



# The Toledo Howler

Newspaper of the Toledo Chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association

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**FREE**

## Heart of Toledo Adventure Trail

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The Heart of Toledo adventure Trail is a collaboration between the Destination Planning department at the Belize Tourism Board and BTIA members and other small businesses owners in central Toledo. Rob Hiron



Kayak the Rio Grande

from the Lodge at Big Falls who has been involved with the project from its inception said, "It is a great example of collaboration between the Tourism Board and small business owners in the area. BTB has the resources and the locals have the knowledge and this project brings the two together in a way that could be a model for future tourism trail developments." Kevin Gonzalez, Director of Destination Planning along with his colleagues Clive Myers and Arlo Cansino worked on bringing the project to fruition at the Belize Tourism Board.

The trail comprises a range of cultural, adventure and natural history experiences located around the loop that runs north from Big Falls village, west through the villages of Silver Creek, San Miguel and San Pedro Columbia around to the Dump junction at mile fourteen and back to Big Falls.

There is a brochure that includes a map with the locations of each home or business and a description of what to expect. Once on the road each place is indicated by a green Toledo Adventure Trail sign. These two things make it really easy for visitors from Belize or overseas to design their self-guided route taking in the attractions that appeal to them.

If you are looking for pure adventure then Big Falls Extreme Adventures offers its six-stage zip line, while the Lodge at Big Falls offers kayaking trips from San Miguel village downstream to the lodge itself using its sit-on-top Hobie kayaks. Both Extreme Adventures and the lodge offer river tubing along the same stretch of river. At one place a creek enters the river from a hot spring on the hillside. Guests can get out and wallow in the warm pools just above the point where the two waters join. One mile north of Big Falls you take a left turn off the Southern Highway on to the dirt road that leads to Lubaantun. The first village you reach after half a mile is Silver Creek where you can visit the home of Florentina and Miguel Choco a K'ek'chi' Mayan organic farmer and member



Roasting Cacao beans

of the Toledo Cacao Growers Association. He has a kitchen garden of about an acre that has an enormous variety of fruits and vegetables. These include two types of cocoa (cacao). The first is the one cultivated for export to make Green and Black's Mayan Gold chocolate. The second is called Balaam and is the same variety that was used as a form of currency by the ancient Maya.

The Howler wrote about Miguel and his farm in the October 2008 edition of the Howler. Further along the road in the village of San



Living Maya Experience Lunch

Pedro Columbia there is another Mayan organic cacao grower, Eladio Pop, who runs the Agouti Farm. Eladio's house is in the village and his plantation just a little way outside. Guests can eat lunch at his home and have the opportunity to roast and grind cacao to make a cacao drink. Eladio is one of BTIA's newest members and you can read a fuller article about him and his farm on Page 5.

The Toledo Botanical Arboretum of Alfredo and Yvonne Villoria is a fascinating collection with a huge variety of fruiting and flowering plants and trees.

*Continue on page 3*

## Chocolate Festival of Belize 2014

Toledo is gearing up once again to celebrate the eighth Chocolate Festival of Belize that will take place on the Commonwealth Day weekend from Friday 23-Sunday 25 May. The overall format remains similar but each day will be enhanced with new attractions and activities.

The festival opens with its gala evening of Wine and Chocolate, sponsored once again by Bowen and Bowen who will be offering their signature chocolate stout. This year the event moves back into Punta Gorda town and will be held at Garbutt's Marine and Fishing Lodge on

the waterside by Joe Taylor Creek.

On Saturday all the action takes place in Punta Gorda town on Front Street where local ethnic groups will display their cultural food and music and Belizean chocolatiers will have samples of their wares available for purchase.

The festival moves into the heart of Toledo on Sunday to Lubaantun Mayan site. This year the dancers of the Baktun 13 group from Maya Centre will return to perform and there will be performances by Jose Chun and family from San Marcos village who form a string en-



semble playing the Mayan harp, violin and guitar. The marimba will be performed by another group from Blue Creek village.



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# 14<sup>TH</sup> Annual Punta Gorda Christmas Bird Count

4 January 2014

Although the weather cooperated this year, we ended up with our lowest totals in the 14-year history of the count: 224 species and 3295 individual birds counted. But there was no shortage of good birds. After somehow failing to log Spot-breasted Oriole on count day every year since its discovery in Belize in 2007 at Cattle Landing, we finally nailed it down this year thanks to a pair that had been visiting my feeder on a daily basis since last October (see associated article in this issue). We also recorded Orange-breasted Falcon, Northern Harrier, and Wedge-tailed Sabrewing the first time, and Brown Booby, Double-crested Cormorant, Lovely Cotinga, and Black-throated Blue Warbler for only the second time since the first count was conducted back in 2000.

Low turnout and car trouble were the main contributors to the low numbers. With ever rising gas prices, it is becoming more and more difficult for people from northern Belize to participate in the count, and we still do not have enough local birders to sustain the count. Additionally, some of the local stalwarts of previous counts are finding it harder and harder each year to juggle work commitments with an entire day afield. But, for me, the most frustrating aspect of this year's count was my vehicle breaking down outside of Laguna Village late in the morning and having to be towed into town. That relegated me to an afternoon of counting birds at my feeder—but, hey, I did get the Spot-breasted Orioles!



Spot-Breasted Orioles

## Lee Jones: Attracting Birds to Your Yard

I have always been the only birder in my family. My wife, despite her uncanny ability to spot birds along the highway and point them out to me as we zip past at 50 mph, had no interest whatsoever in learning their names or how they fit into the overall scheme of things. My son thought birding was dumb. My daughter was still too young to fully comprehend the incredible magic of birds and birding. Or so I thought.

