



The Toledo Howler

Newspaper of the Toledo Chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association

APRIL 2009

YEAR 2, ISSUE 4

FREE

Toledo Cacao Fest

22nd—24th May

INSIDE THE HOWLER

Toledo Cacao Fest 2009	1
Calendar of Events	3
Music: The Punta Gorda Stars	4
Restaurant Guide	5
Map of P.G.	6
Arzu on Medicinal Plants	6
BTIA Members	7
Transport Schedules	8
The Itzama Ethnobotanical Garden	9
Sun Creek Lodge	11
Tour Operator: Cuxlin Ha	14
Wat's Cookin	15
Map of Toledo	16
Classified Ads	16

During Commonwealth Day holiday weekend, Toledo district will once again host the Toledo Cacao Festival organized by the Toledo Chapter of BTIA and the Toledo Cacao Growers Association. The festival is becoming established as a regular feature on the Belize tourism calendar and attracting visitors both from within Belize and overseas.

Toledo itself can be justly considered as the original home of cacao and chocolate which played such an important part in ancient Mayan life. Today the TCGA sends its members beans to Green and Black's in the United Kingdom where it is transformed into their world renowned Mayan Gold orange-flavored chocolate.

Mayan Gold chocolate was the very first Fair Trade product in the UK back in These days an increasing acreage in Toledo is being given over to the organic cultivation of cacao and Green and Blacks pay above the market rate for the beans. The cultivation of cacao is a win-win situation for the environment since cacao is a sub canopy species and grows best in the shade of other trees. This discourages slash and burn agriculture and the farmers are now being encouraged to intercrop their cacao with other cash crops such as allspice. Green

and Black and TCGA together have done more to make a difference to the economy and well-being of the people of southern Belize than any number of development projects.



Woman in traditional Mopan Maya blouse grinds cacao beans on a stone.

The annual cacao festival is the fun part which celebrates Toledo's central importance in this sector of the economy. As in previous years the festival begins on Friday night with a wine and chocolate evening at the University of Belize campus in Punta Gorda. Students from the Tumul Kin Center of Learning in Blue Creek village will provide marimba accompaniment while a selection of Garifuna and Creole songs will be performed by students of the Delile Academy Choir from Dangriga.

The Taste of Toledo fair will take place all day on Saturday in PG's Central Park. The day's events include a cookery fair centered around chocolate recipes. There will be cookery presentations as well as a craft tent

selling locally designed and produced craft products. The Cacao for Kids section of the fair will include face painting, story telling, punchboard a chess competition and more.

A feature of Saturday night's entertainment will be the first ever Miss Cacao Fest Pageant where the participants will be asked to demonstrate their knowledge of their own culture as well as their knowledge of the history of cacao and its production.

Sunday the third and final day of the festival will feature the cacao trail tours and cultural presentations at Lubaantun Maya site. The cacao trail tours are run by Bruno Kuppinger who will be taking visitors to see a working cacao plantations. The events at Lubaantun will include a performance of the Mooro Dance as well as a performance of the Mayan Ball Game. The Mooro dance tells of the wars between the Maya and the European conquistadores and includes stylized battles and sword fighting.

To find out more email info@toledochocolate.com, or call the Festival Office on 722-2531

For more festival information see the **Calendar of Events** on page 3 or visit the web site at www.toledochocolate.com



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

Join BTIA and display your promotional materials in the information center.

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Contact Toledo BTIA at the Tourism Information Center, Front St., Punta Gorda Tel. 722-2531 E-mail btiatoledo@bti.net
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- e. Closing Ceremony Festivities May (21)

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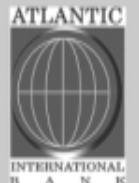
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Sponsors and Partners



Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Venue / Time	Other Info
11 & 12 April	Deer Dance performance Traditional Mayan dance	Big Falls Village Primary School / 8am–4pm	Entrance: \$10 pp Refreshments available
22 May	Toledo Cacao Fest 2009 Enjoy wine, chocolate and appetizers with live Marimba music and the Delille Academy Choir.	The terrace of the University of Belize in Punta Gorda 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm	BZ\$40 until 30 April BZ\$50 on the door
23 May	Taste of Toledo ♦ Cookery fair Cookery presentations and cultural food tent ♦ Cacao and chocolate products & crafts fair	Central Park, PG 8:00am to 4:00pm	
23 May	Cacao Symposium Special presentation by Dr Jaime Awe, Head of the Institute of Archaeology, on the Mayan calendar, history and significance of cacao to Toledo in ancient and modern times	TCGA Depot, Main St, PG, 9am–10am	
23 May	Sea Toledo ♦ Bay view boat rides ♦ Guided kayak trips ♦ Snorkelling trips	10:00am-2:00pm every hour 10:00am-2:00pm every hour 10:00am and 1:30pm	\$5 \$5 \$45
23 May	Cacao for Kids Face Painting, Story telling, Punchboard, Chess competition	Sports Complex, Punta Gorda	
23 May	Miss Cacao Fest Pageant	Father Ring Parish Hall 7:00pm-8:30pm	\$5 adults \$2 children over 12
23 May	Culture in Harmony Live music events:		
	New Vibz: band playing reggae, paranda, soca, punta and cumbia	Reef Bar 6pm–midnight	Chocolate cocktails for the entire weekend
	Umalali drummer	Grace's Restaurant 9pm–midnight	Conch soup, grilled shrimp & conch
	Luaruguma Peini Garifuna drumming band	Beya Suites, under the gazebo 6–10pm	BBQ conch & fish, special cacao fever grass drink
	Local musicians jam session playing blues, reggae and soul	Earth Runnin's 9:00pm til late No cover charge	Chicken roti, Thai fish curry, pasta, hummus & baba ghanoush
	Local documentary on Toledo	Garbutt's Marine Investment, Joe Taylor Creek 6–11pm	Marine Buffet
	Cool J's band: Caribbean style music & Dinner. Cacao-based menu including special cacao bread pudding with rum sauce.	Tranquility Lodge, Jacinto 7–9pm	Call for reservation
24 May	Cacao Trail Tours Visit an organic cacao plantation. Tour on the 24th will finish at Lubaantun for the Deer dance	♦ Daily from 18th–24th May ♦ 8:00 am departures from Punta Gorda	
24 May	Mooro Dance at Lubaantun , all day event Bus service at 9:30am and 1:00pm from the Tourism information Center in PG.	Lubaantun & San Pedro Columbia village / 9:00 am to 4:00pm	Transport: \$5 return pp Entrance: \$1.50 adults, children FREE
24 May	Music concert at Central Park, PG Cacao Fest Raffle	7:00pm –9:00pm	FREE

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Toledo Music:

Luwaruguma Peini

The Punta Gorda Stars

The Punta Gorda Stars (Luwaruguma Peini in the Garifuna language) are a group of five musicians who have been entertaining audiences in Belize and Guatemala for over ten years. The group have performed as far away as San Pedro, Livingstone and Guatemala City.

In November 2008, at the Battle of the Drums in Punta Gorda, the Stars were awarded third place in an increasingly competitive event.

Darius Avila, President of The Battle of the Drums Secretariat, says the group members were remarkably in sync with each other during the performance, which drew the audience into an intense involvement with the music. Darius believes the Stars are a strong contender to win the event next year.

Membership in the group has varied over time but at present there are five members; four are family and one is a close family friend.

Dale Aranda does vocals as well as being the group's front man and cultural interpreter during performances. Dale's ability to educate the audience about the Garifuna culture while entertaining them is a pleasure to experience.

Ivan McDonald plays both the primero and segundo drums.

Ronald McDonald plays primero and segundo drums plus lead and backup vocals.

Evan Nolberto plays the hickatee (river turtle) shell and also does background vocals.

Last, but not least, Damiana Gutierrez does vocals and dancing. Damiana is mother to Ivan, Ronald and Dale.

Dale explains the instruments to me. The primero drum is the smaller drum and is used for counter rhythms while the larger segundo drum acts as the bass to provide the background rhythm in each song. He compares the segundo drum to the human heartbeat, which seems very appropriate. The turtle shell is used like a percussion instrument. Also the maracas which are made from gourds, are used to enhance the beat.



Luwaruguma Peini perform for guests at The Lodge at Big Falls on New Year's Eve last year. Within a few minutes, all the guests were up and dancing.

Dale explains some of the different kinds of Garifuna music the group play.

The Hu Ga Hu Ga is a sacred dance performed in the Garifuna temple, the dabuyaba, during feasts for the ancestors. The dance is normally accompanied just by the segundo drum.

Another musical style is called Paranda, which is like a serenade and traditionally

shell and maracas. The music is meant to accompany dancing. In traditional Punta, men and women dance separately without touching each other. The dance has a competitive nature, as each person attempts to dance more sexily than their partner.

I asked Damiana, as mother of the band, where the musical talent comes from. She says that when she was growing up in PG, her family always played music, sang and danced during the November Garifuna celebrations. Music has always been part of her life.

When Damiana is not performing with the group, she makes and sells mouth-watering conch fritters around PG. She can be found down on Front St on market days.

