

The Toledo Howler

Newspaper of the Toledo Chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association

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FREE

Shark Conservation Award

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A marine biologist from Punta Gorda is this year's winner of one of the world's most prestigious prizes for grass-roots nature conservation: the Whitley Gold Award, donated by WWF-UK. The Whitley Awards scheme is an annual competition, first

held in 1994. In the eighteen years since the scheme began, it has given grants worth more than £6m to support the work of inspirational conservation leaders in seventy countries and built a network of more than one hundred and twenty Whitley alumni.

Dr Rachel T Graham, director of the Wildlife Conservation Society's (WCS) Gulf and Caribbean sharks and rays programme, received her prize on 11 May from HRH The Princess Royal (Princess Anne) at the Royal Geographical Society, London, during a ceremony hosted by The Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) - the UK-based charity behind the international awards scheme.

The award recognizes her work to implement a national action plan for sharks and get more local people actively involved in protecting ocean wildlife and coastal biodiversity, contributing to the protection of local livelihoods and Belize's economically important tourism industry.

WFN's Director, Georgina Domberger, says: "The judges were tremendously impressed by Rachel's twenty years of dedication to shark conservation, her success in winning legal protection



twenty years of conservation work is turning the tide for sharks and drawing needed attention to protect these magnificent marine predators." John Robinson, WCS Executive Vice President for Conservation and Science,

for whale sharks in Belizean waters, and her innovative plans to let schoolchildren, students, planners and decision-makers see sharks in the wild and experience undersea Belize at first hand, so encouraging them to become advocates of the marine world."

Glyn Davies, WWF-UK's director of programmes, says: "In WWF's anniversary year it is tremendous to be able to support Rachel in her efforts to protect shark populations in Belize. The presence of these 'top predators' maintains the diversity of the entire reef ecosystem as well as maintaining the star attractions for the tourists who visit Belize's beautiful reef."

To accompany the title and the Whitley Gold Award 2011 trophy, Dr Graham also wins project funding worth BZ\$200,000. Belize's sharks are in rapid decline, largely because of over-fishing by non-Belizean fishing fleets - to meet the demand for white fish meat in Honduras and Guatemala, and to supply shark fins to Asia.

"Belize's marine life has a tireless champion in Rachel Graham," said Steven Sanderson, WCS President and CEO. "Her

said, "Rachel is a huge asset to WCS's conservation efforts to protect marine ecosystems around the world. Her work benefits one of the most pristine marine regions in the Western Hemisphere."

At the same ceremony Whitley Awards worth around BZ\$100,000 each in project funding went to six other conservation leaders from Argentina, Croatia, India, Indonesian Borneo, Russia and Uzbekistan.

We will give Rachel the last word who told her audience in her acceptance speech that they should "go and seek out sharks and rays and find out for yourselves what incredible and magnificent animals they are, and by going to find them and seeking them out you will actually be helping a lot of local communities and showing them that a live shark is worth far more than a dead one".

Rachel is also a member of the Toledo chapter of BTIA and owner of the Blue Belize guesthouse on Front Street south of the market. Congratulations and thank you, Rachel.



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Contact The Howler Editorial Team

Tel. 722-2531 E-mail btiatoledo@btl.net. Features Editor: Marta Hirons 732-4444 or marta@thelodgeatbigfalls.com.
Advertising and Production Manager: Rob Hirons 732-4444/610-0126 or rob@thelodgeatbigfalls.com

Lee Jones: The Unappreciated Grackle

Quiscalus mexicanus, the Great-tailed Grackle – or simply “blackbird” to most Creole-speaking Belizeans – is perhaps the most maligned bird in all of Belize. Everyone knows it; few appreciate it. It is that ubiquitous neighborhood bird with the glossy black plumage and long oddly twisted tail feathers. No one can argue that it has a way of making itself known in the neighborhood. Rooftop grackle fests at the crack of dawn are legion. If you own a house with a zinc roof, you know exactly what I am talking about! If



you happen to live near their roost, then you truly deserve my sympathy. Grackles are communal. Every evening birds from near and far congregate in large, raucous flocks at their nightly roost, which in some places can comprise several thousand birds. For a real spectacle, visit Battlefield Park in Belize City at dusk. But if you bring a companion with you, don't expect to carry on a quiet conversation. The sound of several thousand grackles can be deafening. Oh, and you'd better bring along an old umbrella – one you won't mind discarding afterward.

During the day, grackles have other ways of reminding you of their presence. Grackles are a constant source of entertainment. If they are not doing battle with the chickens, tormenting the household cat, or stealing food from your beloved Fido, they are performing grackle

operettas on the clothesline, the veranda, the utility line, the hood of your truck, the dead mango limb you keep forgetting to trim. And, of course, they always, *always* leave behind a little token of their appreciation. After all, if it weren't for grackles, how would you ever know when the mangos are ripe; that you really don't need that expensive alarm clock after all? That without grackles Fido might overeat and become horribly

obese? With grackles around to entertain you, you will never suffer the unbearable silence of a power outage in the middle of your neighbor's impromptu rock concert.