Recently, that all changed—not gradually, not through constant “coaxing” on my part, not through increased exposure to the world of birds. Their conversion was instantaneous. One day: “Duh”; “Blah”; “What’s the big deal?” Next day: “Oh my God!” Awesome! “What’s that bird called, again? That one over there. The one with the orange breast and black hood.” Oh, and that beautiful blue one over there? And that bright red



Summer Tanager

one?”

The magic wand? Bananas. Yes, *bananas*. Lots of bananas. Add an occasional papaya, a few sliced oranges, and Voila! Instant conversion. Oh, and sugar water. Can’t forget the sugar water.

Last August we moved into a new house with three large mango trees, an almond tree, and most importantly, a dead golden plum in the backyard. And fortunately, as it turns out, a couple of quite productive banana plants. I decided to put up a fruit feeder to see if it would bring in any birds. I took a couple of small planks and drove long nails in them spaced about two inches apart. I placed the planks strategically in the dead golden plum at about eye level, spiked some bananas and papayas on the nails protruding out the top of the plank, and waited. And waited. We got a few neat butterflies that were attracted to the rotting fruit, but no birds. I was patient. Besides, I liked watching the butterflies and trying to figure

out what they all were.

A couple of weeks after setting up the fruit feeder, when we were in Spanish Lookout, I purchased a couple of hummingbird feeders at Riemers Farm Supply. We rigged up a clothesline on a pulley system from our back veranda to the golden plum and hung the feeders on it. To our surprise, within a day or two, a couple of Green-breasted Mango hummingbirds started coming to them. The conversion had begun.

Immediately after that, a couple of Blue-gray Tanagers discovered the fruit feeder, followed by a pair of Golden-fronted Woodpeckers. By now, fall migration was underway, and the annual influx of avian visitors from North America, some of which feast on fruit during the winter, were turning up in ever increasing numbers. By the end of September we had four species of orioles coming to the feeder daily, including a pair of Spot-breasted Orioles, a species that was unrecorded in Belize until 2007 and is still quite rare.

Summer Tanagers also began appearing at the feeder in September along with a couple more resident species: Yellow-winged Tanager and Black-cowled Oriole. The Green-breasted Mangos departed for parts unknown in October, only to be replaced several days later by a few migrant Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and an occasional Rufous-tailed Hummingbird.

In October we got our first Gray Catbirds at the feeder, but they were more interested in gobbling down the habanero peppers(!) growing in our garden. Add in a couple of species of warblers, an occasional Clay-colored Thrush, Brown Jay, and Great-tailed Grackle, and we had quite a variety of birds to hold our interest. My wife and kids were elated.

By December, though, things began to get out of hand. To give you an idea, we counted as many as 30 Blue-gray Tanagers and 20 Baltimore Orioles at one time, either at the feeder or waiting in the wings! Our banana supply had to be supplemented with bananas from the market, to the tune of 30 bananas a day!

Reluctantly, we realized we would have to either cut back or let the kids go hungry. It was a tough decision, but reason ultimately prevailed and we cut back. Now we only put out ten to fifteen bananas every two to three days. When the food is



Baltimore Oriole

gone the birds have to fend for themselves, which they do quite readily. After all, that is what they have done for eons before discovering the cornucopia in our backyard.



Bird Feeder

We don’t get toucans and parrots at the feeder because we live in town, but who can complain?

To date we have had 19 species at the fruit and hummingbird feeders. My kids are spending more time out on the back veranda watching birds and less time glued to the TV. My wife is out there every day providing me constant updates on what’s new at the feeders while I slave away at the computer in my windowless (by choice!) office. She has even found several new species for the yard the last few months. My 6-year-old daughter is now begging me to take her birding every chance we get. It’s truly amazing what a difference a few well-placed bananas can make!

# Heart of Toledo Adventure Trail

*Continue from page 1*

The Cal and Chiac families of The Living Maya Experience offer fascinating and fun cultural experiences while, between San Miguel and San Pedro Columbia, Florencio Mes keeps alive Mayan musical traditions and instrument making and is pleased to welcome guests.

Lisa White Kile of Columbia River Co-operative offers the only butterfly farm open to the general public in Toledo and visitors can walk among the Blue Morpho butterfly and other species and learn about their life history. Look for their sign close to the turn off to Lubaantun Mayan site. Birders can contact the Lodge at Big Falls to go birding with Steven Choco their local Kek'chi Mayan guide whose membership of the Belize Bird Records Committee is testament to his expertise.

The trail includes places to eat. There are four in Big Falls itself. Call and make an appointment to visit the Cal's Living Maya Experience and you can help in the preparation of a delicious Mayan vegetarian meal.

Further along the road Coleman's restaurant offers a



Guests with Florencio Mes in San Pedro Columbia

Belizean buffet from midday until around five in the afternoon. Big Falls Extreme Adventures is another spot to find a traditional Belizean lunch. Otherwise call The Lodge at Big Falls and visit them for a lunch menu with a focus on salads and sandwiches, pizzas and burgers.

If you are looking for accommodation then try The

Lodge at Big Falls, Bak-a-Bush guest house and the Toledo Ecotourism Association guest house in San Miguel village. These are all along the Heart of Toledo trail. Outside the area of the eco-trail you can also find rooms at the Farm Inn another twelve miles further west near San Antonio village or at Tranquility Lodge in Jacintoville closer to Punta Gorda.

