



The Toledo Howler

Newspaper of the Toledo Chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association

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FREE

Toledo Cacao Fest 2008

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Cocoa has played a dominant role in Toledo from ancient Maya times. Today Toledo is home to organic cacao orchards where the cacao is grown and processed into the world-renowned Maya Gold chocolate, itself inspired by the ancient Maya 'kukuh' drink. The Festival is a family weekend celebration of chocolate and the rich flavors of the Toledo District.

Festival Chairperson, Darla Mallory, commented, "This year's Festival sees the return of last year's favorite events, with some exciting new additions.

"The Department of Archaeology has granted us permission to hold the first ever performance of the Deer Dance in the plaza at Lubaantun, and one of our community projects is to enhance the visitors' centre at the site, and restore the display cases to allow the return of the artifacts from safe-keeping in Belmopan.

"The Festival is the result of wide-ranging collaboration with many stakeholders (of which the cacao farmers are key), and our heartfelt thanks go to all of them. One of our most enthusiastic supporters and a founding committee member was Gregor Hargrove, who passed away last month. His death is a huge loss to the District and, in conjunction with the Toledo Cacao Growers Association, we hope to establish a lasting memorial to his work. In the meantime, our best

tribute is to make this and future Cacao Festivals as successful as our first."

The Festival opens on Friday 23rd May with its Wine & Chocolate evening. Saturday's cookery and craft fair features chocolate products, arts and crafts from

which to educate about the positive contribution cacao production makes to the environment and the economic needs of our buffer communities. We are planning a full day of fun activities – including face-painting, and traditional children's games. We're also running a poster, essay and poetry competition and this year's competition theme is "Cacao: keeping Toledo green"

Sunday's Cacao Trail tours take visitors inland to Toledo's 'chocolate country', visiting the organic cacao orchards, meeting the farmers and their families, and tasting not only the organic home-made chocolate but also sampling the rich local culture. The tours end at Lubaantun for a special performance of the Deer Dance, before heading back for the free concert and firework display in PG

Town.

This year's concert finale features the Garifuna Collective, hot on the heels of their Andy Palacio tribute tour, followed by a spectacular firework display over the Bay of Honduras, and our grand raffle!

[Schedule of events on Page 9]

For more information email: info@ToledoChocolate.com

Visit the Festival website www.ToledoChocolate.com, or call the BTIA Toledo Tourism Information Centre on 722-2531.



Deer Dance performer at last year's Toledo Cacao Fest.

the District's artisans, cultural exhibits from Toledo's ethnic groups, and music from PG's very own 'Queen of Bruksdown' Leela Vernon. There are Sea Toledo Marine Trips and Cacao for Kids activities throughout the day.

Lisel Alamilla from Fauna & Flora International along with Ya'axche Conservation Trust and the Toledo Environmental Educators' Group is heading the Cacao for Kids activities.

She said, "Organizing the kids programme is of strategic importance for the conservation organizations in Toledo - as it provides an important forum from



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Contact Toledo BTIA at the Tourism Information Center, Front St., Punta Gorda Tel. 722-2531 E-mail btia-toledo@btl.net **Chair:** Bruno Kuppinger, **Secretary:** Yvonne Villoria, **Treasurer:** Leonie Requena

Contact The Howler Editorial Team

Tel. 722-2531 E-mail btiatoledo@btl.net
Features Editor: Marta Hirons 671-7172, Advertising & Production Manager: Rob Hirons 671-7172, Editorial Assistant Kimberly Williams 722-2531

THE SEA FRONT INN: TOURISM PIONEER IN PUNTA GORDA

<p>Larry and Carol Smith first arrived in Toledo in 1973 where they worked as missionaries for twenty years and brought up their three children. The whole family are now Belizean citizens.</p> <p>They built and opened the Sea Front Inn in November 1997. Since that time they have seen thousands of visitors come and go. As well as tourists they have hosted representatives of NGOs, Prime Ministers of Belize, medical teams after hurricane Iris in October 2001 and musicians like Aurelio Martinez from Honduras and the late Andy Palacio. Oh, and film crews and missionaries and a National Geographic team studying the boa constrictors on the Snake Cayes.</p> <p>You can't miss the Sea Front Inn. It is the tallest building on the sea front with blue roofs and a pier reaching out into the Gulf of Honduras where their sea trips embark and locals and visitors sunbathe and swim. It is just a short five-minute walk from restaurants and shops in town.</p>	<p>The Sea Front Inn has 14 rooms, two apartments and a penthouse suite. The apartments are fully furnished with equipped kitchens and extended stays</p>  <p>The Seafront Inn; a well known PG landmark.</p> <p>from two weeks to as long as you like can be arranged.</p> <p>The Sea Front which is staffed twenty-four hours a day has wireless internet, parking and air-conditioning in all rooms. The Rosewood Forest Restaurant on the third floor is open for breakfast (\$10-15) everyday for both guests and the public. They provide lunches for tours and will cater dinner on request for groups of ten or more. Guests can</p>	<p>also find a range of local crafts for sale in the restaurant. This is run as a service to the craftspeople and all revenue goes to them.</p> <p>The rooms were all re-modeled and improved recently and are themed. Guests may find themselves in the Manatee, Blue Morpho, Dolphin or Black Orchid room all of which feature local hardwood finishings.</p> <p>The Sea Front tailors packages for its guests which include the possibility of one or two night tours to Livingston and the Rio Dulce across the Bay of Honduras in Guatemala. An unforgettable experience.</p> <p>Future plans include kayak rentals and bicycles for guests use.</p> <p>The Sea Front is continually improving its guest services and you can always be assured of a warm welcome from owners Larry and Carol.</p> <p>Contact E-mail office@seafrontinn.com Tel: 722-2300 Fax: 722-2682 Web site http://www.seafrontinn.com</p>
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<div><p><i>DJS-</i></p><p>The Unique Indigenous Experience</p><p>A people-to-people cultural mutuality program. Learn about the</p></div>	 <p>The Lodge at Big Falls</p> <p>Accommodation in elegant river-side cabanas</p> <p>Pool Kayaking River Tubing Bar & Restaurant</p> <p>www.thelodgeatbigfalls.com 671-7172 info@thelodgeatbigfalls.com</p>
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The Arbor Restaurant features a balanced menu of fresh, local seafood and regional cuisine with many of the herbs, vegetables and tropical fruits organically grown at Machaca Hill. All of our bread and desserts are homemade. Our bar offers a full selection of top-shelf liquors, wine and local beer.