Like it or not, grackles are here to stay. They thrive in the presence of humans. You will never see a grackle in the rainforest. Grackles were a rare sight at the corner of Hummingbird and Western until humans

decided to move their capital there. They have taken up residence on the most remote cayes. Why? Because, wherever humans go, garbage – and grackles – soon follow.

So, live with them you must. And since you must, you might as well learn to appreciate them. Really. If you can get beyond the impulse to plug every grackle within earshot into the nearest light socket, you will find that grackles are actually pretty amazing birds. If you have never watched two male grackles courting the favor of a nearby female, you have missed out on one of nature's great spectacles. Watch the two males as they skypoint, heads thrown back, tails pointing straight down. Watch as they then lean forward and bow politely while raising the feathers on their back and breast. Continue watching as their



posturing eventually degenerates into bill-to-bill combat – all while the quite unspectacularly plumaged female (I'm sure she's beautiful on the inside) waits patiently nearby.

When it comes to avian linguistics, few birds have a vocal repertoire that exceeds that of the Great-tailed Grackle. While all of their utterances cannot be considered melodic by any measure, some are truly impressive. Sit and listen. Make note of as many sounds as you can. Come back again in a week or two and you will add new grackle vocabulary to your list. Try associating these grackle utterances with various grackle behaviors. Which sounds are uttered only by the male? Which ones are female exclusives? See if you can identify those vocalizations that are uttered only during courtship; while tormenting the cat; while squabbling over dinner scraps; as they scatter at the sudden appearance of a large hawk. Do you hear any vocal communications that you would call a song? If so, which ones? When you're done, ask yourself, is language really the exclusive domain of humans? Observe how grackles communicate in non-vocal ways. It has been said that as much as 80 percent of human communication is through body language and only 20 percent through the spoken word. Despite all of its raucous vocalizing, could this also be true of the Great-tailed Grackle

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.

Tourism Awards 2010

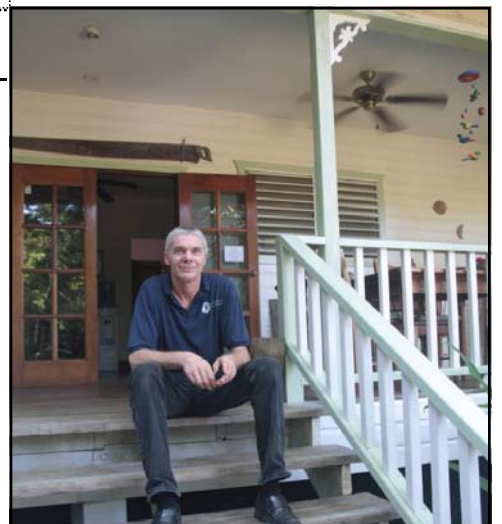
A number of Belize hotels and resorts received Travelers Choice awards from Trip Advisor the online travel review site that were presented at the National Tourism Awards ceremony in Belize City in June 2011. The awards are based on the number and quality of reviews that accommodations receive.

Hickatee Cottages was honoured as the seventh most popular Bed and Breakfast in Central and South America. Hickatee Cottages were also a finalist for the Best Small Hotel in Be-

lize and Bruno Kuppinger of Sun Creek was a finalist for the Tour Guide of the Year.

Hickatee Cottages has expanded in the past year with addition of two new cottages taking their total to six rooms.

Right: Owner Ian Morton relaxes on the steps of Charlie's Bar and the restaurant at Hickatee Cottages



Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Venue / Time	Other Info
9th Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Concert 	Central Park, PG	Free
10th Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St George's Caye Day Parade Block Party Bicycle Float 	Central Park, PG 9am–6pm	Free
20th Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torch Light Flag Raising Ceremony Fireworks 	Central Park Venancia Petillo Park 8pm–2am	Free
20th Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Entertainment Concert Block Party 	Central Park 8pm–2am	Free
21st Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independence Day Ceremony Float 	Central Park PG 9–12 noon	
21 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Block Party / Parade 	Central Park PG Noon–6pm	
28 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library Lecture Series <i>Is the Past Present? Belize at 30</i>, a panel discussion of social issues facing Belize before and after independence (see page 16) 	Parish Hall 9am-12pm	Free
7th Oct	TIDE Weekend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seafood Gala: buffet with wine /Coolie Rebels Band 	Starts 7pm	For more info: 722-2274/ 722-2431 Tickets \$50 Semi formal
8th Oct	TIDE Weekend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Conservation Competition, entertainment & music. Cyrlia's Chocolates Tour Blue Creek Caving, swim & barbeque 	Starts 7pm	Entrance \$5 \$45 pp \$50 pp
9th Oct	TIDE Weekend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish Fest: fishing tournament, cycling race, kayaking, games for kids, etc. Music by DJ Fresh 	TIDE Compound Starts 10am	
10th Oct	TIDE Weekend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snorkeling Tour of West Snake Caye Rio Blanco Waterfall Picnic 		\$75 pp \$45 pp
28-29 Oct	Organic Fair (See article Page 11)	Central Park, PG	
12th Nov	Battle of the Drums	Sports Complex, PG / 7:30pm	\$15 pp

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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	732-4444	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]
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?

Chicken Satay with Peanut Butter Sauce

One of the interesting aspects of Indonesian cuisine is that it uses many of the same ingredients that are available down here in Toledo. Shared ingredients include coconut, lime, ginger, tamarind, pineapple, lemon grass and lime leaves and a number of spices. This satay recipe is delicious.