Many Belizeans are still surprised by the wealth of opportunities existing down in Toledo and the Heart of Toledo Adventure Trail brings many of these together in one accessible sixteen mile circular loop. So get in your vehicles, make a phone call or two and set up an exciting trip to Belize's undiscovered south. There is still time to make arrangements for Easter.

Contact the Tourism Information Center in P.G. (722-2531) for more information and to get individual phone numbers for businesses along the trail. The brochure will be published very soon and be available from the information centre.

## BTIA welcomes new Information Officer

Stephanie Parham is BTIA's new Tourism Information Officer appointed in the autumn of 2013. She is Toledo born and bred. She grew up in Mafredi attending the Methodist Primary School in the village before going on to Toledo Community College where she graduated in 2005.

At that time she did not have any clear career path ahead of her and spent the next few years in Belmopan, Belize City and Placencia. In Belmopan she ran a small internet café and stationery store; in Placencia she ran the Pirate's Grill before moving on to the French Connection restaurant. After that she became office administrator for Remax real estate agents in Placencia where she worked for eighteen months.

So after all this, she still had no chosen career pathway until returning to Punta Gorda and joining the front desk staff at Belcampo Lodge. She worked there for three years before joining BTIA as Tourism Information Officer. It was at Belcampo she discovered her passion for service in tourism

and promoting the attractions of the Toledo that she knows and loves so well.

She has wasted no time in making her mark. On February 14, she organized BTIA's first Valentine's Day bashment at Garbutt's Fishing Lodge on Joe Taylor Creek. She gathered a group of volunteers from among her friends and other members of BTIA. The evening was great success with music by DJ Fresh and about seventy people, mainly couples of course, in attendance. We look forward to next year when I am sure



Stephanie will be looking to make it bigger and better.

When asked about tourism in Belize she replied, *"There should not be any reason, this country cannot sustain itself on tourism, but we have to go about doing it the right way. And we all know the right way sometimes entails struggle and hardships, but we are building this country for our children. I'm building it for my child. We should not wait for foreigners to come here and be a tourist, let's start with us Belizeans. This is my philosophy – Be a Tourist in Your Own Country: It's The Element of Surprise!"*

Stephanie is that rare self-motivated and well-organized individual and we look forward to working with her and developing her leadership for tourism in the years ahead.

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# Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Venue/Time	Other Info
April 18th—21st	Easter Weekend Fri, Sat & Mon Bank Holidays		
May 1st	Labour Day		
May 23rd	<b>Chocolate Festival of Belize</b> Opening night Wine & Chocolate Gala	Garbutts Marine, Joe Taylor Creek, PG 6pm - 10pm	Tickets in advance \$50. No sales at door.
May 24th	<b>Chocolate Festival of Belize</b> Taste of Toledo	Front Street, Punta Gorda town - Cultural food and entertainment from 9am - 6pm	More info contact btia-toledo@btl.net or call 722-2531
May 25th	<b>Chocolate Festival of Belize</b> Lubaantun Finale	San Pedro Columbia Village, Lubaantun Maya Site from 10am - 4pm	More info contact btia-toledo@btl.net or call 722-2531
September 21st	Independence Day		
October 10th	<b>TIDE Fish Fest</b> Seafood Gala	Venue to be decided	
October 11th	<b>TIDE Fish Fest</b> Youth Conservation Competition	Venue to be decided	Tide Tours - info@tidetours.org or call 722-2129
October 12th	<b>TIDE Fish Fest</b>	TIDE Headquarters, Cattle Landing Village	



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# Eladio's Chocolate Adventure



Eladio Pop was born into a family of fifteen children in San Pedro Columbia Village in the Toledo District. His father was a farmer and his mother was a housewife who also helped with the farming. At the age of seventeen he met and fell in love with his wife, Virginia, a resident of San Pedro Columbia. Not long after they had their first child, Adalia. Eladio continues to farm and has a great love for planting and embracing the natural riches of the earth. He is an organic farmer who does not use any machinery or pesticides to farm and reap his products. His machete is his best friend.

Eight years ago, after growing and reaping cacao, Eladio decided he would bring back the value of cacao from his ancestors, not only in his home but for the public as well. Slowly but surely, lots of people started hearing about and visiting the cacao farm, the roasting of cacao beans, grinding it and making it into a paste to drink as hot chocolate. It is prepared in the same way the Mayans, many years ago, use to do it. He is proud of his

country and see the country as well. I want my community to be a part of the cacao planting too. I want to share my heart with the world."

Visiting Agouti cacao Farm is by far one the most exciting experiences you can have while visiting Toledo. If you are staying in Punta Gorda Town, you could hop on Cal's Village bus that goes to Silver Creek via San Pedro Columbia at 11:00. This bus is always parked on Jose Maria Street in Punta Gorda Town. The trip involves a forty-five minute ride from the town to San Pedro Columbia Village.

It is always best to contact them before going, so as to have someone waiting at the bus stop in the village for you. Feliciano Pop, also a tour guide with the Toledo Tour Guide Association, works directly with his father. He generally would be the one you would meet at the bus stop and would

accomplishment in introducing and sharing this wonderful part of his heritage with his family and the world.

Eladio became well known and his chocolate farm and demonstration blossomed three years ago when director Rohan Fernando, an award-winning director and cinematographer, a Sri Lankan native and Canadian immigrant, was introduced to Eladio Pop's cacao farming through the National Film Board of Canada. Rohan produced a documentary called "The Chocolate Farmer". It illustrates the life of Eladio and his family, his farm and chocolate demonstration, his values, what he believes in and how he has seen the world change in many different ways.

Eladio said, "I love Belize and I believe it is a blessed country. I want tourists to not only come to my place and do the tour I offer; I want them to come to the coun-

take you on a short Mayan Village tour before arriving at the house.