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DEJA VIEW AND REEF BAR

New tenants moved into the old Titanic bar down on Front Street in the middle of February. It has been given a complete facelift and is now brightly painted in blue, yellow, red and green. The new tenants, Juli Puryear and Polly Wood, perform a double act.

From 7:30 until 2pm it is Juli's Deja View café serving breakfast and lunch with a range of smoothies and excellent coffee grown and roasted in Belize. Try the delicious passion fruit smoothie or the frap-pucino. Home made bagels and French toast offer a different kind of start to the day and Juli's walnut praline and German chocolate cake will add love handles as you eat. There is a traveler's book exchange, crafts stand and wireless internet in addition to the best views in town.



Deja View Café & Reef Bar: a cool seaside spot overlooking PG's bustling market

At 2 pm Juli clocks out and Polly takes over the same space as the Reef Bar. She offers a range of burgers where every ingredient, from the bun to the burger patty, is home made. Thai chicken curry, fish cakes, honey mustard pork chops and cheesy calaloo and tomato crepes all introduce welcome diversity to the dishes available in PG.

Meals are available until 10pm every day and wine is available by the glass or bottle along with a range of cocktails. Beer is very reasonably priced at \$3.50 or \$3.00 during Happy Hour from 5-6 every evening.

Contact Tel: 702-0154

E-mail dejabrewbelize@yahoo.com



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Maya Bags Carried Around The World

Maya Bags is the brainchild of Judy Bergsma from New York who first came to Toledo in 1998 to visit TIDE. Judy was inspired when she was given a beautiful embroidery of a butterfly by Jovita Sho in San Pedro Columbia. Judy explained "the combination of the people I met, the needs they had, Jovita's gift of embroidery and the timing in my life set me up for a journey with Belize and the Maya I never anticipated."

Today, MayaBags® is the trademark for this effort, defined by a business based both in Southern Belize and in the U.S.A. The mission of the business is to help Maya women become income producers in their households, while also building their self-esteem and independence within their community and preserving the rainforest. By providing work and assisting the women with quality and design, MayaBags® also supports the continuation of the traditional crafts of hand-embroidery, textile weaving & basket coiling. From its small beginnings of working with six women, MayaBags® now works with six teams of embroiderers, weavers, and basket coilers living in six different villages and involves over fifty women and four men. In Belize, the Maya women are 42% stakeholders in the business while another 7% of the shares have been set aside to provide income to a conservation fund run by the TIDE for protecting the rivers that run through the Maya villages in the Toledo District. In MayaBags® Punta Gorda office, next to Frontier Inn by the airstrip there is a commercial surging machine and two commercial sewing

machines. The business in Belize is run by Desiree Arnold, a Belizean, and, as Judy says, "an incredibly capable woman." "I look at what we've accomplished in a short period of time, and it makes my heart sing and my feet dance."

The Maya women involved in this



project are among the poorest in Belize, yet represent an intact culture rich in tradition and history. Although poor and mostly uneducated, they have the energy and desire to improve their lives and carry forward the skills involved in their traditional crafts, as these skills are the only way they can earn an income while caring for their family. Judy and Desiree both agree, "These women are fabulous; they're fun to be with, have a good work ethic, and generally are appreciative of what it takes to make this all work."

MayaBags® produces a line of high-end, hand-embroidered purses, travel bags for lingerie, shoes, and accessories, yoga mat bags, string backpacks for children, and reusable gift bags for wine and holidays wrappings. MayaBags® has also developed a line for home décor, including pillows and table cloths and even Christmas ornaments.