Ingredients for Satay

10oz pork tenderloin or chicken breast
 1 medium onion finely grated
 1.5 teaspoons of finely grated fresh ginger
 2 teaspoons of sugar
 1/2 teaspoon ground chili paste
 1 teaspoon ground coriander
 2 tablespoons thick coconut milk
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1 tablespoon light soy sauce
 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin (for pork only)

Ingredients for Peanut sauce

1 cup of crunchy peanut butter
 1 tablespoon of ground chili paste

1 tablespoon of sugar
 1 tablespoon of light soy sauce
 1/4 cup of water
 1/2 cup of thick coconut milk
 1/2 teaspoon of lemon grass powder
 1/2 teaspoon of ground coriander
 Pinch of yellow ginger (turmeric) and salt

Method

- Mix the satay ingredients and place in a bowl.
- Cut the pork or chicken into small cubes about 3/4" square and add to the other ingredients and mix well.
- Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and set aside for at least an hour or place in the refrigerator overnight.
- Place the peanut butter sauce ingredients in a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Reduce to a very low heat and simmer for five minutes.
- Thread the meat onto several wooden skewers and grill over charcoal or a lightly oiled comal
- Serve with the warm peanut butter sauce, rice and whatever vegetables you like.

Contributed by The Lodge at Big Falls and a regular favourite on their menus.

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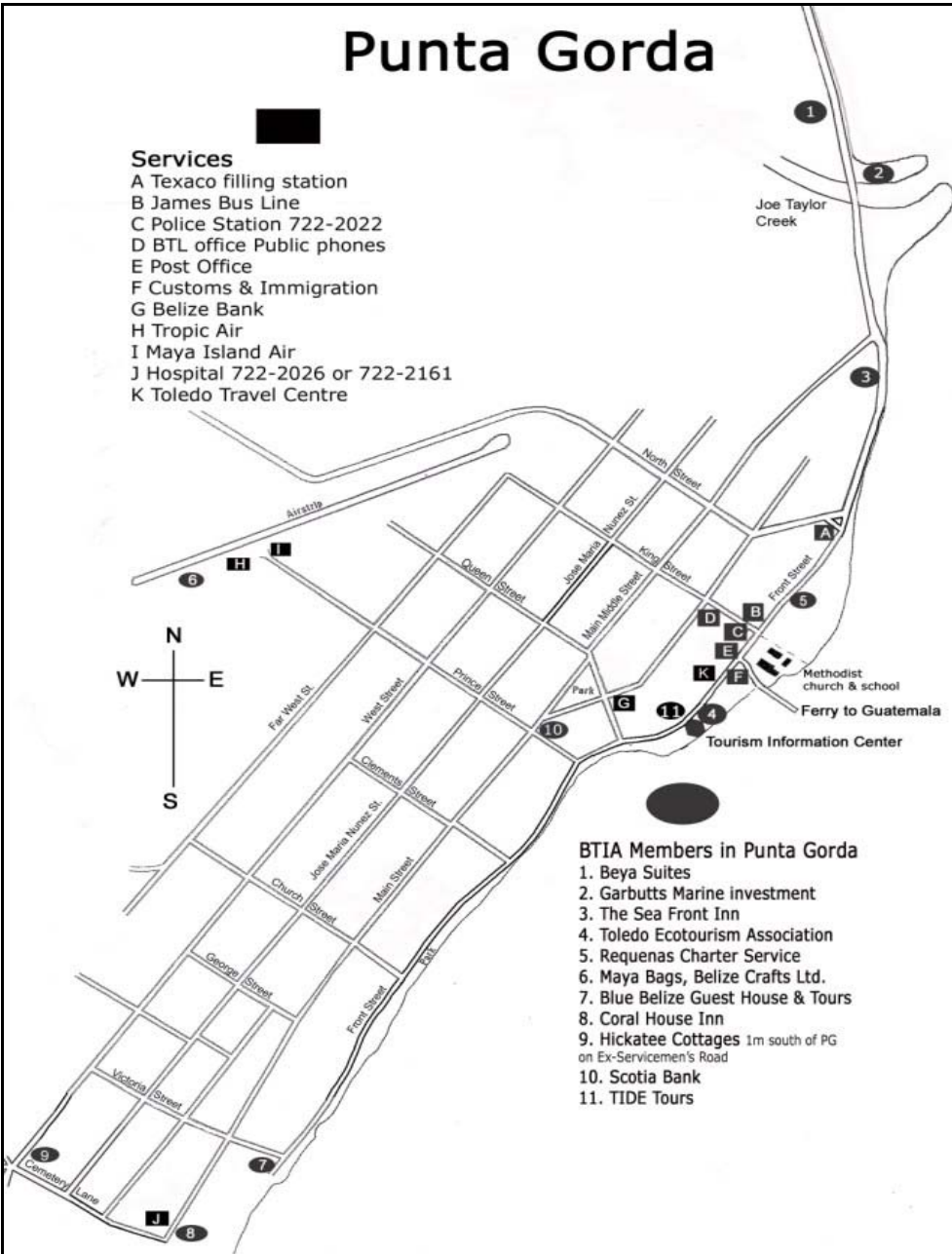
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8. Coral House Inn
9. Hickatee Cottages 1m south of PG on Ex-Servicemen's Road
10. Scotia Bank
11. TIDE Tours

BTIA Toledo Welcomes New Members in 2011

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

- ◆ The Dreamlight Computer Centre
- ◆ Yum Kax Womens' Group in Indian Creek village

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 to Roberto Coh at the Tourism Information Center on Front St.