You are then greeted by the family and get a very small introduction before heading out to the farm. Eladio will walk and talk about his farm and you will feel the love flowing from his words and the passion that he has for what he does. You will then get to see the cacao pods, break them open and have a taste of that sweet creamy coated bean. Trust me; once you have tried it you will get hooked.

You are then escorted back to the house where his wife and daughter will show you how they first dry and then roast the bean and tell you how to determine the right time for the roasting to be complete. You will get to try the roasted bean in tiny pieces, which are called nibs after which you will be shown the process of grinding it on the



traditional Mayan volcanic rock called a "metate". Of course, you will get to dip your hand in and do your part in grinding that paste. After the paste is made you get to mix it in hot water and drink it with or without sugar. This is your hot chocolate!

Leaving the farm, house and the family is sad. You want to stay and hear more and see more. But there is a serenity you encounter on this tour that stays with you, wherever you go. It gives you that warmth and comfort that chocolate gives. Indeed, this chocolate farm and demonstration is a must see when visiting Toledo!



## Toledo Cacao Growers Association

The Toledo Cacao Growers Association (TCGA) is a not-for-profit organization established in 1984 that seeks to improve the socioeconomic standard of its members through a diversified system of production incorporating sound ecological practices. Today more than 1,100 subsistence farmers (primarily in the Toledo and South Stann Creek Districts) are engaged in cacao production. Its members are divided into 52 communities in the Toledo, Stann Creek and Cayo Districts that produce some 50 tons of cacao beans annually.

**Service to Members:**

1. Trainings in Cacao Production (improved farm management techniques)
2. Technical support/consultation through the extension department
3. Organic and Fairtrade Certification
4. Wet bean purchase and pick up
5. Farm Rehabilitation
6. Sales of polythene bags, selected high yielding seeds and tree saplings
7. Grafted trees (during transplanting season only)

**8. Drying facilities and cascading fermentaries**

**9. Guaranteed purchase of quality fermented and dried cacao beans**

**Markets:**

**Export**

1. Mondelez International
2. Choco del sol

**Domestic**

1. The Belize Chocolate Company Ltd
2. Goss Chocolate
3. Ixcacao (formerly Cyril's Chocolate)
4. Cotton Tree Chocolate
5. Che'il Chocolate

**To Become a Member:**

1. Farmer must have /or interested to plant at least 1 acre of cacao
2. Proposed site must be inspected and approved by TCGA
3. Complete Membership Application form and pay \$5.00 Application Fee and \$10.00 annual fee
4. Abide by TCGA's organic terms and conditions





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# Sketch map of PG Town

## PUNTA GORDA TOWN SERVICES

- 1 James Bus (702-2049)
- 2 Police Station (722-2022)
- 3 BTL Office and public phones
- 4 Customs and Immigration, and water taxis
- 5 Belize Bank
- 6 Scotia Bank
- 7 Maya Island Air
- 8 Tropic Air
- 9 Hospital and Polyclinic (722-2026 / 2161 / 2145)  
Fire Station, Middle Main Street (722-2032)



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*Joe Taylor Creek  
Punta Gorda Town  
Toledo District  
Belize C. A.*

## Restaurant Guide

Asha's Culture Kitchen	74 Front Street, south of market	Creole/Seafood/BBQ and Vegetarian	632-8025	Open Wed-Sun from 12pm to 12am
Belcampo	Wilson's Road	Pan Central American and International	722-0050	Lunch: noon-14:30. Dinner: 19:30-22:00. (Reservations preferred)
Coleman's Cafe	Big Falls Village, near the rice mill	Belizean	720-2017	Daily: 11:30-16:00 & 18:00-21:00 (Reservations Preferred)
Da Lazy Fish	Front Street, where the Old Fish Co-op was	Seafood/Belizean food		
Drift Wood Cafe	Front Street, next to James Bus Line	Vegetarian		
Fajina Firehearth Food	Front St, PG	Local Mayan Food	666-6144	Mon-Sat: 07:00-19:30. Closed on Sundays
Gomier's Restaurant and Soy Centre	Alejandro Vernon St, near PG Welcome sign	Local & international vegetarian / Seafood	722-2929	Mon-Sat: 08:00-14:00 & 18:00-21:00. Closed Sundays
Grace's Restaurant	Main St. PG	Belizean/ International	702-2414	Daily: 06:00-22:00, including holidays
Hang Cheong	Main St, PG	Chinese	722-2064	Daily: 10:00-14:00 & 17:00 -midnight
Mangrove Restaurant	Cattle Landing, by the curve	Belizean / International	623-0497	Daily: 17:00-22:00. (Reservations preferred)
Marian's Bay View Restaurant	Front St, south of the market by the sea	East Indian/ Belizean/Catering	722-0129	Mon-Sat: 11:00-14:00 & 18:00-22:00 Sun & Hols: noon – 14:00 & 19:00-21:00
Martina's Kitchen	Main Street, beside tortilla factory	Belizean	623-3330	Mon-Sat: 07:00-15:00. Closed on Sundays
Mom's Restaurant	Queen St, PG, by the park	Belizean	620-1607/661-1359	Mon-Sat: 06:00-14:00 & 16:00-21:00 Closed on Sundays
Rainbow Cafe	Queen St, PG, by the park	Belizean	631-2309	Mon-Sat: 7:00-14:00. Closed on Sundays
Rainforest Cafe	Big Falls Village, just south of the bridge	Belizean	669-0080	Daily: 10:00-22:00
Reef Bar & Restaurant	Front St, upstairs by the market	International/Belizean	625-8652	Daily: 10:00-14:00 & 16:00-midnight. Closed on Tuesdays
Sho's Local Restaurant	Entrance to Blue Creek Village	Belizean/ Catering	668-6540	Mon-Sat: 07:00–20:00. Closed Sundays. Group reservations required
Starz Dinner	BTL parking lot, PG	Belizean		Mon. to Sat. 7:00 to 15:00 Closed on Sundays
The Lodge at Big Falls	Big Falls Village, near the rice mill	International/ Belizean/ Middle Eastern	732-4444	Daily: 11:30-14:00 & 18:30-21:00 (Reservations Required)
The Snack Shack	BTL parking lot, PG	Breakfast & lunch/ Snacks, shakes, juices & pastries	702-0020	Mon-Sat: 07:00–15:00. Closed Sundays
Waluco's	Opposite TIDE pier in Hopeville	Belizean/East Indian/Seafood/ Catering	670-3672	Mon-Thurs: 07:00-14:00 & 17:00-22. Weekends: 07:00-late

