closely monitoring the macaw population.

*H. Lee Jones is based in Punta Gorda, Toledo. He is the author of “Birds of Belize” the definitive guide to birding in Belize and the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Belize.*

## Paynes Creek *Continued from page 13*

Having discussed the idea of a town display and observation platform for several years with tour guides, tour operators, various NGOs, and citizens, McKillop received much enthusiasm about the project, but needed funds. The AIA Site Preservation Grant provides needed funding to carry out the project—although additional financial and “in-kind” support will be sought.

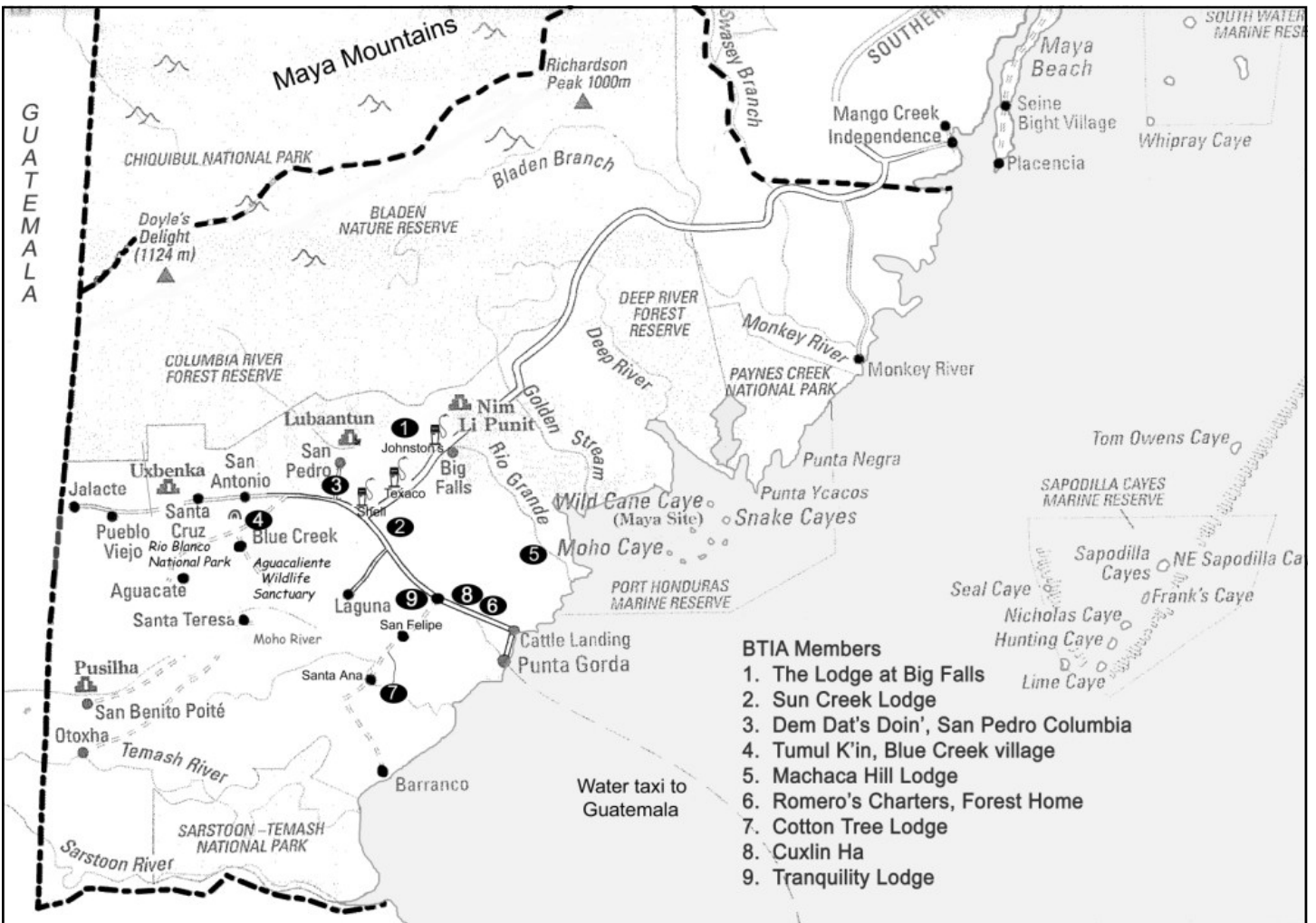
The AIA Site preservation grant program is intended to instill in local communities reasons to preserve significant archaeological sites. By educational outreach the team hopes to educate students and others in the community about the value of the Underwater Maya sites. By the Punta Gorda Town display, as well as other displays and the observation platform, they hope to provide tourist destinations that enhance tourism experience, thereby making the sites economically valuable for the citizens of southern Belize to protect and preserve. By integrating archaeology with other tourism

experiences such as fishing, birding, and visits to the cays, they hope the citizens of southern Belize will further efforts to preserve and protect the important cultural and natural resources of Paynes Creek and Port Honduras.



*Grad student Mark Robinson and Project Director Heather McKillop hold ancient wood post at Paynes Creek archaeological site.*

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  3. Dem Dat's Doin', San Pedro Columbia
  4. Tumul K'in, Blue Creek village
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  7. Cotton Tree Lodge
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**PG Fire Department:** 722-2032  
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**Belize Tourism Board:** 227-2420 / 227-2417  
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## Taste of Belize 2010

Taste of Belize celebrated its ninth anniversary in October this year.

The all-day event, organized by the Belize Tourism Board, brings together participants who compete in categories that include professional chefs, amateur chefs, bartenders, cake decorators and this year for the first the Best of Belize competition which asked for a team of two or more restaurants to offer a menu representative of its district.



The Orange Walk food stall at Taste of Belize 2010

The Best of Belize regional cooking competition was won by a team of three establishments from Orange Walk followed by Dangriga and then its neighbour Hopkins in third place. Toledo was represented by Gomier Longville ( see "Wat's Cookin" and "Southern Voices" in this issue.) who teamed up with the Lodge at Big Falls represented by Leona Cholom and Cordelia Choco who presented a variety of menu items using vegetarian and fish recipes and local vegetables.