

The Toledo Howler

Newspaper of the Toledo Chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association

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FREE



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The Battle of the Drums returns to Punta Gorda in November.

This highly successful competition and show always takes place on the Saturday before Garifuna Settlement Day on Nov 19th so this year's event will be on the 12th.

For those who are not familiar with this event, the Battle of the Drums is a drumming competition and show that allows groups to compete and display their musical artistry by playing five (5) different categories of Garifuna drumming. The first Battle of the Drums was held in Punta Gorda Town on November 17, 2006 and was well received by spectators from home and abroad.

In 2007, there was even a bigger audience and greater enthusiasm. In 2008 the event evolved into an international drumming competition and show involving drumming groups from various parts of Belize as well as from neighbouring Guatemala and Honduras.

This competition and show has become a major local and tourist attraction. The proceeds from the Battle of the Drums Initiative are strictly used to pursue various Garifuna cultural retrieval projects in Punta Gorda Town and other Garifuna communities as the funds allow. The cultural retrieval projects include annual Battle of the Drums summer camps for children and youths ages 5 to 16 years, Garifuna Drumming in Schools program for primary school age children, Annual Primary Schools Garifuna Translation contest, among others.

The groups performing at this year's Battle of the Drums are:

Ugundani Dance Group from Belize City, Wageirale Drum-

mers from Dangriga, Lebeha Drummers from Hopkins, Lumalali Beidi of Seine Bight village, Hamalali Esanigu Dance Group from Georgetown village, Mario & The Umalali Group of Punta Gorda Town, Iseri Laruga from Livingston Guatemala



Paul Nabor the leading Parandero in Belize see p 10

and Grupo Juchelo from Baja Mar, Honduras.

This promises to be a fabulous year with so much talent participating. Check out the Howler's Calendar of Events (Page 3) for a full schedule of November events with dates, times and venues.

For more information call: 621-0140.



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Calendar of Events

| Date | Event | Venue / Time | Other Info |
|----------|---|--|------------|
| 5th Nov | Ms Yurumein Contest: Garifuna Cultural Tal- | | |
| 9th Nov | Children’s Garifuna Talent Show: Showcase of new talent. All presentations in the Gari- | | |
| 11th Nov | High School Battle of the Drums: high school students show off their talents in drumming, singing and dancing. Schools from Stann | 3pm-6pm | |
| 11th Nov | Battle of the Drums Food & Fete | Rooftop of UB Toledo in PG 8–12pm | |
| 12th Nov | TOLTEX Toledo Tourism Expo Battle of the Drums | Central Park 9am-4pm Sports Complex, PG begins 7:30pm | |
| 13th Nov | Paranda Top 10: live radio broadcast on Love FM focusing on the distinctive Paranda sound. Music performed by local PG | Beya Suites, Hopeville From 2pm | |
| 19th Nov | Yurumein—Garifuna Settlement Re-enactment followed by parade through PG | PG Cooperative Wharf 6:30 am | |



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Lee Jones: Aguacaliente Wildlife Sanctuary

When this column was conceived in 2009, it was dubbed “Birding Hotspots in Toledo District”. My last Howler article, “The Unappreciated Grackle”, strayed from that theme. The Great-tailed Grackle, despite its magnificent-sounding name is by no means anyone’s idea of a signature species for a birding hot spot! This month I am back on topic with an article about one of Toledo’s truly great birding spots: Aguacaliente Lagoon. This unique ecosystem and its associated habitats, located only twelve miles from Punta Gorda, has a bird list that exceeds 230 species (and growing!). It is accessible from Laguna Village to the south and, with a little more effort, from Mafredi Village to the north. The series of three main lagoons and several smaller lagoons collect and detain floodwaters from Mafredi Creek, Aguacaliente Creek, and Piedra Creek to the north and east and, in turn, regulates their flow into Black Creek, Blue Creek, and ultimately the Moho River. The lagoon system functions much like a reservoir but without need of a dam.