MayaBags® have created an exclusive, main floor line of purses for Barneys New York flagship stores across the U.S. for the past five years. They have a product line in Browns of London, and The Museum of Natural History in New York. You can see MayaBags®

products online at the MayaBags' web site, www.mayabags.org or www.mayabags.com. This Spring season they launch childrens' string backpacks in Steph's Stuff, a main street boutique in East Hampton, Long Island and will be doing a trunk show for our purses at Entre Nous in East Hampton as a benefit for Cancer Care. Judy says "I always credit Jovito Sho as the co-founder of this business; she gave me the piece of embroidery that inspired

me, she embroidered the first set of bags we did, she was my first team leader. To this day, I turn to her with questions I have about how to handle situations that arise, I ask her for cultural insights, and she acts as my guide."

Contact Maya Bags

In the USA

MayaBags, a US and Belizean
Registered Trademark
WorldWrappers, Inc.
115 West 88th Street
New York, NY 10024
212-874-5569
j.bergsma@mayabags.org
www.mayabags.org

In Punta Gorda

722-2175E-mail:
belizeexecutivedirector@mayabags.org

Where to get your copy of The Toledo Howler:

The Toledo Howler will normally be distributed at the Toledo Tourism Information Center on Front Street as well as other shops, restaurants and places of business of BTIA members in Toledo (see list on Page 7). The paper can also be found at Maya Island Air and Tropic Air terminals throughout Belize plus Tropic Air and Requena's Charters in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala.

BTIA TOLEDO MEMBERS 2008

Business Name	Email	Phone	Contact Person
Beya Suites	info@beyasuites.com	722-2188	Lisa Avila
Blue Belize Guest House & Tours	info@bluebelize.com	722-2678	Dan Castellanos & Rachel Graham
Chris Crowell	chris@cottontreelodge.com	670-0557	Chris Crowell
Coral House Inn	ridarbelize@yahoo.com	722-2878	Rick & Darla Mallory
Cuxlin Ha Time Share	cuxlinha@hotmail.com	501-614-2518	Dona Lee Scafe
Dem Dats Doin	demdatsdoin@btl.net	501-722-2470	Yvonne Villoria
Fish & Fun Guiding Services	bzdeepsouth@hotmail.com	671-0506	Ovel Leonardo
Garbutt's Marine Investment	garbuttsmarine@yahoo.com	604-3548	Dennis Garbutt
Hickatee Cottages	cottages@hickatee.com	662-4475	Ian & Kate Morton
Juli Puryear	julizeinbelize@yahoo.com	722-2276	Juli Puryear
Larry Smith	larry@seafrontinn.com	722-2300	Larry & Carol Smith
The Lodge at Big Falls	info@thelodgeatbigfalls.com	671-7172	Marta & Rob Hirons
Machaca Hill Lodge	info@machacahill.com	722-0050	Ovel Leonardo
Obsession Bar & Grill	stcharlespg@btl.net	722-0193	Carlo Wagner
Requena's Charter Service	watertaxi@btl.net	722-2070	Julio Requena
Romero's Charter Service	rcharters@btl.net	722-2625/2924	Frances Romero
Scotia Bank	jose.chan@scotiabank.com	722-0098/0099	Jose Chan
Sun Creek Lodge	suncreek@huges.net	600-8773/614-2080	Bruno & Melissa Kuppinger
TIDE Tours	info@tidetour.org	722-2129	Delonie Foreman
Toledo Eco-Tourism Association	teabelize@yahoo.com	722-2531	Vicente Sackul
Tumul Kin Center of Learning	tumulkindevelopment@yahoo.com	608-1070	Esther Sanchez Sho

Restaurant Guide

Name	Address	Type of Food	Phone	Hours
Coleman’s Cafe	Big Falls Village	Belizean	720-2017	Daily: 7- 9am, 11:30- 4pm & 6- 9pm [Reservations Preferred]
Deja View & Reef Bar	Front St, upstairs market, PG	International	702-0154	Mon-Sat: 7:30am – midnight Sun: 2pm - midnight
El Cafe	North St, PG, in front of Charlton’s Inn	Belizean	702-2093	Daily: 6:30am— 2pm & 7—9pm
Emery’s Restaurant	Main St, behind Texaco, PG	Belizean/ Seafood	722-2312	Daily: 8am – 10:30pm
Fie Wang Restaurant	Main St, PG	Chinese	722-0037	Mon-Thurs: 10am – 2pm & 5pm – 11pm. Fri & Sat: 9am - midnight
Gomier’s Restaurant and Soy Centre	Alejandro Vernon St, PG, near PG welcome sign	Vegetarian/ Seafood	722-2929	Tue - -Sat: 8am – 2pm & 6 – 9pm
Grace’s Restaurant	Main St. PG	Belizean/ Interna-tional	702-2414	Daily: 8am – 1-pm
Hang Cheong Restaurant	Main St, PG	Chinese	722-2064	Daily: 10:30am – 2pm & 5 – 11pm
The Lodge at Big Falls	Big Falls Village	International / Mid-dle Eastern	671-7172	Daily: 11:30am – 2pm & 6:30 – 9pm [Reservations Required]
Morenco’s Restaurant & Ice Cream Parlor	Main St, PG	Belizean/ Seafood/ Ice Cream & Snacks	702-2572	Mon-Sat: 9am – 2pm & 5 – 10pm Sun: 5 – 10pm
Marian’s Bay View Res-taurant	Front St, south of market	East Indian/ Beliz-ean	722-0129	Mon-Sat: 11am – 2pm & 6 – 10pm Sun & Hols: noon – 2pm & 7 - 9pm
Martina’s Kitchen	BTL parking lot, PG	Belizean		Mon-Sat: 7am – 2pm. Closed Sun-days
River’s View Bar & Grill	Big Falls Village, by the bridge	Belizean / Grilled meats & fish		Mon – Thur: 9am – 9pm. Fri – Sun: 9am - midnight
The Snack Shack	BTL parking lot, PG	Breakfast & lunch/ Snacks, Shakes & Juices	702-0020	Mon – Sat: 7am – 4pm. Closed Sun-days
Waluco’s Bar & Grill	Hopeville, across from TIDE wharf	International	665-3066	Wed – Mon: 11:30am – 9:30 pm. Closed Tuesdays