BTIA meets monthly 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.



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Beya Suites	info@beyasuites.com	722-2188	Lisa Avila
Blue Belize Guest House & Tours	info@bluebelize.com	722-2678	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	cuxlinha@live.com	630-7673	Chris Perez
Cuxlin Ha Retirement Village	cuxlinha@hotmail.com	732-4747	Dona Lee Scafe
Dem Dats Doin	demdatsdoin@btl.net	722-2470	Yvonne Villoria
Dreamlight Computer Center	dreamlightpg@yahoo.com	722-0113	Tim Dami
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	732-4444/610-0126	Marta & Rob Hirons
Machaca Hill Lodge	info@machacahill.com	722-0050	Shirley Mae Parham
Maya Ant and Bee Group	mayaantandbee@gmail.com	662-1139	Ofelia Cal
Requena's Charter Service	watertaxi@btl.net	722-2070	Leonie Requena
Romero's Charter Service	rcharters@btl.net	722-2625/2924	Francis Romero
Scotia Bank	roxanna.aleman@scotiabank.com	722-0098/0099	Roxanna Aleman
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Seiko Vieira	seikovieira7@gmail.com	665-5394	Seiko Vieira
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The asp or puss moth caterpillar (left) must never be touched. The fur contains venomous spines which are extremely painful. The adult moth *megalopyge opercularis* above.



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Archaeology: Nim Li Punit

Toledo is often called the “Forgotten District.” But this was not always the case. The inland hills of Toledo are dotted with ancient Maya sites. Five of these—Pusilha, Uxbenka, Lubaantun, Xnahab, and Nim Li Punit—contain both impressive stone architecture and multiple examples of carved sculpture containing Maya hieroglyphs. These monuments discuss the history of the inhabitants of the district from roughly A.D. 400 to 800, people who at the time of the Spanish conquest were called the Manche Chol. For the archaeologists who can read these monuments, the ancient Manche Chol of Toledo District are no longer forgotten.

Nim Li Punit, situated above Indian Creek Village, is one of the most visited and easily accessible Manche Chol sites of southern Belize. The modern name means “Big Hat” in the Q’eqchi’ language, and was chosen by Dr. Joseph Palacio because of the enormous headdress worn by a king on Stela 14, the second biggest ancient sculpture found



The stela plaza at Nim Li Punit

museum but is not on display.

The hieroglyphs of Nim Li Punit discuss events beginning with the legendary planting of stone sculpture perhaps as early as the sixth century. Most of the events described on the monuments, however, took place between A.D. 721 and A.D. 810. But the texts themselves were

carved during an even briefer period beginning no earlier than A.D. 731. Thus, we have at best a 79-year window on the historical events that the kings of Nim Li Punit chose to describe. A final and enigmatic monument is

Stela 3, which you can see lying in the northwest corner of the South Group of the site. The text here shows a monkey face followed by a bar and two dots, and may be read as “seven ajaw.” This is the name of the twenty-year period that began in A.D. 830 and marked the beginning of a major cycle in the Maya calendar. It is one of the latest carved dates in Belize, and refers to a time after the famous “Maya Collapse” of about A.D. 780-820. We do not know yet know if people were still living at Nim Li Punit at this time, or if the date was carved on an already standing monument by a pilgrim visiting the abandoned town.

Several of the monuments suggest connections with regions outside of Toledo District. One site that is named at Nim Li Punit—and also at Pusilha—has been given the nickname “the water scroll site.” This may be Altun Ha, in northern Belize. Alternatively, it could be a closer site in southern Peten, Guatemala, where there are many other mentions of “the water scroll site.” There are also several curious references to “Ek Xukpi” lords, a title that appears frequently at Quirigua, a Guatemalan site not far from Puerto Barrios. Finally, one interpretation of a portion of the text on Stela 21 (in the Nim Li Punit Visitor’s Centre) may refer to Copan, Honduras, but this is not at all certain. Stela 15, also at the Visitor’s Centre, shows a king of Nim Li Punit scattering a liquid or seeds into an incense burner. He is wearing a turban made of a long, wrapped strip of cloth in the exact style of the kings of Copan. We do not yet understand the political relationships between Nim Li Punit and these more distant kingdoms, but it is not far fetched to imagine that the rulers of these places may have intermarried and were related.

Perhaps the most curious thing about all the carved monuments of southern Belize is that they do not seem to ever mention their nearest neighbors. The rulers of Nim Li Punit did not write about Pusilha, Uxbenka, or Lubaantun.

The rulers of these other sites returned the favor and also ignored each other.