Aguacaliente Lagoon’s importance to the natural heritage of Belize was realized in the early 1990s, a recognition that led to its designation as a wildlife sanctuary in 1998. In 2003-2004, Trekforce constructed a visitor’s center at the edge of the park and an elevated boardwalk linking the visitor’s center with the road at Laguna Village. In 2006, the boardwalk was extended from the visitor’s center to Piedra Creek at the heart of the sanctuary, greatly facilitating access to the lagoons by tourists and others wishing to explore this marvelous birding hot spot. After 2006, tour groups began adding Aguacaliente Lagoon to their itinerary. Local guides were hired to lead the way into the heart of the sanctuary, and a small fee was established to defray some of the cost of maintaining the park.

All seemed well at first. But then the system fell victim to entropy. And eventually through mismanagement of funds the community based organization collapsed.

Relentless seasonal rains and occasional flooding soon took their toll on the boardwalk. Parts of it that received

little sunlight became dangerously slippery from a fine glaze of mold, invisible to the eye, that settled in after even the lightest of rains. Whole sections of the boardwalk eventually gave way. The visitor’s center, which approximates the halfway point along the two-mile trail, has been shuttered and locked every time I have visited the park. Its only purpose seems to be to temporarily shelter the weary hiker from the rain. In short, the park is in serious need of funds and improved management. A proper boardwalk that will be safe to walk and that can withstand the extreme tropical climate will be expensive to build. Even with volunteer labor, the cost of materials will be prohibitive without adequate funds to purchase the lumber, nails, and slip-resistant material needed along shaded portions of the walkway. To facilitate funding, a fee station will need to be built at the entrance to the boardwalk or established at the existing visitor’s center, and it will need to be manned on a daily basis.

So, is it really worth the money and effort that will be required to upgrade the infrastructure to make the park more accessible, enjoyable, *and safe*? Having visited the sanctuary on a number of occasions, allow me to weigh in with a resounding YES! Picture a scene teeming with hundreds of egrets, herons, ibises, storks, whistling-ducks, teal, and cormorants. Throw in a scattering of Roseate Spoonbills and Jabiru storks, two regular visitors to the lagoons. Add to that, southern Belize’s only breeding colony of Wood Storks and an impressive list of rarities—those seldom seen species that give veteran birders and novices alike such an adrenaline rush whenever they are encountered.

On 28 March 2001, Omar Figueroa, at the time National Coordinator of Birds Without Borders, was conducting an aerial water bird survey of the lagoon when he saw two **American Flamingos** circling the lagoon below! Yes, wild flamingos, the first and only flamingos ever documented from Belize. Six years



An American Wigeon *Anas americana*

later while birding the easternmost lagoon on 9 March 2007, I heard a strange sound behind me and wheeled around to see a **Crested Caracara**, the first ever in southern Belize, chasing an Osprey that had in its talons a freshly caught fish. There was no doubt that the caracara intended to have this fish for its next meal. Whether it succeeded, we will never know, as the Osprey eventually disappeared behind some trees on the far shore with the caracara still in hot pursuit. Other avian “goodies” recorded at Aguacaliente: a pair of rare **Buff-breasted Sandpipers**, a pair of **American Wigeon**, a **White-tailed Hawk**, and a number of other species too numerous to mention here. Along the wooded trail leading to the lagoons, the rare **Gray-throated Chat** has been a fixture, although it has not been detected recently. More than **20 species of warblers** have been recorded along the boardwalk. And Aguacaliente is one of the few spots in Belize where all five species of kingfishers can be seen in a single visit.

As you can see, as a birding destination, Aguacaliente Wildlife Sanctuary is easily on a par with St. Herman’s Blue Hole National Park, Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, and other well-known tourist attractions farther north. But because of its isolation in “remote” southern Belize, difficulty of access, and limited funding, it has not received the attention it deserves. Let’s all pitch in and do what we can to make this national treasure the unparalleled tourist attraction it deserves to be!



| 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 [Res- ervations 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/ Interna- tional | 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/ Beliz- ean/ Middle Eastern | 732-4444 | Daily: 11:30am – 2pm & 6:30 – 9pm [Reservations Required] |
| Machaca Hill Lodge | Wilson’s Road | Pan Central Ameri- can and International | 722-0050 | Lunch: noon-2:30pm. Dinner: 7:30- 10pm. [Reservations preferred] |
| Mangrove Restaurant | Cattle Landing, by the curve | Belizean / Interna- tional | 722-2270 | Daily: 5pm-10pm. [Reservations preferred] |
| Marian’s Bay View Restau- rant | Front St, south of the mar- ket 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 Sun- days |
| 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 Sun- days. Group reservations required |
| The Snack Shack | BTL parking lot, PG | Breakfast & lunch/ Snacks, shakes, juices & pastries | 702-0020 | Mon-Sat: 7am – 3pm. Closed Sun- days |
| Waluco’s | Opposite TIDE pier in Hopeville | Belizean/East In- dian/Seafood/ Catering | 670-3672 | Mon-Thurs: 7am-2pm & 5-10pm. Weekends: 7am-late |