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		
Schedule of Buses leaving Punta Gorda							
Departs from Punta Gorda		Arrives in Belize City		Service Provider		Type of Service	
3:00am		10:30am		National Transport		Regular	
4:00am		10:00am		James Bus Line		Regular	
4:30 am		9:15am		National Transport		Regular	
5:00am		11:00am		James Bus and Usher's Bus Line		Regular	
6:00am		11:00am		James Bus Line		Express	
6:00am		12:30pm		James Bus Line		Regular	
8:00am		2:30pm		James Bus Line		Regular	
10:00am		4:30pm		James Bus line		Regular	
12noon		6:30pm		James Bus Line		Regular	
1:30pm		7:30pm		Usher's Bus Line		Regular	
2:00pm		7:30pm		James Bus Line		Regular	
3:00pm		8:30pm		James Bus Line		Regular	
Boats To Puerto Barrios and Livingston, 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
Boats to Livingston depart on Tuesdays and Fridays at 10 a.m.							

Did you know...?

There are 59 known species of snakes in Belize. Of this number, only 9 are capable of delivering a life threatening bite and only 4 of these are generally found in Toledo.

Ssssurprising.....



Rotary Club in Punta Gorda

A new Rotary Club was established in Punta Gorda on 17 January , 2008. Led by Jose Chan the manager of Scotia Bank's new branch in the town the club is sponsored by established branches in Placencia and Belize City.

The club meets weekly at Grace's Restaurant on Main Street. Kenrick Theus is the president elect who will take over in the new Rotary year which begins in July.

Rotary does many good works around the world. The Gift for Life program in Belize has made operations in the USA possible for many Belizean children.

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Monkey River Creole Festival



Dancers at last year's Monkey River Festival

The second Monkey River Creole Village Festival will take place on the weekend of 24 and 25 May under the patronage of the governor General Sir Colville Young.

The weekend will include a big money fishing competition, football marathon, traditional games,

a dory race and traditional dancing.

Miss Leela Vernon is cultural consultant for the festival and is planning a two day dance training workshop for participating villagers. She will teach the Warinae, an historic dance originating in Monkey river and performed by banana plantation workers after the harvests. Other dance to be taught include the rujau, Bruksdown, Samba and Maypole Dancing. Miss Leela and the Baymen's Clan will entertain during the weekend along with the Belize Defence Force band. Other musicians will be announced later.

For more details call Sue Harris on 620-8581

E-mail steppingstones.sue@gmail.com

Requena's Charter Service

Linking PG and Puerto Barrios for over 12 years

Leonie and Julio Requena started their water taxi service in 1995. As is so often the case in Toledo, they saw a demand which was not being met by existing businesses. Prior to 1995, there had been only a twice weekly service to Puerto Barrios, across the bay in Guatemala. Other boat services were unreliable.

The Requena's started with one small boat which could carry 20 people. In time they acquired a larger boat and now own two boats, each with a capacity of 30 people.

As well as their daily water taxi service to 'Barrios', the Requena's also offer charter trips to the cayes and rivers of Toledo as well as the Rio Dulce in Guatemala. Reliable, responsible and safe

transportation continue to form a central part of their business practice.



Leonie Requena outside the office on Front Street in PG

Leonie was born in Belize City and moved to PG at the age of 9. Julio was born in Guatemala and arrived in PG at age 14, where they later met and married in 1963.

Requena's Charter Service has been a

member of the Toledo branch of the BTIA (Belize Tourism Industry Assoc) since its

inception in 1986 and have always played an active role in promoting tourism to the district. Leonie is presently the Treasurer of the branch. She says there have been many changes in PG over the years and now many more businesses are focused on tourism.

As Leonie says, "Tourism stakeholders must work together to improve and market our product so more people will come and enjoy our beautiful district."

Requena's Charter Service offers a daily water taxi to Puerto Barrios, leaving at 9am from the main dock (opposite the post office) and returning at 2pm. For more information and reservations call 722-2070 or visit their office on Front St.