Dale Aranda has also been involved with the Belize National Dance Company for many years and has traveled with them to Spain, France and Italy as well as the United States. Dale says his goal is to help keep the Garifuna culture alive and thus help continue the work started by Andy Palacio.

Contact Details:

To book the group, contact Ivan McDonald on 607-5274



Left to Right: Dale Aranda, Damiana Gutierrez, Evan Nolberto and Ivan McDonald at home in PG. Ronald was not present.

played at holidays and festivals. All instruments are used. The local singer, Paul Nabor, is famous for his Paranda style.

And then there is Punta. Dale says traditional Punta does not include any electric music, unlike its modern offshoot Punta Rock. Traditional Punta is played with the drums, turtle

Restaurant Guide

Name	Address	Cuisine	Phone	Opening Hours
Coleman's C afe	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
Gomier's Restaurant and Soy Centre	Alejandro Vernon St, near PG welcome sign	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 / Middle Eastern	671-7172 614-2888	Daily: 11:30am – 2pm & 6:30 – 9pm [Reservations Required]
Mangrove Restaurant	Cattle Landing, by the curve	Belizean / International	722-2270	Daily: 5pm-10pm. Breakfast & lunch for groups [Reservations preferred]
Marengo'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
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
The Snack Shack	BTL parking lot, PG	Breakfast & lunch/ Snacks, shakes, juices & pasties	702-0020	Mon-Sat: 7am – 4pm. 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

All restaurants in Toledo district are welcome to appear in the Restaurant Guide. There is a BZ\$5 charge for each listing or BZ\$15 for advance payment for one year (4 listings). Please contact the BTIA Tourist Information Center in PG for more information. Phone: 722-2531

PG Chocolate Tours

Taking over the space vacated by the sunshine Bakery on Front Street, we welcome the opening of Cotton Tree Chocolate's production facility. In case you are new to PG, they are located just past the Texaco station along the seafont.

Julie Puryear manages a team of three chocolate makers to produce their 3oz bars of milk and dark chocolate. Juli is offering free guided tours of their operation every day at 10am for about half an hour. Groups of more than four visitors should call or e-mail to make an appointment.

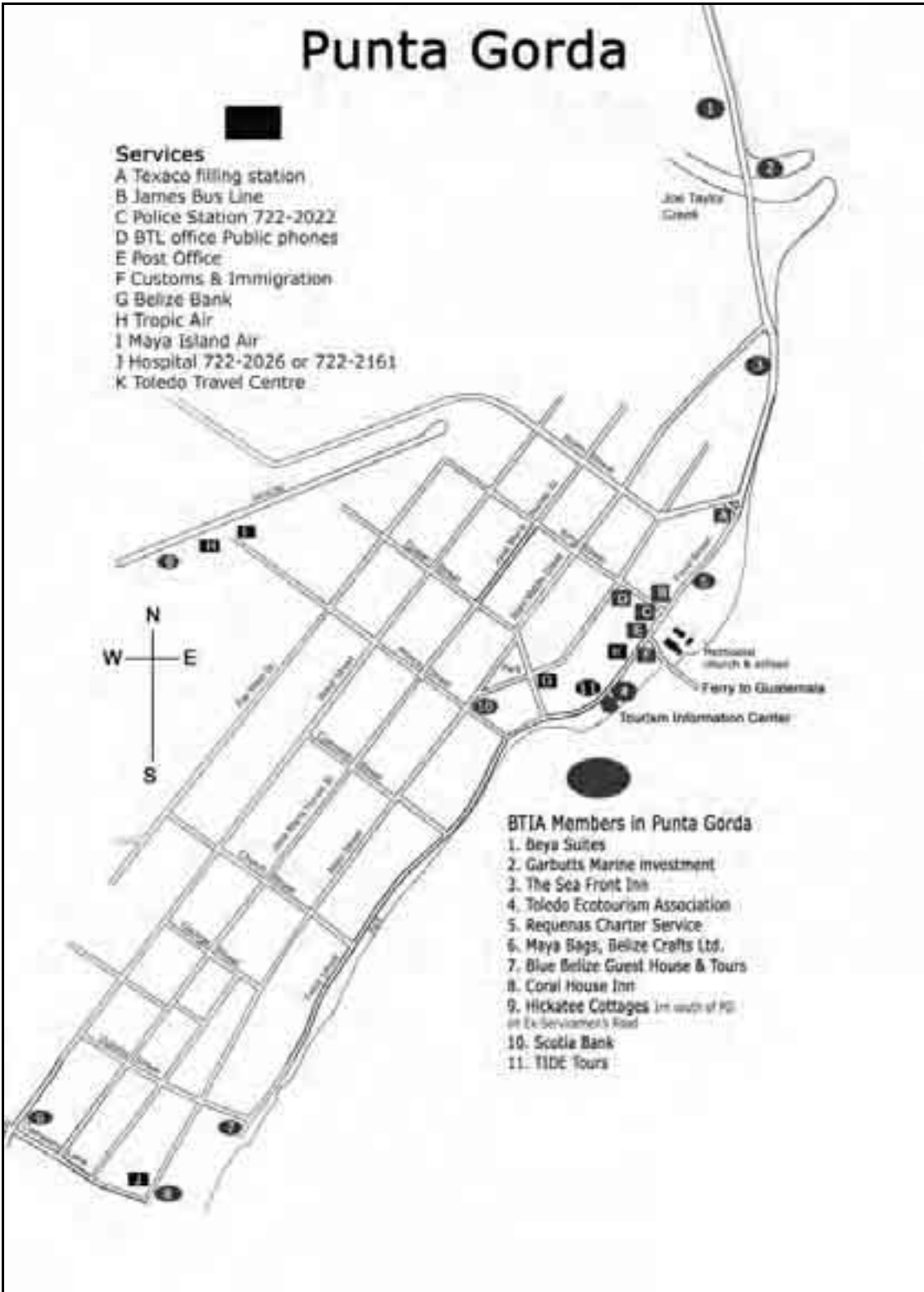
#2 Front St, Punta Gorda.