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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
- ♦ Gas stations on Southern and Western Highway
- ♦ Online
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Wat’s Cookin?

CORAL HOUSE INN SCONES

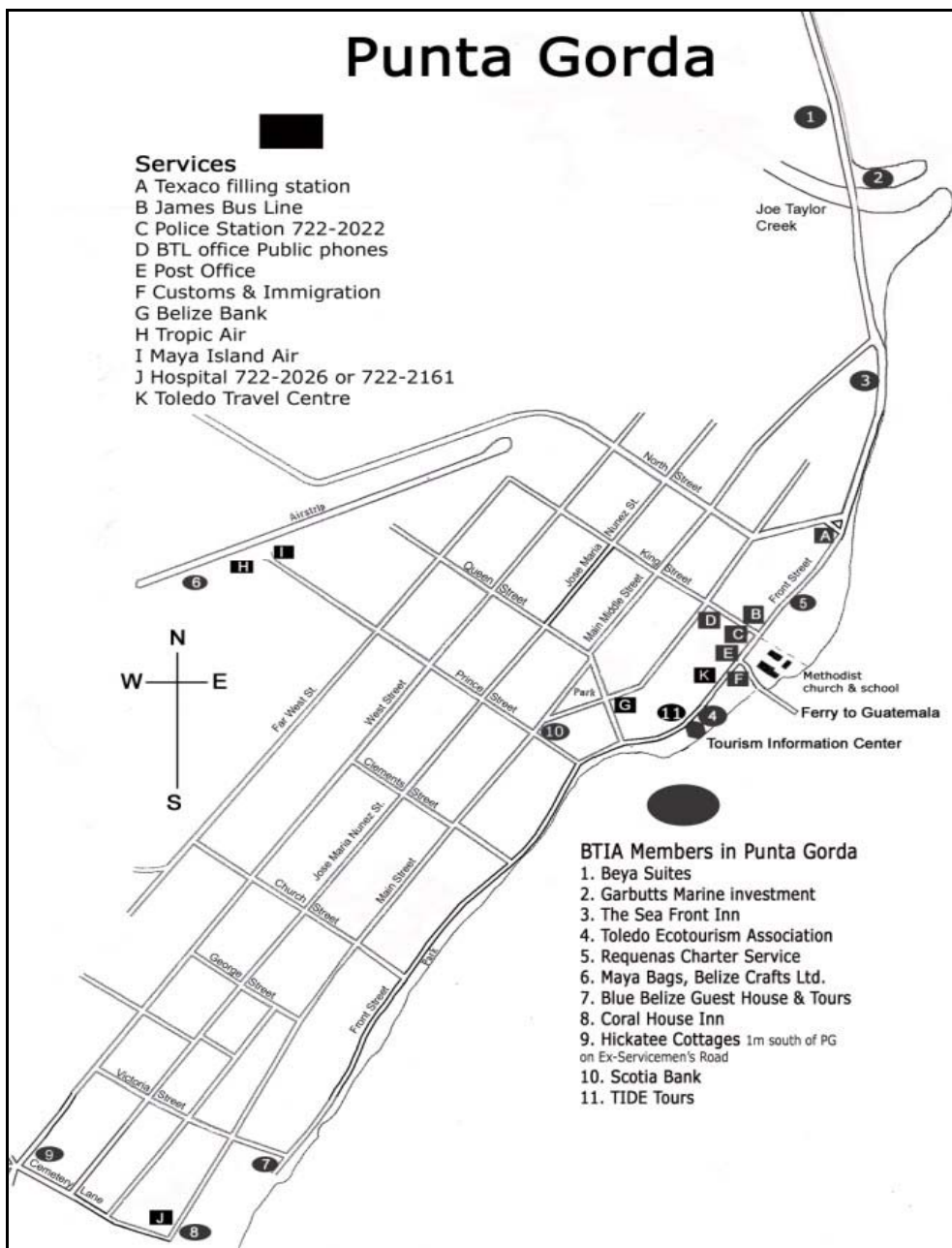
- Preheat oven to 400
- 2 Cup flour
- 1/4 Cup sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- 1/2 Cup butter or shortening
- 4 tsp baking powder
- 2/3 Cup milk or milk and orange juice mixture
- 1/3 Cup chopped nuts
- 1/3 Cup chopped dried fruit