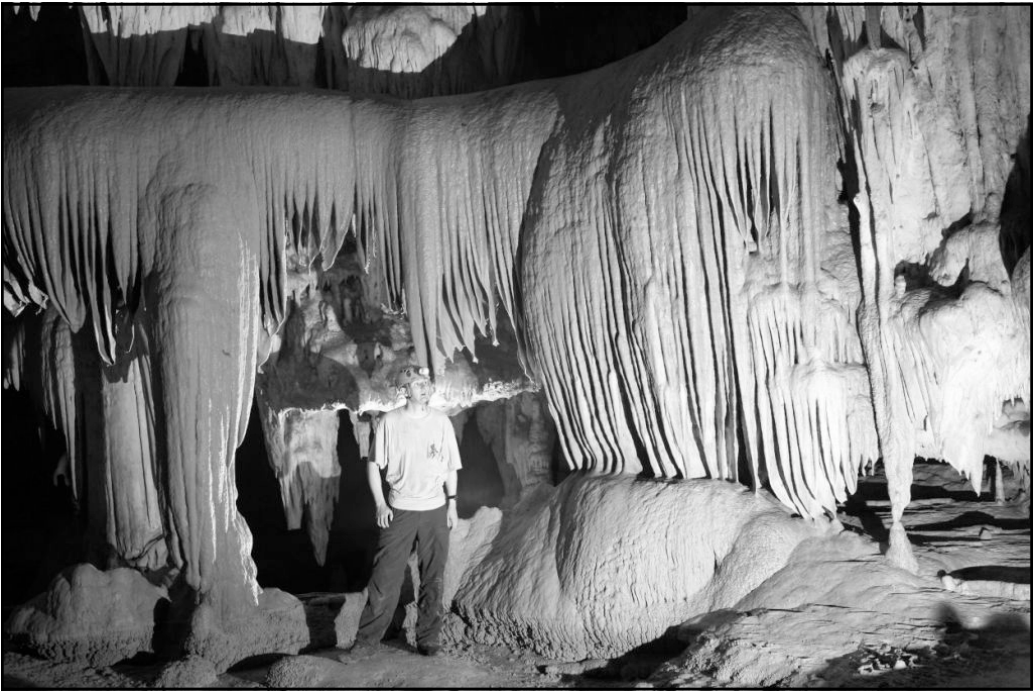
PHOTO OP: TIGER CAVE

The South Wales Caving Club visited Toledo again this year during February and March. They have been coming here since 2000 under the auspices of the Archaeology Department . While underground they use their skills and techniques to map the caverns they explore. Their maps depict all the natural features they encounter, limestone formations, underground water courses and blockages. Any archaeological discoveries are reported to the Archeology Department.

This year they generously gave some of their time to run Toledo’s first caving training for licensed tour guides. The training was led by Toby Dryden one of the United Kingdoms most skilled and experienced cavers.

The day’s training topics included geology, conservation, group management and perhaps most important of all, safety. There were participants from Sun Creek Lodge, Machaca Hill Lodge, Cotton Tree Lodge and Cuxlin Ha.

This issue’s “Photo Op” picture shows some of the impressive limestone formations within Tiger



Cave which lies just a couple of miles to the north of San Miguel village where the Rio Grande emerges from the mountainside.

A caver is surrounded by magnificent limestone formations in Tiger Cave near the Toledo village of San Miguel

Guest Houses to Create Central American Co-op Marketing Group

Three guest houses, two from Toledo and one from Placencia, represented the Belize Tourism Industry Asssociation at a 2-day workshop in Nicaragua to develop a new regional tourism network throughout Central America. The network is being developed with the assistance of Gites de France – an organization established in France over 50 years ago to promote holiday rentals and guest houses, and a network which today has over 56,000 properties and which contributes \$500m to local economies throughout France.

Belize was represented by Coral House Inn and Hickatee Cottages from Toledo and Lydia’s Guest House in Placencia. They were among fifty property owners who met in Managua to discuss and develop strategies and a framework for the co-operative mar-

keting and promotion of individual properties and multi-centre vacations in Central America. The aim is to establish a standards and rating system, group marketing and an association based on the French model.

Darla Mallory fromCoral House commented “this is such an exciting opportunity for us here in Belize to strengthen our ties with the Central American region, and benefit from strength in numbers in collectively promoting Central America as a diverse and exciting tourism destination. Gites de France is a proven success, and their experience will be invaluable in developing the network.”

Lydia Villaneuva said “this French network was set up to benefit local economies, and their philosophies closely match the principles of Best

Management Practices for sustainable Tourism that we have been implementing. What’s good for the small owner-operated guest houses is also good for the community, the country, and the region.”

Kate Morton said “In Belize, over 70% of our tourist accommodation has twelve rooms or fewer, and the Gites de France model of collectively promoting small, owner-operated guest houses is a great fit for Belize.”