Tel: 621-8776 or email: juli@cottontreechocolate.com

Welcome

New Owners at Tranquility Lodge

Tranquility Lodge in Jacintoville, 9 miles inland from PG, is now owned by Sheila & Rusty Nale. The Nales lived in San Pedro for many years before coming to Toledo. We wish them success with their new business and life in our beautiful district.



Join BTIA and Put Your Business on the Map

BTIA is businesses working together to promote Toledo district as a tourism destination.

Join now and get a **FREE** blank copy of the PG town map. Use the map to produce your own promotional literature for your business.

The BTIA membership year runs from January to December so apply now to put your business on the map from the beginning of 2010.

How Do I Join BTIA?

Visit www.btia.org to read about BTIA and all the other membership benefits and to download an application form. Complete the form and hand it in to Shieba chun 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.

ARZU ON MEDICINAL PLANTS: COW FOOT



Cow foot or Pata de Vaca

South America. It produces large, drooping white flowers together with a brown seed pod, and grows abundantly along our Southern Highway.

In spite of its funny name, this large hoof-shaped leafed plant has a solid reputation for balancing blood sugar levels among diabetics, healing diabetic related diseases like kidney disorders, frequent urination, and other urinary problems. The effects of this herb on blood sugar have been clinically tested in South America where it is widely used. Cow Foot is so effective at balancing blood glucose levels that some professionals are starting to call it "vegetable insulin."

When not treating diabetic disorders, Cow Foot is busy tending to other imbalances like blood building and body detoxification, enhancing blood cell production, and acting as a diuretic, while lowering bad cholesterol levels. All these help restore overall body

functionality.

The Garifuna people include Cow Foot as a key ingredient in a brew that nursing mothers drink to increase milk production, while their midwives use it in a breast massage ointment for new mothers to promote healthier milk production.

Measure one fresh leaf per cup and steep in hot water. Drink one cup after each meal to help balance sugar levels.

Caution: Diabetics taking this herb should monitor their blood sugar levels carefully, and make any adjustment to medication. Do not use if you have low blood sugar or hypoglycemia.

Listen to Ana Arzu's "Mountain Spirit Speaks" on Wamalali Radio 106.3FM Tuesdays & Thursdays at 6.30pm

Contact 600-3873

Throughout the Spanish countries it is called *Pata de Vaca*. Indeed, the large leaves of this plant share a striking resemblance to a cow's hoof. Cow Foot (*bauhinia forficata*), as it is known throughout Belize and the English speaking Caribbean, is a small tree that grows between 5 and 9 meters (5 to 30 feet) tall throughout the rainforest of Central and