- Grated nutmeg
- Grease a 9” x 13” baking pan.
- Put flour, sugar, salt, baking powder in a bowl. Cut in shortening to a course meal consistency. Add milk/juice all at once and stir until dough forms a ball. Turn dough onto a lightly floured board and knead 14 times. Pat or roll until 1/2 thick and cut into wedges or triangles.
- I like to substitute a ¼ c orange juice for some of the milk and grate nutmeg into the dough. Bake for 20 minutes. Recipe makes 10-12 scones.
- Recipe kindly donated by Darla Mallory of Coral House Inn*

Punta Gorda

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A Texaco filling station
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 C Police Station 722-2022
 D BTL office Public phones
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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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Southern Voices

Dennis Garbutt



Dennis was born in Belize City, raised in Punta Negra and has lived in PG since high school. Dennis manages the family business, Garbutt's Marine & Fishing Lodge, which has a mainland lodge at Joe Taylor Creek and offshore operations at Lime Caye in the Sapodillas. They offer a variety of marine tours and activities including world class fly fishing, snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, river tours and others. The main lodge in PG was opened in 2008 with fly fishing as its main focus.

Q. Can you tell us about your family history in Toledo?

My family traditionally fished for a living but now we all make our living in tourism. You can get by as a fisherman but you can't make a very good living. We grew up in Punta Negra and also out in the Sapodilla Cayes, particularly Hunting Caye and Lime Caye where we have our second lodge. I am the oldest of five children. I went to Belize Technical College in Belize City to study building technology. After being a builder for a few years, I became a high school teacher in PG at the Toledo Community Col-

lege. Then in 2000 I started working for TIDE and later Earthwatch and the Belize Fisheries Department.

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

I remember the long and bumpy drive north when I was a child. The paved highway is a great improvement. Also more children have access to high school now. It used to be that only a primary education was required for jobs like the BDF (army) and police but now a better education means a better chance for a good job. I think there is also more awareness now about conservation issues.

Q. How can we improve tourism in Toledo?

All the tourism stakeholders in Toledo need to get together and agree on a proper master plan for tourism development in the district. There needs to be a clear and shared vision of what we want to see happen. There should be more sharing of information between tourism organizations like the BTIA, the Tour Guides Association and Tour Operators Association and other partners. There is a need for more training for tour guides and more access to low interest loans so they can better equip themselves to serve the tourism industry.

Q. What could PG Town Council do to support tourism?

Since the Town Council definitely has a stake in tourism development in Toledo, they would be involved in putting together the tourism master plan I mentioned. Bet-

ter communication between the Town Council and other tourism stakeholders is needed. There are plenty of small things the Town Council could do, like finding a solution to the problem of the town dump, but these things would all be a part of the master plan which they would help draft.

Q. Reef or Rainforest Dennis?

It has to be the reef—I've spent my whole life around the sea. The Sapodilla Cayes are my home.

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

I would have to say one of the islands but it's a difficult choice. There are so many beautiful islands down here. People talk about how wonderful the diving is in the Bay Islands (Honduras) but we have comparable and better diving sites here in Toledo.

Q. What is your favourite season or month of the year?

April I think. Easter is such a big family occasion. Everyone goes to the sea. When I was growing up, my family would all meet up on Hunting Caye (in the Sapodillas) and stay there for a week. All my aunts, uncles and cousins came too. We barbecued, fished, swam and had a great time.

Q. What is your favourite Belizean food?

I would have to say rice & beans and chicken. I have to eat rice every day though I'm learning to eat less.

Q. Red beans or black beans?

I eat both but my favourite is split peas.