Continued on Page 10



Another view of the plaza

in the Maya world. We now know that the ancient rulers of Nim Li Punit called themselves the “holy lords of Kawam.” Precisely what Kawam means is unknown, but one version of the hieroglyph looks like the head of a large bird, perhaps a raptor. To call it the “Kingdom of the Hawk” or “Eagle” would not be far from the truth.

There are eight carved stone monuments containing hieroglyphic texts known from Nim Li Punit. Today you can see seven at the site and in the excellent visitor’s centre. The eighth monument is in poor condition and was severely damaged by machete blows. It is stored at the

Yum Kax Women's Group at Indian Creek

Yum Kax is the Mayan corn god and the name chosen by the five members of the newest women's co-operative in Toledo and newest

such as The Ya'axche Conservation Trust which operates in the Golden Stream Corridor Preserve of which Indian Creek is a part. Their menu includes caldo with corn tortillas, cohune cabbage with rice, tamales and escabeche, rice and beans with chicken and that most Mayan of dishes, chow mein. Everything is freshly made as it has to be since they operate without electricity and have no refrigeration. To arrange to eat at the women's centre it would be best to call ahead of time.



Yum Kax members near the entrance on the Southern highway

member of BTIA.

The Howler visited and met Concepciona Coc, Candelaria Pop and Mercedes Choc.

For visitors to their centre, about half a mile north of the entrance to Nim Li Punit Mayan site in Indian Creek village, they offer both food and crafts.

The women will give a demonstration of corn tortilla making and teach their visitors how to do it themselves if they want to learn. They also demonstrate how to roast and grind cacao and make two kinds of cacao drink. Cacao uk in which the cacao is simply mixed with water and can be drunk either hot or cold and Cacao em where the cacao is mixed with corn to make a very distinctive drink.

They also offer food on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays and can do outside catering for organizations

Their crafts include rosewood products, slate carvings, necklaces and bracelets and the ubiquitous jippi jappa baskets. They make leaf-shaped rosewood bowls, canoes with paddles and spoon and fork salad serving sets. They have carvings made either from slate or a yellow and red silt stone including the one of Yum Kax himself (see picture on this page). Necklaces and bracelets use watermelon seeds, bamboo, coconut shell, cedar beads and shells collected on the shoreline at Placencia or Punta Gorda.

Their location right on the highway makes it an ideal place for tour operators driving south from Placencia to visit Lubaantun, Nim Li Punit or Blue Creek. So stop by and support this new venture. The Howler wishes them every success.

Phone: 604-0688/635-9952



Yum Kax the Mayan corn god carved in silt stone



Candelaria Pop grinds corn on a shaped stone

Garbutt's Marine & Fishing Lodge

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Punta Gorda Town
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The flowers of palms grow from a sheath called a spathe. Concepciona Coc holding carved and painted spathes; a toucan on the left and Yum Kax on the right.



Leaf-shaped rosewood bowls and silt stone carvings



Bracelets and necklaces made from cedar wood beads

Nim Li Punit

Continued from Page 8

If we are going to learn about how the different kingdoms of southern Belize interacted and related, it will not be from their carved monuments.

Thus, hieroglyphs tell only a part of the story. Like our own statues, they show only what our rulers want us to remember. Moreover, they do not tell us anything about the life of commoners. Finally, they were carved and placed at Nim li Punit during the very short period—only about four generations—when the

site was ruled by divine kings. We still know very little about life before or after that period.

In 2010, members of the Toledo Regional Interaction Project from the University of California, San Diego, began excavations at Nim li Punit. We were fortunate to work with an expert field crew who were trained at the site a dozen years ago. We are currently studying the many thousands of pottery sherds, chert stone tools, obsidian blades, and other objects we excavated last year. We hope to compare these artifacts with those we also excavated from Pusilha and Lubaantun in order to better understand trade

and exchange among these closely spaced kingdoms. We also hope to find evidence of trade with more distant polities like Quirigua, Altun Ha, and Copan. We want to learn about the lives of ancient common people at Nim li Punit, and will do so by excavating simple houses. Finally, we want to fill in the large gaps of history before and after the rulers of Nim li Punit carved stone monuments.

In this way, we hope that the ancient Manche Chol of Toledo District will not be forgotten.

Contributed by Geoff Braswell, University of California at San Diego



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Organic Gardening in Toledo

Sustainable Harvest International (SHI) will be showcasing its work with Toledo farmers at its Third Annual National Organic Fair to be held on Friday and Saturday, October 28th and 29th in Punta Gorda's Central Park.

Forty-five farmers from various communities around the Toledo district will be displaying their crops that are the results of a sustainable method of planting that includes the use of dead barriers (rocks and sticks) and live barriers (pineapples) to control erosion; composting; crop rotation; cover cropping

"Now they can use the same land over and over again."

SHI is currently working with 323 farmers from across the country in a five phase, five year program that encompasses theory, workshops on developing a nursery, introduction to micro-credit, entrepreneurship and monitoring.

"Currently, most of the farmers we are

working with in Toledo are still in phase one and two of the program, planting to sustain their family needs," explains Yasmin Ramirez, SHI marketing officer. "They are planting carrots, cabbages, and cucumbers in addition to okra, papaya, cacao, moringa and cilantro. There is a long waiting list of farmers interested in joining the program that also includes chicken, sheep and pig husbandry, installation of solar composting latrines and use of wood conserving stoves, ovens and biodigester. Through this program, SHI hopes to make a positive impact on the environment, agro-ecology, food security, livelihood and learning capacity of the farmers.