## Registered Tour Operators in Toledo District 2014

***Always book your trip with a registered tour operator to ensure your guide has been trained & licensed and vehicles are properly insured***

Tour Operator	Local Phone Number	Location
Big Falls Extreme Adventures	634-6979	Big Falls
Blue Creek Rainforest Lodge	663-4665	Blue Creek
Cotton Tree Lodge	670-0557	San Felipe
The Farm Inn	732-4781	San Antonio
Garbutt's Marine Investment Co.	722-0070	Punta Gorda
The Lodge at Big Falls	732-4444	Big Falls
Natural Adventure Tours	533-3028	Monkey River
Reef Conservation International	702-0229	Punta Gorda
TIDE Tours	722-2129	Punta Gorda
Toledo Cave & Adventure Tours	604-2124	Sun Creek
Wild Encountours	636-1028	Punta Gorda

# TOLEDO VILLAGE BUSES

<b>Service</b>	<b>Depart PG</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Calling at...</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Return to PG</b>
Kan	11:30	<b>Aguacate</b>	Dump, Mafredi, Blue Creek	Mon to Sat	05:20
J 'n' L	12:00	<b>Barranco</b>	San Felipe ( <i>for Ixcacao</i> ), Santa Ana, Midway	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	06:00
Garcia	11:00	<b>Big Falls</b>	Dump, Jacintoville,	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	08:00
Chub	11:30	<b>Crique Sarco</b>	San Felipe, Santa Ana, Midway, Conejo, Sunday Wood	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	05:15
Ack	12:00	<b>Dolores</b>	Dump, Mafredi, Jordon, Santa Teresa, Mabilha, San Lucas, Corazon Creek, Otoxha	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	03:00
Pop	10:30	<b>Golden Stream</b>	Dump, Big Falls, Indian Creek	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	06:45
Pop	13:00	<b>Golden Stream</b>	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee, Indian Creek ( <i>for Nim Li Punit</i> )	Mon to Sat	07:30
Pop	17:00	<b>Indian Creek</b>	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee	Mon to Sat	12:00
Pop	21:00	<b>Indian Creek</b>	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee	Mon to Thurs	15:30
Bol	06:00	<b>Jalacte</b>	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz, Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo	Mon to Sun	05:00
Chunny	11:30	<b>Jalacte</b>	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz ( <i>for Rio Blanco</i> ), Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo, Jalacte	Mon to Sat	03:00
Bol	16:00	<b>Jalacte</b>	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz ( <i>for Rio Blanco</i> ), Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo, Jalacte	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	15:00
Shol	12:00	<b>Laguna</b>	Elridgeville	Wed/Fri/Sat	
Pop	11:30	<b>Medina Bank</b>	Dump, Big Falls, Hicatee, Indian Creek ( <i>for Nim Li Punit</i> )	Mon to Sat	05:30
Chunny	11:30	<b>San Antonio</b>	Dump, Mafredi	Mon to Sat	06:00
Coc	12:00	<b>San Antonio</b>	Dump, Mafredi	Mon to Sat	06:30
Coc	12:00	<b>San Antonio</b>	Dump, Mafredi	Mon to Sat	13:30
Teck	12:00	<b>San Benito Poite</b>	Dump, Mafredi, Blue Creek ( <i>for Hokeb Ha</i> ), Santa Teresa	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	04:30
Sho	11:30	<b>San Jose</b>	Jacintoville, Dump, Mafredi, Crique Jute, Nah Lum Ca	Wed/Sat	04:00
Choc	12:00	<b>San Jose</b>	Dump, Mafredi, Crique Jute, Nah Lum Cah	Mon/Fri	05:00
Chen	11:30	<b>San Vicente</b>	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz ( <i>for Rio Blanco</i> ), Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo, Jalacte	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	02:00
Chen	05:30	<b>San Vicente</b>	Dump, Mafredi, San Antonio, Santa Cruz, Santa Elena, Pueblo Viejo, Jalacte	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	14:00
Bobby	11:00	<b>Santa Ana</b>	San Felipe ( <i>for Ixcacao</i> )	Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat	07:15
Cal	04:30	<b>Silver Creek</b>	Dump, San Pedro Columbia, San Miguel	Mon to Sat	13:00
Cal	11:00	<b>Silver Creek</b>	Dump, San Pedro Columbia ( <i>for Lubaantun</i> ), San Miguel	Mon to Sat	06:00
Cucul	11:30	<b>Silver Creek</b>	Dump, San Pedro Columbia ( <i>for Lubaantun</i> ), San Miguel	Mon to Sat	07:00
Cucul	16:00	<b>Silver Creek</b>	Dump, San Pedro Columbia, San Miguel	Mon to Sat	12:30
Cucul	21:00	<b>Silver Creek</b>	San Pedro Columbia, San Miguel	Mon to Thurs	16:00