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A Newcomer to Punta Gorda

By Gary Matthews



Gary Matthews is an intern at TIDE Tours in PG for six months. He was born and lives in Trinidad & Tobago and recently finished earning a BSc in International Tourism Management from the University of the West Indies. When he returns home, he hopes to find a marketing job within Trinidad & Tobago's tourism sector.

~~~~~

I came to Punta Gorda with a purpose, for it was due to the course of study at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad that led me to come to PG. I chose somewhere that I thought is unique, fascinating and mystical.

Arriving in Belize international airport reminded me of how Trinidad was 30 years ago. I proceeded to the bus terminal to take the bus to Punta Gorda. It was at the terminal that I realized that Belize is a very cosmopolitan country and further to my surprise, I saw the Mennonites who I

only saw in the movies and knew until then, only existed in the USA as the Amish. This surprise led me to ask in my mind "what are they doing here?" On arriving in Punta Gorda after the six hour journey I settled into the hotel and got myself adjusted to the life in this interesting town. For the following weeks ahead, by the grace of God, I found somewhere comfortable to live and settled into working with TIDE Tours.

Working with TIDE Tours afforded me the opportunity to meet a wide cross section of interesting persons in the community. Besides the Mennonites, I discovered the existence of the Garifuna community and learnt of their origins. The Mayans and their sub groupings was a further discovery which intrigued me as I have read some literature on the Mesoamericans of old but was not aware of their status in the

looked forward to as it was on this day that people representing each of the nine communities came out to buy and sell produce. This collage of ethnicities and the buzz created by their activities intrigued me, I was in a state of euphoria and I wanted to be part of it. I introduced some friends of mine Tom and Kristina to this Saturday event which we have continued experiencing to this date.

I'm glad I was able to make some contribution to TIDE Tours and the community. The staff at ProWorld (an intern placement organization who used to share offices with TIDE Tours) were very supportive of me during my stay and I look upon Nicole and her team together with Celia and her team at TIDE with great admiration for the dedication and creativity they have in what they do by helping to make a positive difference in the community as well as giving the participants the opportunity

to experience an alternative way of life.

I feel I have been blessed to have had this experience thanks to TIDE and TIDE Tours. Now that I am near completion of my internship, I can look back with fond memories of my time in Toledo. I described Toledo to someone recently and said that PG is like Trinidad used

to be. They then said that the community was backward, to which I replied that it was not, it is well preserved. Just a bit of sprucing up physically is needed.



A new morning begins in Punta Gorda. Photo by Dirk Francisco

community today. I also discovered some of the beautiful areas of the Toledo countryside such as the Rio Blanco Waterfalls, San Antonio village, Blue Creek Cave, just to name a few.

Market day on Saturdays I particularly



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# Caving in Toledo: Yok Balum Cave

Driving west towards the border with Guatemala after passing through the village of San Antonio the road follows the direction of a ridge of hills about two miles to the left of the road. A deep saddle marks the place where the Rio Blanco swirls down into a sinkhole only to re-emerge further on as Blue Creek. The Rio Blanco tumbles down the valley between the road and ridge.