BTIA TOLEDO MEMBERS 2009

Business Name	Email	Phone	Contact Person
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
Carlo Wagner	stcharlespg@btl.net	722-0193	Carlo Wagner
Coral House Inn	ridarbelize@yahoo.com	722-2878	Rick & Darla Mallory
Cotton Tree Lodge	chris@cottontreelodge.com	670-0557	Chris Crowell
Cuxlin Ha Retirement Village	cuxlinha@hotmail.com	501-614-2518	Dona Lee Scafe
Dem Dats Doin	demdatsdoin@btl.net	501-722-2470	Yvonne Villoria
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			Agapito Shal
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	elvis.perez@scotiabank.com	722-0098/0099	Elvis Perez
The Sea Front Inn	larry@seafrontinn.com	722-2300	Larry & Carol Smith
Sun Creek Lodge	suncreek@hughes.net	600-8773/614-2080	Bruno & Melissa Kuppinger
TIDE Tours	info@tidetour.org	722-2129	Karel Kuran
Toledo Eco-Tourism Association	teabelize@yahoo.com	722-2531	Vicente Sackul / Reyes Chun
Toledo Tour Guides Association	info@toledotourguides.org	665-6778	Bruno Kuppinger
Tranquility Lodge	info@tranquility-lodge.com	677-9921	Sheila & Rusty Nale
Tumul K'in Center of Learning	tumulkindevelopment@yahoo.com	608-1070	Esther Sanchez Sho

We can take you there



Reservations: 226-2012

reservations@tropicair.com www.tropicair.com

Where to get your copy of The Toledo Howler:

- ◆ BTIA Tourist Information Center, Front St in Punta Gorda
- ◆ Business premises of BTIA members in Toledo (see list above).
- ◆ Tropic Air and Maya Island Air terminals throughout Belize
- ◆ 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

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
4:00am	10:00am	James Bus Line	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
5:00pm	To Dangriga	El Buen Pastor	Daily

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
Pichllingo	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.

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NEW ITEMS

The Itzama Ethnobotanical Garden

Just a few miles north of Big Falls on the Southern Highway between Golden Stream and Indian Creek there is a very unusual botanical garden. The garden is called the Itzama Garden, or place of Itzamna, the Maya god of wisdom. It is a medicinal plant garden or ethnobotanical garden which was conceived and created by the local community of Maya traditional healers. This garden is a working area for the healers to grow plants for treating patients in the Kek'chi and Mopan Maya villages of Toledo. It is not a conventional botanical garden designed for visitors to see unusual tropical plants or ornamental flowers. Because of its non commercial use the garden is not developed to the level of most tourist destinations.

The healers are all elderly men and members of the Kekchi Maya Healers Association. They have transplanted approximately one hundred different species of medicinal plants into the garden from inaccessible areas of the Maya mountains. With the medicinal plants domesticated close by, the healers can now treat patients without having to go on long journeys to find the rare and unusual plants they need. The garden is a 75 acre forest and field site on the banks of Golden Stream. The garden was developed over ten years ago with formal organization by the Belize Indigenous Training Institute, the donation of land by the Government of Belize, and research by botanists at the University of Ottawa and medical scientists from Cleveland State University. Modest assistance from various donor agencies such as the International Development Research Centre (Canada) and the Naturaleza Foundation has allowed the construction of a road into the site, an irrigation system and a small traditional thatched building

used as a meeting center. One of the most important features of the garden is a ceremonial hearth, where the healers and a Maya spiritual leader conduct healing and cultural ceremonies. These include Maya calendar ceremonies, purification and curative ceremonies.

The botanical garden is not a for-



Don Francisco Caal a traditional Mayan healer points out several plants used in the treatment of snake bites

mally laid out garden and the medicinal plants transplanted from the rainforest areas of the Maya mountains are growing under small shade trees in irregular rows. There are several paths through the garden which has different habitats where plants can grow in wet areas close to Golden Stream, through drier areas of forest and open field. The healers have provided special habitats for unusual plants on rotting logs or above ground places on trees. In the open area, they have planted fruit trees like soursop and guava or full sun plants such as lemongrass. Some of the better known plants at the garden are medicinal ginger which is used for treating stomach ache, alligators hand which is used for treating bites and bruises, cat's claw for inflammation and allspice tea which is used for treating digestive disturbances. Only a few of the plants are common species found around towns or other fields. Studies by the University of

Ottawa shows that almost all of the rest of the plants grown in the forested section that are used by the healers are exotic rainforest species that are part of the traditional knowledge passed down orally by the Maya. They are used in a wide range of treatments that are undertaken by the healers. They treat everything from sprains, bruises and athlete's foot to ulcers. Surprisingly, one of the main things that the healers have specialized in are botanical treatments for mental health. They have some thirty-nine different types of plant used for the treatment of epilepsy and anxiety related diseases. The healers are committed to ethical and safe treatments for patients and are working with the Universities and the Belize Ministry of Health to test and integrate traditional healing into first line health care. Maya youth from the Tumul Kin school at Blue Creek are also participating so that this ancient wisdom

can be passed on to the next generation.