## Emergency Numbers

**PG Police station:** 722-2022

**PG Hospital:** 722-2026 / 722-2161 / 722-2145

**PG Fire Department:** 722-2032

**National Emergencies (NEMO):** 822-0153

**Belize Tourism Board:** 227-2420 / 227-2417

**BTIA Main Office Belize City:** 227-1144



Gray-necked Wood Rail

# TRANSPORT SCHEDULES

## Flights

Depart Punta Gorda	Arrives Belize City	Service Provider	Depart Belize Intl.	Arrive In Punta Gorda	Service Provider
06:45	07:55	Maya Island Air	08:10	09:15	Maya Island Air
06:30	07:30	Tropic Air	07:50	09:00	Tropic Air
09:30	10:35	Maya Island Air	10:10	11:15	Maya Island Air
09:20	10:20	Tropic Air	10:20	11:30	Tropic Air
11:30	12:35	Maya Island Air	12:20	13:30	Tropic Air
11:35	12:35	Tropic Air	14:20	15:30	Tropic Air
13:35	14:35	Tropic Air	14:40	15:45	Maya Island Air
16:00	17:05	Maya Island Air	16:40	17:45	Maya Island Air
16:00	17:10	Tropic Air	16:40	17:40	Tropic Air

## James Bus Line Schedule

Departs P.G.	Arrives Belize City	Departs Belize City	Arrives P.G.
03:50am	10:30am	05:15am Express (except Sun)	10:30am
04:50am	11:30am	06:15am	12:45pm
06:00am (express)	10:45am	07:15am	01:45pm
05:50am	12:30pm	08:15am	02:45pm
07:50am	02:30pm	09:15am	03:45pm
09:50am	04:30pm	10:15am	04:45pm
11:50am	06:30pm	12:15pm	06:45pm
01:50pm	08:00pm	01:45pm	07:45pm
02:50pm	08:30pm	03:15pm	09:45pm
03:50pm	09:30pm	03:45pm Express	08:45pm

## Boats To & From Puerto Barrios , Guatemala

Service Provider	Dep Punta Gorda	Arrive Puerto Barrios	Depart Puerto Barrios	Arrive Punta Gorda
Requena's Charter Service	09:30	10:30	14:00	15:00
Tek-Dat	01:00	14:00	03:00	04:00
Pichilingo	14:00	15:00	10:00	11:00
Sharkboy	16:00	17:00	13:00	14:00

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



Toledo Tourism Information Centre  
Front Street, Punta Gorda Town  
Mon to Fri 8am to 5pm  
Tel: 722-2531  
Email: BTIAtoledo@btl.net

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

Distribution points include:

- ◆ Tourism Information Centres throughout Belize
- ◆ Tropic Air and Maya Island Air terminals
- ◆ BTIA Toledo members
- ◆ Requena's Charters, Puerto Barrios
- ◆ Major gas stations

As well as a wide online presence in electronic format

*Please contact the Toledo Howler team at 722-2531 if you would like to become a distributor for the voice of tourism development in Belize's deep south!*



## Trip Advisor Awards for Toledo

Each year TripAdvisor awards their “Traveller’s Choice” awards for destinations, beaches, restaurants and hotels. Ambergris Caye took top honours again this year, being voted the “Number 1” island in the world, which is great news for them, very well-deserved, and also fantastic news for Belize!

We’re delighted to report that two Toledo hotels were also awarded Traveller’s Choice awards, so many congratulations to The Farm Inn, near San Antonio Village and to Hickatee Cottages just outside PG Town.

If you’ve enjoyed your Toledo experience, then don’t forget to tell people about it, and help raise the profile of this unforgettable district! You can submit reviews to TripAdvisor for your activities, restaurants, and accommodation by visiting [www.tripadvisor.com/UserReview](http://www.tripadvisor.com/UserReview)



# The Sapodilla Cayes at a Glance

**Tom Owens Caye** is leased by Gayle and Dona Scafe of Cuxlin Ha Resort in Eldridgeville, Toledo. It is used by Reef CI for diving groups from Monday to Friday each week apart from the month of October and two weeks in February. At the weekends guests can make arrangements with Cuxlin Ha to go out for a weekend staying on the tiny 1-acre caye on Saturday night.

Reef CI +501-629-4266 info@reefc.com

Cuxlin HA +501-732-4747 Cuxlinha@gmail.com

*Right Sunrise on Tom Owen's Caye*



**North East Sapodilla Caye** is uninhabited and unused. It is the northern most point of the "No Catch Zone" that extends down to Lime Caye at the southern end of the Sapodillas.

**Frank's Caye** is for sale. It is not open to the public. The buildings on it are dilapidated.

**Nicholas Caye** is privately owned by Belcampo Lodge.

**Hunting Caye** is home to various branches of the Belize government. The Belize Coastguard has a base there as well as the Belize Port Authority that is responsible for the lighthouse. The Immigration Department has a unit there and sailing boats and other craft can do their entry and exit procedures at Hunting Caye. The Fisheries Department is responsible for the enforcement of the marine park laws and marine research. This includes monitoring water quality and the health of the reef monitoring Nassau grouper, lion fish and the sea turtles.