From the village of Santa Cruz adventure travelers can access Yok Balum (Jaguar Paw) cave with its entrance on the face of the slope leading up to the ridge. It is so called because of a stalactite near its entrance shaped like a jaguar paw. The cave is relatively little known but has been explored by archaeologists from the university of New Mexico. Their instrumentation is able to read the strata in the stalagmites and stalactites (remember “-mites” grow up and “-tites” come down!) and get information about the rainfall and climate trends in the same way that biologists in northern climes can read and interpret the growth rings of a tree.

The trip to explore Yok Balum is a full day tour and is only accessible by visitors who are more than averagely fit. On a scale of difficulty from 1-10 it is probably around a 6 or 7. Reaching the cave takes from 90-120 minutes in each direction. Always go with a qualified and licensed guide and if weather conditions are adverse then the guide will make the decision to go ahead or not based on considerations of your safety.

The trail is demanding, going up and down and is often muddy, even in the dry season. Travellers will have to wade across the Rio Blanco that crosses the trail and is about 100 feet (30metres) wide at that point and is always at least knee deep. Take great care in crossing; you will need to shuffle your feet and probe the river bed in front of you. A hiking pole is an excellent accessory and even if you do not have one with you your guide may be able to cut one from a bush stick along the trail.

Rubber boots or hiking boots are most suitable footwear and long trousers and long-sleeved shirts as well as a good insect repellent are recommended.

The trail passes through some high bush as well as farm plantations. There are beautiful heliconia along the way as well as orchids, bromeliads and a huge cotton tree (ceiba). The trail is used by jaguar and their paw prints are usually to be seen following the trail on which they hunt peccary (wild boar) and the crested guan. Fifty years ago the trail was a logging road and used by bulldozers to pull trees out of the bush.

The final stretch of the trail is a steep 45° pitch up the side of the mountain face over a distance of about 300 yards. The entrance itself is not grand but rather requires a twenty foot crawl through a low section before entering the entrance

chamber. Once inside the Karst cave system (see box below) there is no technical caving using ropes but there are more crawls from one chamber to another and a dazzling array of limestone formations from stalactites and stalagmites , curtains and flowstone formations as well as straws that are newly formed stalactites that are still hollow inside. It is possible to go through the mountain and emerge from another entrance on the other side that looks down towards the village of Aguacate south of Blue Creek.






### Contacts

The trail is managed by the Uxbenka sun God Association (UKAA) which also guides visitors in the newly excavated ruins of Uxbenka itself. All visitors to Yok Balum should take a trail guide from the village as well as a licensed tour guide. The current leader of the association is Jose Mes (628-9535) whose home is the fuirst house on the left after passing the water tower. There is a fee of \$BZ5 per person to use the trail.


Bruno Kuppinger of Sun Creek Lodge and tours is an experienced guide to Yok Balum




**Karst Topography** is landscape shaped by the dissolution of a layer or layers of soluble bed-rock such as limestone or dolomite. The Maya Mountains are composed of such rock and there are countless caverns and underground water courses throughout the Maya Mountain massif. The mildly acidic water begins to dissolve the surface along fractures or bedding planes in the limestone bedrock. Over time, these fractures enlarge as the bedrock continues to dissolve. Openings in the rock increase in size and an underground drainage system begins to develop, allowing more water to pass through the area, and accelerating the formation of underground karst features. Due to subterranean drainage, there may be limited surface water, even to the absence of all rivers and lakes. Many karst regions display distinctive surface features, with cenotes, sinkholes or dolines being the most common. Some karst regions include thousands of caves.








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# Toledo's Musicians: Paul Nabor