Individuals and groups who are interested in this healing tradition can make an appointment to visit the garden. A brochure on commonly used medicinal plants is available and an advanced handbook is in preparation.

Contact Victor Cal at the Belize Indigenous Training Institute

Tel: 702-0134

E-mail: vikcal045@hotmail.com.

This article was contributed by Dr John Thor Arnason, Professor of Biology at the University of Ottawa, Todd Pesek MD director of the Center for Healing Across cultures at Cleveland State University, Victor Cal and Francisco Caal

Coral House Inn

BED, BREAKFAST AND BICYCLES

Step off of Main Street in Punta Gorda and experience the intimate atmosphere of the Coral House Inn, with spacious verandas overlooking the Caribbean Sea.

Amenities include – Swimming pool, continental breakfast, wireless internet, poolside bar and use of bicycles.

www.coralhouseinn.net 722-2878



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ACCOMMODATION:

SUN CREEK LODGE

Sun Creek Lodge, 12 miles from Punta Gorda, offers five jungle cabanas set in lush tropical gardens.

The Lodge is owned and managed by Melissa and Bruno Kuppinger. Melissa, a Belizean national, was born in Independence Village in northern Toledo. Bruno was born in Germany near Stuttgart. The two met while taking Spanish language classes in Belize City.

Their first business was a tour operation offering trips throughout Belize. They were soon bringing more and more visitors to Toledo district to see the sights. Bruno and Melissa realized how useful it would be to have a lodge in the south as a base for day tours. Sun Creek was the result.



One of two cabanas with shared outdoor shower room and WC. A queen and single bed allow up to 3 persons to share.

The beautiful landscaping reflects the loving attention Melissa gives to the outdoor environment. Plants have been well

chosen to create the feeling of a jungle paradise. There is a sense of being in tune with the natural world rather than overwhelmed by it.

Each of their five cabanas has been built using tropical hardwoods and covered with bay leaf thatching. The interiors are cool and comfortable.



Interior of the villa cabana

One cabana, known as the villa, is a furnished one bedroom house with separate living room. There is a queen sofa bed in the living area so the villa can sleep up to four people. The villa has its own private shower room outside. There are also two cabanas with private ensuite bathrooms. Each has a queen and single bed. The remaining two cabanas also have a queen and single each with shared shower and WC.

Sun Creek Lodge is a member of the Toucan Trail group of budget accommodations in Belize, offering rooms for



Another interior showing the beautiful hardwood furnishings

US\$60 or less.

Cabana rates include breakfast and transfers from and to PG. Packed lunches can be provided for day tours and dinner is available on request, if guests do not have their own transportation. The communal dining area also hosts a small gift shop with lovely jippi jappa basket work from the village of Santa Cruz.

If you are traveling from Punta Gorda, Sun Creek Lodge is located 12 miles along the San Antonio Road just in from the San Marcos junction (see map on back page). Coming from the north, turn left at the Dump junction towards PG and carry on about 2 miles to the San Marcos turning on the left side of the highway. Sun Creek is less than half a mile down the San Marcos road.

For information and reservations, call: 614-2080 or email: sun-creek@hughes.net.



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Players in the Mayan ball game
 Chaajchay in PG on 28th March



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TOUR OPERATOR: CUXLIN HA

Gayle and Dona Scafe arrived in Belize in 1997. They came down from the snowy heights of Gunnison, Colorado to sea level on the Rio Grande plain north of Punta Gorda. As Dona says, "We'll never see snow again!". She doesn't seem to mind too much.

They built Cuxlin Ha retirement village and resort at the end of the Papashaw Road in Elridgeville on the banks of Jacinto Creek which flows into the Rio Grande. They opened in December 1999.

Dona and Gayle's vision was to make a difference through the creation of jobs for local people. A second guiding principle was that people should be able to own their own land.

One source of inspiration for them was a book written by then First Lady of the United States, Hillary Rodham Clinton called *It Takes a Village: And Other Les-*

Cuxlin Ha's tour operation. Their tours fall into two categories, sea tours and inland tours.

Celiano Pop is their main guide and driver for their inland tours which focus on the Mayan sites, the waterfalls and villages between San Antonio and the border and Blue Creek Cave. Mayan sites they visit include the old favorites of Lubaantun and Nim Li Punit but they are beginning to take visitors to Uxbenka currently being excavated and also as far south as Pusilha in the village of San Benito Poite, famous for its ancient Mayan stone bridge.