On Saturday, October 29th, at Central Park, the public will be able to buy the local produce and enjoy presentations of gardening skills, cooking classes, interviews and entertainment. On Friday the 28th, a bus will be taking visitors around to several organic farms in the area to talk to the farmers about their work.

"SHI will be reaching out to people for donations to cover the cost of renting tents, marketing, and the bus for Friday", explains SHI marketing officer Nana Mensah. "This is going to be a very ambitious event and we would appreciate all the financial support we can get."

For more information about the Fair or to arrange to make a donation, contact SHI at 501-722-2010.



to suppress weeds and enhance soil; making and using natural insecticides, pesticides and fungicides to control weeds, insects and diseases. "Most of these farmers were slash and burn, chemical farmers", explains Candido Chun, regional coordinator of SHI.

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Dem Dat's Doin

The Howler arrived to visit Dem Dat's Doin' close to San Pedro Columbia village carrying just a notebook, pencil and a camera and left an hour and a half later laden with cuttings and presents of exotic fruit. This is typical of the generosity of spirit at Dem Dat's Doin where Yvonne and Alfredo Villoria are eager to share their knowledge, experience and their plants and fruit with visitors.

Yvonne and Alfredo arrived in Belize from their home country the Philippines via Hawaii in 1980. They settled on twenty acres of land next to a creek just off the road into Columbia village (past the quarry and the mission over the first wooden bridge and take the first turning on the right).

One of their early projects was the production of bio-gas using a system donated by GTZ the German aid organization based in Barbados. GTZ built three systems in Belize; one in Corozal, another at Central Farm and the third at Dem Dat's Doin. The project offered them technical and other assistance to establish the system to produce methane. But it wasn't quite as simple as it

sounds.

The most efficient "raw material" for methane production is pig manure so Yvonne and Alfredo had to learn how to raise pigs. They lost some to vampire bats and therefore had to learn some veterinary medicine along the way. Continuous learning is very much the ethos at DDD. They no longer raise pigs so the bio-gas system lies idle but could still be cranked up and put back into operation.

The average tour at Dem Dat's Doin will take around an hour and a half. It all depends on the interest of the visitor. They will find out if the visitors have any particular interest and tailor make the tour to suit them so it might be geared to orchids and bromeliads or fruit trees etc. They might also place the focus on their self-sufficiency initiatives using solar panels, composting toilets, collecting rain water and the biogas system of course.

It will always be a hands-on tour; touching, smelling and, best of all, tasting the fruit that are in season. Yvonne will often prepare to greet the guests with a freshly squeezed juice from fruit in their arboretum, or open a coconut for guests to drink the water. She may even prepare a fruit dessert.

If you want to visit Dem Dat's Doin then be sure to make a reservation as far in advance as you can because they may not be there all the time every day. Why not? Well Yvonne and Alfredo have always had multiple interests. Once they understood pig rearing they began training for local villagers to do the same. Many of those same villagers eventually formed the core of the Maya Homestay Pro-



Yvonne shows the biogas collection chamber

gramme that they established. They were co-founders and advisors for the



The flower and plant of turmeric or "yellow ginger" (*Curcuma longa*)



"Sexy Pink" *heliconia* cultivar

Fajina Craft Centre on Front street in Punta Gorda and also established the Toledo Visitors information centre on the old wharf which was an unpaid public service. They were also instrumental in establishing the Toledo Tour Guides Association back in 1995. So they may be out and about working on a new project just as their name suggests. Dem Dat's Doin means those who are getting things done in Creole. We are sure they will be "doin'" for a long time to come.

As for the Howler, well, as someone once said "I'll be back."

Contact: 722-2470 or dem-datsdoin@btl.net

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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 Genipa

Genipa Americana is the given name of one of Belize's most sustainable alternatives to nutritional supplements. The fruit of the Genipa is a unique complex vitamin that literally grows on trees. Its trumpet-like five petalled flowers are yellow-white, faintly fragrant, and bisexual in nature. When in season, from September to April, the mature Genipa produces large berry like fruits that resemble soft yellow brown leathery skinned guavas; only they taste more like dried apples when eaten. Genipa trees begin to fruit after they are about six years old and the fruits take a full year to mature. A 15 year old tree can provide up to 600 fruit in

tein, iron, riboflavin, and anti-bacterial substances. In addition, the fruit pulp alone can be applied to the skin to work as an insect repellent. The tree itself is small to medium sized, growing anywhere from 8 to 30 meters in height, and flowers from May to September. Genipa is native to moist areas very much like the rainforest in southern Belize. This tree is most happy in parts of the rain forest which lie next to rivers as well as areas that flood annually for several months. This tree begs to be propagated; there are about 300 seeds inside the fruit that can be easily planted, it