In the early twentieth century Punta Gorda was divided into two distinct districts. Knee High was the southern area and Masiraca the northern section. The names are still in use by some of the older citizens of Toledo's capital. The Howler went to meet Paul Nabor at his home on Jose Maria Nunez Street in Knee High. This is the area where he was born on 26 January 1928.

Paul was the second of six children with one brother and four sisters. In 1946 at the age of eighteen he decided to spread his wings and “emigrate” and set off alone for the coast of Honduras paddling his dory. In the small hours of the morning with the coast of Honduras tantalizingly close his dory started to take in water. The seas was getting rougher and Paul was struggling to

keep afloat. But as daylight crept on he managed to reach the shore of northern Honduras.

Paul lay exhausted on the beach considering his near death experience and as he lay there he began to compose the song “Salva Vida” about his struggle with death and the power of the sea. While Paul was now in another country he nevertheless felt at home because he was close to a Garifuna village and any Garifuna will take in and give food and shelter to another. He arrived at the door of a young lady who took him in and invited him to a *beluria*. This is an event that takes places on the ninth night after someone's death as a celebration of their life. Paul Nabor went along to the *beluria* and during that occasion taught the villagers his song “Salva Vida”

Paul stayed in the village for a year before deciding that the time had come to move on and he migrated along the coast to Puerto Barrios that even then was a busy port exporting bananas and fruit for the same multinational companies that operate today. At another *beluria* he was inspired by the guitar playing of a group of musicians and lis-

tened all night long until the five o'clock siren sounded to wake the town and all the workers. As they went off to work, Paul who was a fisherman then found his way to a music store and bought his first guitar for twelve quetzales (US\$1.53 in today's money).

Now Paul had no musical training of any kind back then and quickly realized that he would not be able to teach himself the guitar because he could not even tune it. So he visited an uncle who could play and stayed with him for a week learning the basics. At the end of a week's intensive tuition he decided he could take it from there and indeed his music career went from strength to strength.

He stayed in Puerto Barrios for five years developing his musical skills and playing in a group that toured the streets serenading the people. Five years later Paul had moved along the coast to Livingston (Labuga) and he got together with other musicians who eventually became the group of around sixty-five travelling players known as “Folklorico”. There were drummers and guitarists, dancers and singers and *jonkanu* performers who after their first successful performance in Guatemala City went on to tour in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico and Colombia.

Eventually Paul decided to return home to Peini (Punta Gorda) and in the mid-nineties he was connected to Ivan

*Continued on next page*

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| Belize Wood Works Ltd.          | belizewoodworks@gmail.com            | 604-2124/665-6778 | Bruno Kuppinger                |
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| Yum Kax Women's Group           | —                                    | 604-0688/635-9952 | Mercedes Choc, Concepciona Coc |

Continued from page 10

Duran of Stonetree Records in Benque Viejo del Carmen on the western border and through him began his recording career. His first album is variously called “Banda” or Naguya Nei” since first being recorded he has travelled and represented Garifuna paranda music in Malaysia, Germany, Spain and England among other countries although now at the age of eighty-three his travelling days are behind him.