The University of Belize has a student dormitory that can accommodate up to 30 and also receives some international student groups. Vicotr Jacobs from Punta Gorda is the Field Manager and can be contacted on 742-2801

The Toledo Tour Guide Association offers drinks and food at the Hawks-



*Above: a bottlenose dolphin surfaces to greet a tour boat*

**Lime Caye** is owned by the Garbutt family. The Garbutts offer salt water fly fishing, snorkeling and scuba diving with a complete dive shop/ Kayaking is also available with an advanced booking. There is a restaurant and bar serving a buffet with creole style fresh fish, conch and lobster with vegetables, rice and plantain alongng with frsh fruit juices.

There is accommodation in 4 cabanas (two with en-suite bathroom) and one bunkhouse that can accommodate sixteen. They all have flushing toilets and running water.

Those looking for an authentic "desert island" experience should avoid certain dates in the years when Lime Caye is taken over by large groups of visitors from Guatemala and Honduras. These periods include Easter Week, the first of May and New Year. Visitors can observe the nesting habits of the Hawksbill and Loggerhead Turtle between the beginning of June and end of October. Whale shark can be seen year round but the best chance is around the period of the full moon s from March to June.



*Above: looking north towards Hunting Caye from Lime Caye*



*Left: heading back to P.G. from the Sapodilla Cayes*

# Word on the Street: A Visitor's Perspective

Anneke from Pennsylvania visited Toledo and Hopkins with her parents and two brothers during Christmas 2013. We thought it would be interesting to get a teenage visitor's perspective on a family holiday to Belize, and tracked her down during her travels.

## **What attracted you to Toledo?**

My parents wanted us to visit somewhere new in Central America, and thought Belize would be a great trip. So after some research, especially from the Lonely Planet, they thought Toledo would be a great first spot to visit in Belize, and then move to Hopkins for the beach.

## **How does Toledo compare with other places in Belize?**

We stayed only in Punta Gorda and Hopkins so I didn't get to visit too much of the country, but Hopkins definitely gave us more of the beach aspect of Belize and we had an amazing snorkel trip while we were there. I thought the Toledo area was very beautiful, especially the caves and waterfalls, and going kayaking in the mangroves was one of the most amazing things I've ever experienced. Just to be surrounded by vast amounts of nature with all sorts of creatures around you that you don't even realize are there is just simply astounding.

## **How did you travel to Toledo? What was good and bad about the journey?**

We flew from Washington D.C. via San Salvador, and then drove down to Punta Gorda. It was a 5

hour car ride to Punta Gorda and that was a cramped and tiring ride. With holes in the road and speed bumps popping up out of nowhere I sometimes felt like I was stuck on a roller coaster ride, but then at some points during the journey when I woke up it was a beautiful sight to just see the moon through the jungle trees.

## **How long are you staying?**

We stayed for about 10 days but I definitely wish we had stayed longer.

## **What was the most surprising thing about your visit?**

I loved the bug-hunts at our hotel in Toledo – it wasn't actually as terrifying as I expected and I overcame my fear of giant spiders for a brief period. Also swimming in the Blue Creek Cave, while slightly terrifying, was just a beautiful experience and I loved it, and kayaking along the river and seeing crocodiles and iguanas was so cool. Visiting the chocolate farm was very interesting too, especially seeing how chocolate is made. Belize truly gives you an appreciation for the natural world which people take for granted every day.

## **What did you like the least?**

If I had to think of something I guess it would be the GIGANTIC SPIDERS!!! I have a huge fear of spiders and seeing the size of them was absolutely terrifying at first. Also seeing the number of stray dogs upset me.

## **Favourite food?**

Calaloo!

## **Reef or rainforest, cayes or culture?**

The reef and rainforest are two very different environments with equal amounts of beauty so I believe both are worth visiting. I loved our snorkel trip, and I definitely enjoyed the nature and the culture in Toledo. People in Belize seemed to be a lot friendlier than some people here in the U.S.

## **Favourite activities and tours?**

Swimming at Rio Blanco, and also hiking in the different sanctuaries and trail – it was amazing to see animal tracks and be immersed in the nature, and was a beautiful experience for the senses. Snorkeling at the reef was beautiful, and also visiting the Belize Zoo was very cool and I saw a lot of the animals which were brand new to me.

## **Travel tips?**

I believe if you have the right mind set and totally immerse yourself in the nature, you will come out with a new, more open, changed view of the world and the true beauty that it holds. This experience definitely gave me a new found respect and passion for Mother Nature.

I definitely suggest people be polite to everyone, be respectful of people's culture, and respectful of nature. Also I suggest if you go in with an open and clear mind and are ready for adventure like I was, you will definitely come out of Belize with a new world view.

## **Will you be coming back?**

## BTIA presents "From Your Valentine"



BTIA held its first St Valentine's Day Party at Garbutt's Fishing Lodge on Joe Taylor Creek on Friday 14th February. BTIA was pleased to welcome its members and guests from

Day then make sure you don't miss next years. Look out for news on BTIA's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/btia.toledo](http://www.facebook.com/btia.toledo)

the community including Ms Celia Mahung, Director of TIDE and Ms Christina Garcia of the Ya'axche Conservation Trust. Wil Maheia, well known Belizean activist, was there as well as Love FM's southern correspondent Mr Paul Mahung. Music was provided by DJ Fresh. If you missed our first St Valentine's

BTIA thanks Stephanie Parham and her team of volunteers for their efforts in making the evening a success. Other members of the team were Nannette Nunez, Keren Recinos, Eleanor Jackson, Amina Cal, Chantelle Halvorson and Henry Guerra. Pictures are reproduced with the

kind permission of Danny Hun Photography. Contact Danny on 602-9400 or e-mail [hunnyp@gmail.com](mailto:hunnyp@gmail.com)