Celiano originates from Pueblo Viejo close to the western border and has seven children some of whom have been born since he moved to Cuxlin Ha. He speaks English, Spanish and Kek'chi Maya and is well versed in the traditional Mayan ways and jungle survival. So Celiano will introduce guests to some of the food plants available in the bush and the water producing vines which can mean survival for people lost in the forest. Other inland desti-

lin Ha as they have built up their Reef World resort on Tom Owen's Caye at the northern end of the Sapodilla Range. Reef World offers guests the chance to do snorkeling, diving or fishing. Fishing



Harbor at Reef World on Tom Owen's Caye

opportunities include fly fishing, spin casting, trawling and drop fishing.

Trips can also be made on request to Guatemala and the Rio Dulce. Cuxlin Ha's tours add variety to those available elsewhere in Toledo and we hope that they continue to give their guests great cultural experiences and make a difference through the creation of real jobs for real people.

Contact Info: Phone 624-2518

E-mail: cuxlinha@hotmail.com



In the caves at Santa Cruz village

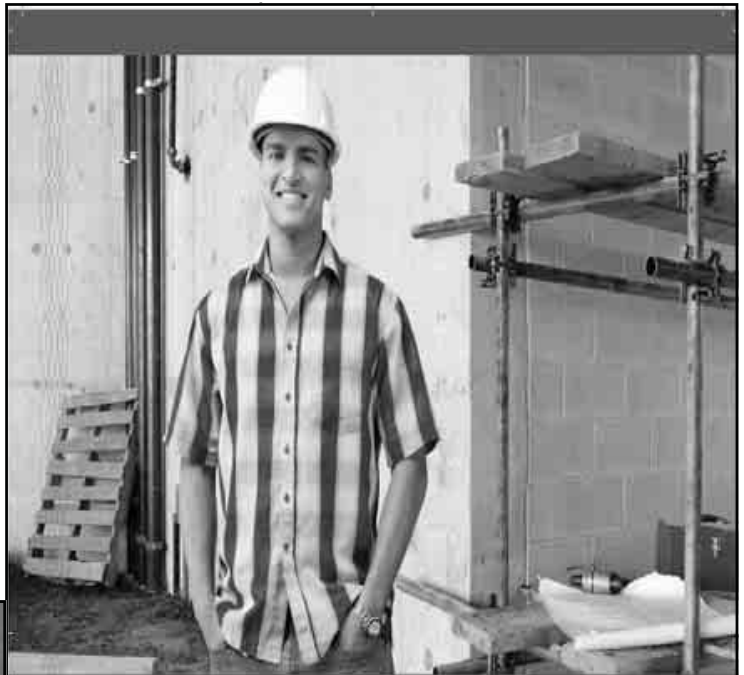
sons Children Teach Us for the children of America. She focuses on the impact individuals and groups outside the family have, for better or worse, on a child's well-being and advocates a society which meets all of a child's needs.

Dona and Gayle not only built their guest accommodation but also a village for local Mayan families as well. As the families work and earn through Cuxlin Ha's business activities they gradually make affordable repayments so that their homes will eventually be owned.

They then went on to train some of these same people as tour guides to serve

include the large cave at Santa Cruz, a difficult activity for fit and adventurous visitors but with some impressive stalagmite formations (see picture).

Their sea operations are normally led by John Young from Punta Gorda town who has worked with Cux-



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Mayan ball player prepares a shot in this physically demanding ancient sport at PG Sports Complex, 28th March.


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Wat's Cookin' ?

Mole Poblano with Sausage Bites *(created for the 2007 Cacao Fest)*

- ◆ 4 green sweet peppers
- ◆ 2 red sweet pepper (or more green peppers)
- ◆ 6 banana peppers
- ◆ 3-6 chilies (various kinds and amounts depending on degree of heat you want)
- ◆ 1 can (15 oz.) whole or diced tomatoes
- ◆ 1 large onion
- ◆ 4 garlic cloves
- ◆ 1/2 cup almonds or cashews
- ◆ 1 ripe plantain
- ◆ 1/2 cup peanuts
- ◆ 1 piece toasted bread
- ◆ 2 corn tortillas
- ◆ 1 local cacao ball, grated in flakes (more if desired)
- ◆ 1/8 cup sesame seeds
- ◆ Spicy sausage, cut into bite sized pieces

Remove stems & seeds from peppers and chilies. Peel onion and finely chop. Peel and cut plantain into 1/4 inch pieces. Set all aside.

In a frying pan, fry all ingredients in batches, starting with sweet peppers and ending with nuts, tomatoes and cacao. As each batch finishes, set aside.

Puree all ingredients in a blender or food processor, thinning with chicken broth. Consistency should be quite thick but thin enough to blend into a smooth sauce.