For more information contact:

Efren Perez,
Marketing Officer at BTIA national headquarters in Belize City
E-mail marketing@btia.org
Tel: 227-1144

Toledo Cacao Fest 2008 – Schedule of Events

	Morning	Afternoon		Evening
Fri 23 rd May				Wine & Chocolate evening, with music from the Caribbean Trio
Sat 24 th May	Taste of Toledo cookery and craft fair			Culture in Harmony music in PG
		Leela Vernon		
	Cacao for Kids activities			
	Sea Toledo Marine Trips			
Sun 24 th May	Inland cacao Trail tours		Deer Dance at Lubaantun	Festival Firework Finale, with the Garifuna Collective. Grand raffle.

Toledo to Host Responsible Tourism Conference

The first International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations was organized in Cape Town in 2002. Delegates attended from twenty countries including representatives of tour operators, entrepreneurs, national parks, government, tourism professionals, NGOs, hotel groups and other stakeholders. Coming from Africa, the Americas, Europe and Asia, they considered the issue of responsible tourism and agreed the Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations.

The Cape Town Conference recognized that local responsible tourism policies and objectives will reflect local cultural and environmental priorities. Responsible travel takes a variety of forms. It is characterized by travel and tourism which minimizes negative economic, environmental, and social impacts. It generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, improves working conditions and involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances.

Responsible tourism makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage and to the maintenance of the world's diversity. It provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues; provides access for physically challenged people and is culturally sensitive engendering respect between tourists and their hosts.

Since 2002 national strategies for responsible tourism have been pursued in some countries at provincial and state level. The remarkable growth of the tourism industry has made it imperative that countries look at tourism development in a new light, so as to maximize the benefits, minimize the impacts of tourism on the social, cultural and natural fabric of the land and adopt practices and policies that are responsible and sustainable.

Mr. Yashin Dujon, responsible tourism consultant and head of the Best Management Unit at Programme for Belize at the time, invited Professor Harold Goodwin to Belize. Professor Goodwin of Sheffield Hallam University in the UK, heads the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) and organizes the responsible tourism conference. Mr Dujon toured him around Belize finishing in Toledo. Professor Goodwin was impressed and immediately started dialogue with both Mr. Dujon and Mr. Kenrick Theus, also a responsible tourism consultant and current President of the Belize Hotel Association to start the work of organizing The Centre for Responsible Tourism and Travel (CRTT) as an arm of the ICRT in Belize. The CRTT will focus on market research, consultancy and training in responsible tourism topics in Belize, Central America and the Caribbean.

When they explained the World Responsible Tourism Conference to the Minister of Tourism, Hon. Manuel Heredia and his new CEO, Mr. Michael Singh the idea was immediately embraced by

them both. In a video address to the recently held World Conference on Responsible Tourism held in Kerala, India on March 21-24, 2008, the minister accepted Belize's successful bid to host the Third Conference on Responsible Tourism.

In his address The Minister pledged his full support for the development and implementation of an environmentally friendly Tourism Strategy for Belize. This includes the necessity for policies in all aspects of tourism and other supporting industries. Citing key global issues impacting the country such as global warming and climate change, the rising fuel prices, and international food shortages as reasons why tourism development should be imperative for small developing economies like Belize.

"Belize remains committed to the development of sustainable tourism and its supporting industries," commented Minister Heredia. "Belize is naturally a strategic venue for such a Conference. It will give us an opportunity to bring key stakeholders together to build alliances that will further move our agenda for responsible development forward and establish Belize as a world ecotourism leader," he added.

This will be the largest conference of its kind to be held in Belize and he first time that the World Conference on Responsible Tourism is held in the Western Hemisphere. The event to be held in Toledo from May 21-25th 2009 is expected to attract over 250 scholars, Ministers, wholesalers and international officials from around the globe.



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Chocoholics Delight

It's hard to miss the gold wrapped chocolate bars that have started appearing for sale around the district.

More striking still is the fact that the wrapper says 'Made in Belize'. It has always been ironic that Toledo is home to some of the finest quality cacao in the world and yet it has been impossible to purchase quality chocolate here. In the past, all the cacao grown in the district was exported and all chocolate available to buy was imported. Not any more!

Kerry and Linn Goss, owners of The Blue Crab Beach hotel in Seine Bight, decided to try their hand at making 'European style' chocolate using Toledo cacao. They started small in 2006 and grew into a commercial business in November 2007. All the cacao used is grown right here in Toledo and, mmm... is it good! The cacao is purchased from the Toledo Ca-

Wan Lee Bit a Kriol

Finga neva say "look ya", e say "look deh"

Finger never says "Look here", it says "Look there", meaning we are readier to blame others than ourselves.

Bad ting neba gat owner

"Bad things never have owners". Meaning nobody accepts responsibility when things go wrong.

Di higher monkey climb, di mo e expose

The higher the monkey climbs the more it is exposed to danger, meaning the holding of high position can be a risky business.



Next Issue August 2008

Preview

Florencio Mes of San Pedro Columbia village who plays and makes Maya harps. He has traveled as far as Malaysia performing at world music festivals. Look out for a feature in our next issue.

cao Growers Association and is 100% organic. Do we need any more reasons to eat chocolate? We don't think so.

Look out for the gold wrappers on sale during the Toledo Cacao Fest in May. Chocoholics unite!