Leaves and fruit of genipa americana

requires little maintenance, loves flooding, and can tolerate dry periods for up to six months. Unfortunately, Genipa is more sought after for good looks and nothing more. People in different parts of the world use this tree for only shade and ornamental value. But the Genipa takes no offense and remains the tree that keeps on giving. It makes a great fence for grazing areas as it also provides nutritional food for cattle and livestock. Livestock thrive on its fruits

and leaves; cattle eat the leaves, and domestic animals eat the fruit. Its flowers yield nectar for pollinators and honeybees. It can be interplanted with temporary crops like cassava or cotton to provide shade for the young trees. Genipap saplings make great firewood, and its timber is excellent for carvings, wood works, and fence posts. A dark blue dye used in food coloring is made from the green fruits. Indigenous peoples of the Amazon, South America, and the Caribbean have long used the dye of the Genipa fruit for body painting, tattooing, coloring fabrics, hammocks, and basket materials. The body paint and temporary tattoos made from the fruit can last up to twenty days. The indigenous people of Guyana continue to use the fruit as fish bait because it keeps the fish biting. The Genipa is unsurpassed when it comes to giving; even the heavy fall of the leaves help to transform and enrich the soil of its immediate environment. If you wish to see a Genipa tree in person, visit the Lodge at Big Falls in Toledo.

Contributed by Ana Arzu
Contact 600-3873 or
arzu@arzumounatinspirit.com



Cross section of a fruit of jennypap

just one season. The mature fruits fall straight to the ground ready to eat, and well protected from bruising by their leathery hide. Each fruit weighs between 200 - 400 grams and is jam packed with nutrients. Each fruit contains about 10 grams of protein, 6 grams of iron, over 60 grams of ascorbic acid, 80 grams of calcium, B vitamins including B2, and other nutritional elements too numerous to mention. Each Genipa fruit is a natural plant based source of pro-

tein, iron, riboflavin, and anti-bacterial substances. In addition, the fruit pulp alone can be applied to the skin to work as an insect repellent. The tree itself is small to medium sized, growing anywhere from 8 to 30 meters in height, and flowers from May to September. Genipa is native to moist areas very much like the rainforest in southern Belize. This tree is most happy in parts of the rain forest which lie next to rivers as well as areas that flood annually for several months. This tree begs to be propagated; there are about 300 seeds inside the fruit that can be easily planted, it

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Southern Voices



Leonie Requena

Leonie Requena and her husband Julio have run the Water Taxi Service from Punta Gorda since 1995. In June 2011 her services to tourism over many years was recognized by the Belize Tourism Board when she was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for her work.

Can you tell us about your family history in Toledo?

My family were originally from Belize City where I was born but we moved to Punta Gorda in 1956 when I was a young girl at primary school age. We also spent just under a year in Seine Bight village before moving further south to PG. We had a fright in Seine Bight when we heard that hurricane Janet (1955) was heading towards Placencia and my father had already left to go fishing and we had no way of contacting him. It turned out all right for us in the end because Janet drifted north where Corozal and the surrounding villages were badly damaged. My father had also decided that something was wrong and had decided not to go out to sea; in fact he could not go out because as he tried to take his boat from the lagoon side to the open water the currents were so strong that he simply could not leave. We sheltered at the school but in those days the school had a thatched roof so was not really a hurricane shelter at all.

What are the most important changes that you have seen in Toledo in your lifetime?

Well, the main one is simply the growth that has taken place. In 1956 Punta Gorda had one unpaved street which is now Front Street. The last house at the north end of PG was the one just before the Seafront Inn today. There was no mains water and we took a wooden trolley and filled up our containers at a well near where the Toledo Community College stands today.

Before we began our water taxi services there were two Guatemalan ferries that could hold around one hundred foot pas-

sengers and crossed three times a week taking a couple of hours. We began filling in the days in between and as we did that the Guatemalans stopped their service. Other Belizean boats have come and gone but we have offered an uninterrupted service to Puerto Barrios since 1995.

How can we improve tourism in Toledo?

Well, we need to be far more welcoming at all the ports of entry and the tourists need more information about what is available here in Toledo. We are still lagging behind other parts of the country and too many visitors who land at the port in PG pass straight on out of Toledo by bus or plane.

What could PG Town Council do to support tourism?

Keep PG much cleaner and fix the potholes permanently rather than filling them in with sand and dirt that gets washed away in the first rain that follows. Then offer promotion and sponsorship for local artists and musicians who spend a lifetime working for their art and country but often end up paupers.

Reef or Rainforest, Leonie?

Reef. Definitely the sea. I am afraid of snakes and other things out there...I am not much of a bush person. My father and husband were both fishermen and we have always lived in front of the sea.

If a tourist has time to visit just one place in Toledo, where would you suggest?

The rainforest. Despite what I just said. There are cayes and beaches elsewhere but the cacao trails, the forest trees and plants and the culture and traditions of the indigenous people are unique.

What is your favourite season of the year?

The dry season which includes the Christmas and Easter times.

What is your favourite Belizean food?

Oh, that is a really difficult question. I like them all and cook them all. I even cook 'hudut' which is a Garifuna dish. We cook Spanish and east Indian and Creole food. We make tamales for Christmas and other special occasions. We call them Tamales Chapin (Guatemalan Tamales). They have lots of spices, roasted and ground squash seeds and sesame seeds, different kinds of pepper, onions and garlic that are all blended together. When we cook them we do it in bulk a couple of hundred at a time and eat them for breakfast or as snacks.

Red beans or black beans?