Cook over low flame for about 2 hours. Mole should be thick but if it thickens too fast, thin with broth. If too thin, continue to cook slowly uncovered. While cooking the mole, take spicy sausage and sauté in frying pan until cooked.

For presentation, spread a layer of mole sauce in a shallow dish. Use toothpicks for picking up sausage pieces. Arrange pieces in rows on top of mole. Add another thin layer of mole on top. Serve warm.

Recipe kindly donated by Marty Fritschle whose hard work made the wine and chocolate evenings of the past two festivals such a great success. He is co-owner of Sirmoor Hill Farm which has recently opened as a guest house at their property on the New Road near Elridgeville.

Photo Op: Baby Black & White Owl, The Lodge at Big Falls, January 2009. Photo by Rob Hirons



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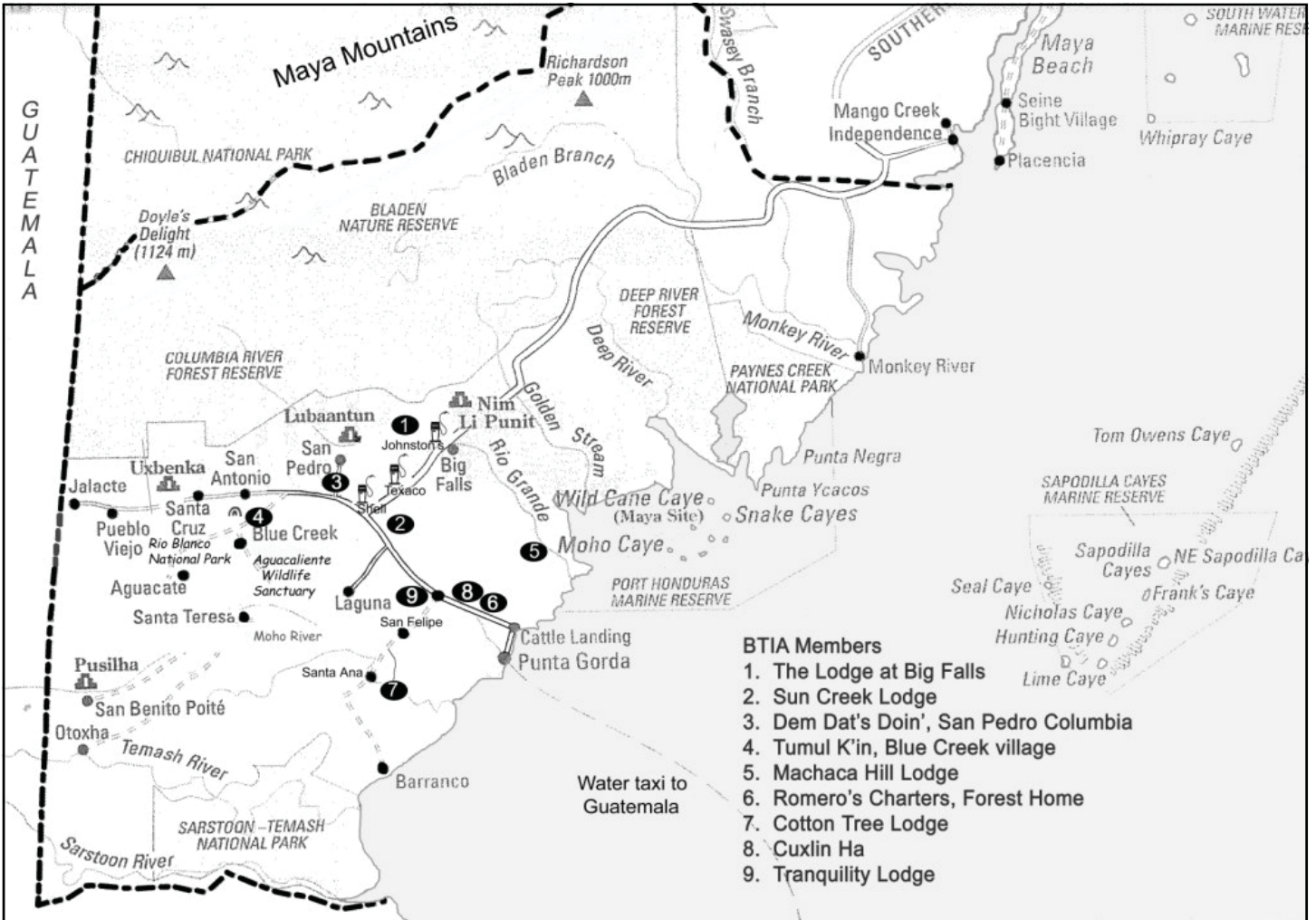
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