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- Trip Advisor Member, June 2007

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Wat's Cookin ?

Caldo

- 1 chicken, cut into pieces
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 large potato, cut into chunks
- 1 large Coco Yam, cut into chunks
- Okra (optional)
- 1 or 2 Tomatoes, chopped
- Recado*
- Herbs: culantro, cilantro, chives, thyme
- Salt
- Oregano leaves to garnish

(*Recado is a paste made from annatto seeds and often mixed with spices such as cumin and allspice)

Boil 3 litres of water in large pot. Add salt. Place chicken pieces in boiling water. Add a small amount of recado, to give the liquid a light orange colour. Add onion, garlic, potato and yam. Add herbs to taste. Simmer for about 45 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Add tomatoes and okra (if using) about 5 minutes before cooking time is finished. Serve in a bowl garnished with oregano leaves. Serve with rice or corn tortillas.

Recipe supplied by Leona Cholom, Head Cook at The Lodge at Big Falls

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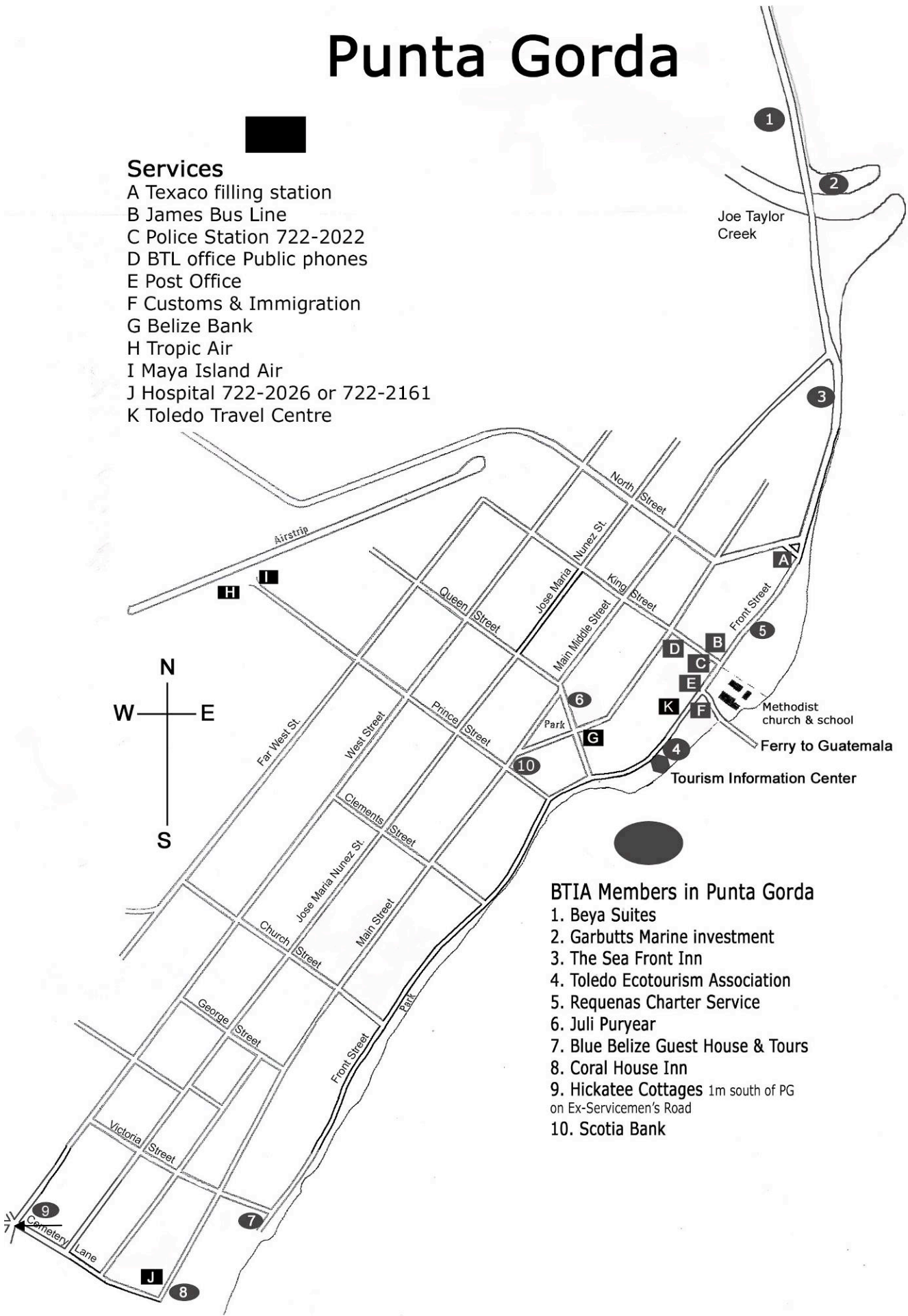
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Punta Gorda

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



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- 4. Toledo Ecotourism Association
- 5. Requenas Charter Service
- 6. Juli Puryear
- 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