He is concerned about the future of paranda music as well as the survival of the Garifuna language which is not universally spoken by the younger generation. The National Garifuna Council shares that concern and the Battle of the Drums weekend and other events surrounding the November celebrations are arranging events for young people in their community with the aim of strengthening the language, musical traditions and pride in their rich culture.



Paul Nabor playing at his first birthday bash in January 2010



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# Arzu on Medicinal Plants: *Peperomia pellucida*

The villagers of Toledo Belize call it “shiny leaf” because nobody knows its real name, where it came from, whether it’s safe to eat, or what it does. But they are sure it is medicine, and know it’s good for something. According to ethno-botanical research, the

official name of this bright green “shiny leaf” weed is *Peperomia pellucida*, it is quite safe to eat, and yes it makes very good medicine. *Peperomia* is a shallow rooted annual herb with succulent stems, and easy to spot on the ground from the silvery shining. The pretty little

leaves are heart shaped with small flowers that bloom on a spike out and upward from the plant. Each small fruit bears one seed that falls to the ground propagates.

The tallest of *Peperomia* plants grows to a height of one and half feet, and can easily be found growing in any damp shady area. Though some plants can be found in yards and near rocky parts of riverbeds, the *Peperomia* of Belize has an inexplicable affinity for growing around thatch and on thatched roofing. On the ground, it thrives in damp loose rocky soil; growing out of sidewalk cracks, and the aban-

doned niches of half built cement houses throughout Southern Belize.

*Peperomia* traces its roots to the Philippines, where it is revered by traditional healers as one of the most effective medicinal



plants for treating arthritis and gout. Herbalists there use a cupful of *Peperomia* leaves per day to keep the arthritis away. Reported to have a delicate taste reminiscent of cilantro and aromatic cucumber, the leaves can be eaten as a vegetable, alone, or added to salads. Traditional healers recommend eating the leaves and stems daily to help alleviate rheumatic pains. For gout, they make a decoction using one cup of leaves to two cups of water and take one cup in the morning and one in the evening before bedtime.

Garifuna people use the entire plant of the

*Peperomia* to make tea. The leaves and stems are used in a poultice to treat eye infections and ripening boils. To use for skin disorders like clearing complexion or for ripening a boil to a head; pound warmed leaves into a poultice and apply to boil, pus-

tule, pimple, and any skin eruption that is just asking to be popped. To relieve headaches, macerate a cup of heated *Peperomia* plants and apply to forehead. For abdominal pains and kidney problems, boil a cup of clean chopped

leaves in 2 cups of water. Boil for 15 to 20 minutes. Strain, let cool and drink one cup after each meal (one cup three times a day). Like any good decent medicinal plant, *Peperomia* prefers to choose where it wants to grow. Once you give this plant some space, it volunteers itself and grows extensively, usually self-propagating along damp shady places. Don’t try to grow *Peperomia*, just give some land and set it free to start your own vegetable/medicine garden.

**Contact** Arzu Mountain Spirit on 600-3873 or email: [arzu@arzumountainspirit.com](mailto:arzu@arzumountainspirit.com)

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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             | 11L00am               |  |
| 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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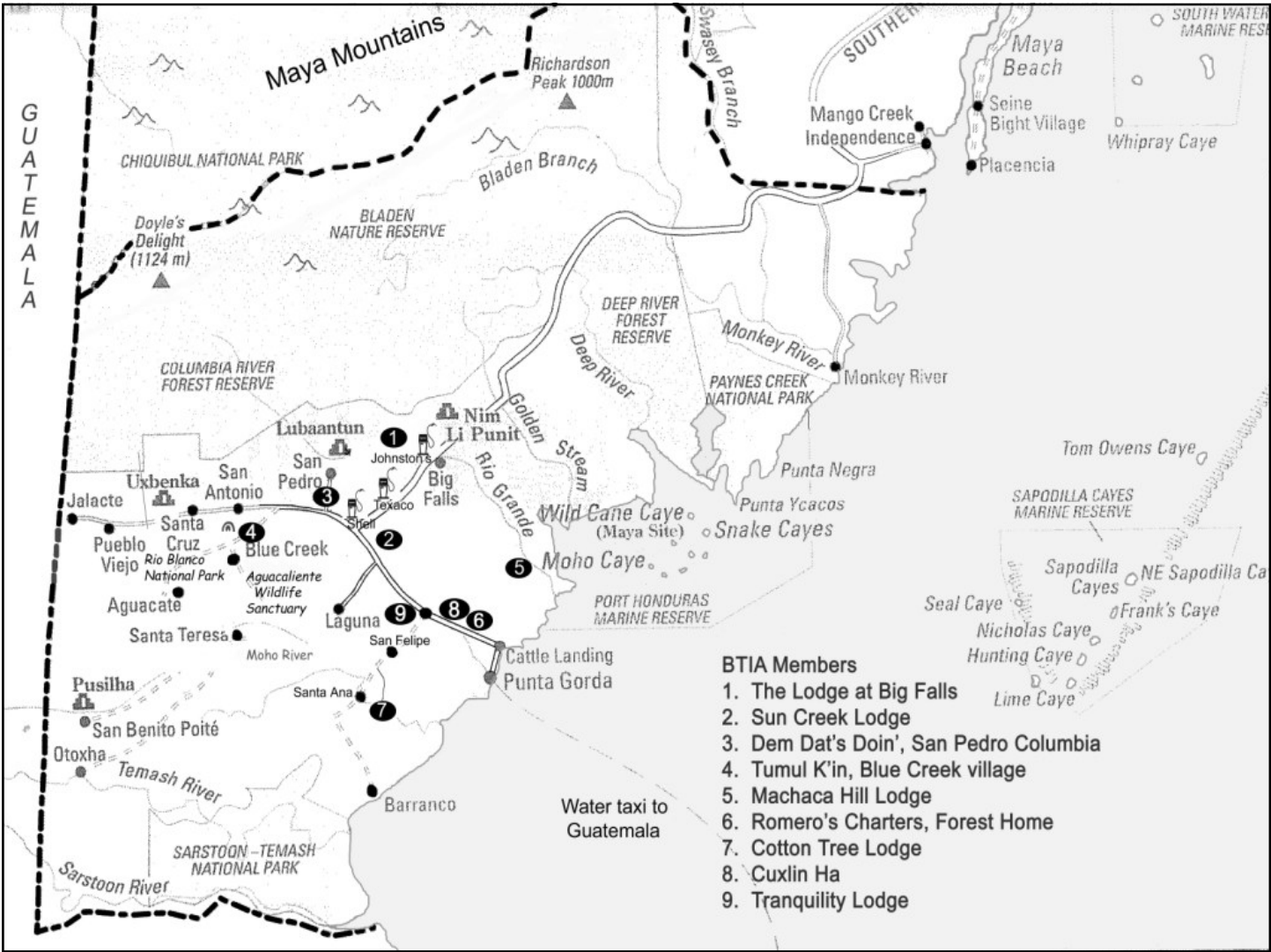
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Dramatic formations near one of the exits from Yok Balum cave

## Yok Balum Cave, Toledo near Santa Cruz village

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