Black. We don't like red beans but black beans with onion and garlic and a few other ingredients are good and we like refried black beans.

Well thanks for your time, Leonie.

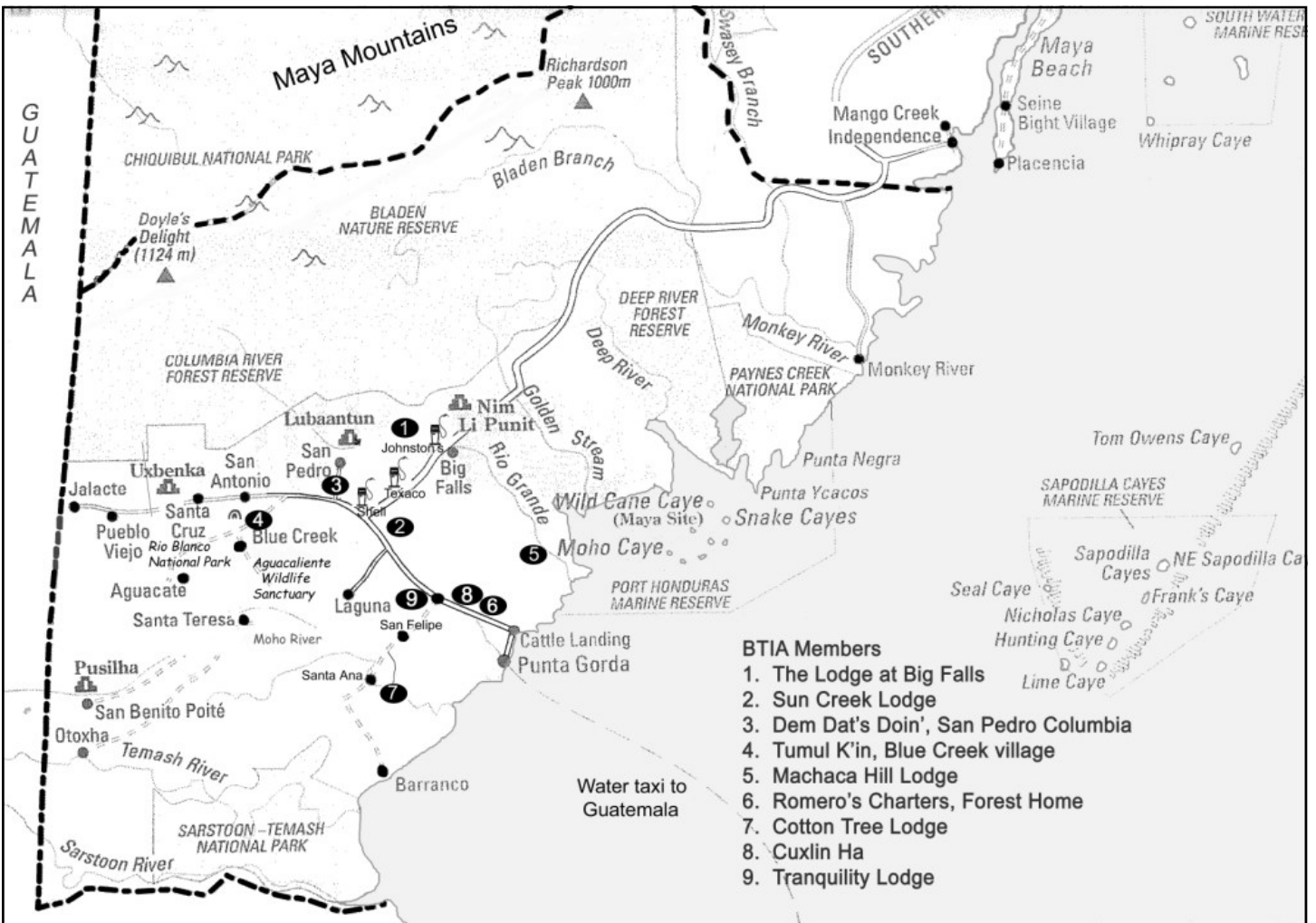
You are welcome, Howler.

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 7).
- ◆ Tropic Air office in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala.
- ◆ Requena's Charters office in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala.
- ◆ Placencia Tourist information Center, Placencia Village
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PG Library Lecture Series:

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The **Punta Gorda Library** Lecture Committee is presenting a second five session series for the 2011-2012 season with topics ranging from ancient Mayan history to contemporary political controversies that will appeal to a broad array of PG's inhabitants and visitors. Several of the events have been structured to advance inter-cultural dialogue and understanding.

The list of events is as follows:

September- *Is the Past Present? Belize at 30*, a panel discussion of social issues facing Belize before and after independence led by Wil Maheia and including Charles Martinez and Hector Silva

November *Our Spiritual Mythology: Ancestor Worship in Garifuna Life* with Ana Arzu

January *The Crystal Skull and the History of the Skull Cults* with Daryl Caps

March *A History of Land Tenure in Belize: Setting the stage for the struggle for land ownership in 2011* with Professor Richard Wilk of Indiana University.

May *Remembering our Past and Understanding our Present: An evening with our elders*

Check with the PG Library on Front Street for dates and times or call 702-2271.