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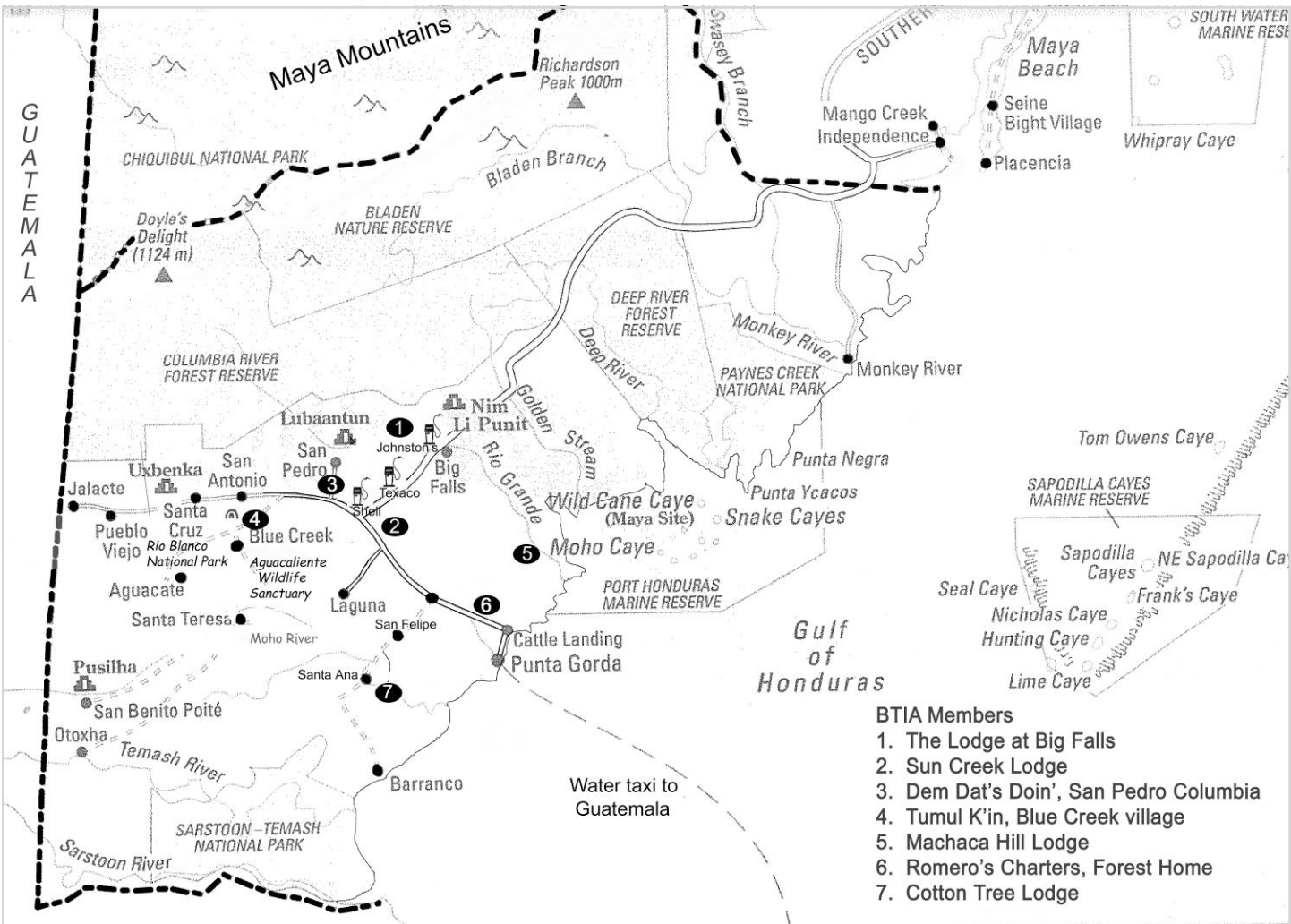
The BTIA membership year runs from January to December so apply now to put your business on the map from the beginning of 2008.

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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.

TOLEDO DISTRICT



Original map from "The Rough Guide to Belize" by Peter Eltringham, published by Rough Guides

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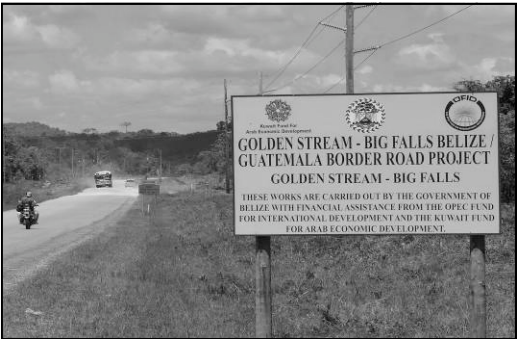
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At long last it appears work has begun on paving that last 9 miles of the Southern Highway. Driving down to Toledo will soon be even easier! No news yet on a completion date but the Howler will let their readers know as soon as any more information becomes available. In the meantime, take care on that dirt road!

Aguacaliente Wildlife Sanctuary announces the launch of their web site at <http://aguacaliente.bz> See the site for everything you need to know about visiting the sanctuary, one of the jewels of Toledo.



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