L to R Eleanor Jackson, Amina Cal and Stephanie Parham

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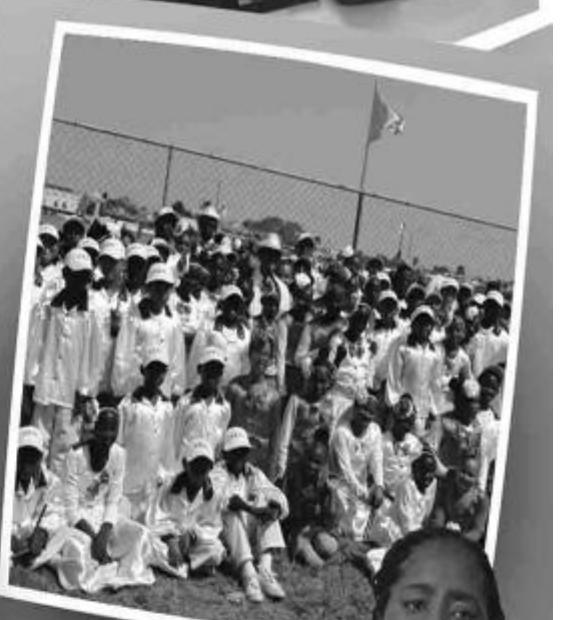


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## BTIA TOLEDO MEMBERS 2014

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Beya Suites	Lisa Avila	722-2188	info@beyasuites.com
Catarina Choco	Catarina Choco	634-6772	catarinachoco@gmail.com
Coleman's Café	Thomas & Pearleen Coleman	630-4069 /630-4432	belizetom@yahoo.com
Coral House Inn	Ale Cho	722-2878	coralhousebelize@yahoo.com
Cuxlin Ha Resort	Dona Scafe	732-4747	cuxlinha@gmail.com
Garbutt's Fishing Lodge	Dennis Garbutt	722-0070 /604-3548	garbuttsmarineandfishinglodge@gmail.com
Golden Stream Plantation	Thomas & Tessy Mathew	732-4014/670-1338	goldenstreamspicefarm@gmail.com
Hickatee Cottages	Ian & Kate Morton	662-4475	www.hickatee.com
Ixcacao Maya Belizean Chocolates	Juan Cho	742-4050/660-2840	ixcacaochocolate@gmail.com
Ixchel Women's Group	Tecla Acal	626-2338/632-7938	Indian Creek Village
Living Maya Experience	Anita Cal & Marta Chiac	627-7408/632-4585	livingmayaexperience@gmail.com
Maroon Creole Drum School	Emmeth & Jill Young	668-7733/632-7841	methosdrums@hotmail.com
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Mountain Spirit Wellness Community	Dr. Ana Arzu	600-3873	arzu@arzumountainspirit.com
ProWorld Belize	Nicole Andrewin	610-1063	nico@proworldvolunteers.org
ReefCI	Polly Alford	629-4266	info@reefc.com
Requena's Charter Service	Julio Requena	722-2070	watertaxi@btl.net
The Farm Inn	Renee Brown	732-4781	info@thefarinbelize.com
The Lodge at Big Falls	Rob Hiron	732-4444 /610-0126	info@thelodgeatbigfalls.com
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Toledo Cave and Adventure Tours	Bruno Kuppinger	604-2124	ibtm@gmx.net
Toledo Tour Guide Association	BTIA Office	637-2000	ttgabze@gmail.com
Warasa Garifuna Drumming School	Ruth & Ronald McDonald	632-7701	warasadrumschool@gmail.com
Yum Kax Women's Group	Concepciona Coc	662-8539/636-9586	coconcepciona@yahoo.com

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# Wat's Cookin?

## Blue Crab

### Belizean Blue Crabs!

A few months from now should see the start of the rainy season, bringing welcome respite from the hot and humid weather leading up to it, but also giving rise to a wonderful natural phenomenon – the running of the crabs!

The large blue land crabs emerge from the under-growth in their thousands for the start of their mating season, and you'll likely come across family groups with sticks and bags looking to catch the crab and cook up a tasty stew.

Each family has their favourite seasonings, but many versions of the stew include coconut milk and plantain, along with "matilda foot" – plantain dumplings!

### Belizean Crab Stew Recipe

(serves 6)

Ingredients:

- 8-10 medium to large crabs
- 2 green plantain (cut into small pieces)
- 1 small pig's tail (cut off excess fat)
- 1 large onion
- 2-3 teaspoons Lea and Perrins Sauce
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 small round red recordo

1/2 teaspoon thyme

1/2 teaspoon any of your favorite seasoning

2-3 cloves garlic, crushed

1-2 cups thick coconut milk

Matilda foot (see the recipe below)

### How to cook Belizean Crab Stew:

Boil pig tail and green plantain until tender, and meanwhile grate and squeeze the coconut milk, reserving 2 tablespoons for the Matilda Foot. Add crab meat and seasonings to the pot, and then drop in the Matilda Foot dumplings and cook for 15 – 20 minutes

Lastly, add coconut milk and taste. Serve the Belizean Crab Stew hot with steamed rice.

### Matilda Foot Recipe

Ingredients:

2 green plantains

1 'turn' or half-ripe plantain

3 tablespoons flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons coconut milk

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 tablespoon margarine



### How to cook Matilda Foot:

Peel and grate plantains.

Mix flour, salt, and baking powder together.

Melt margarine (low heat).

Add margarine and milk to grated plantain, mix well.

Drop by teaspoon into boiling stew.

Adapted from a recipe by Erleen Godfrey, Belizean Favourite Foods.



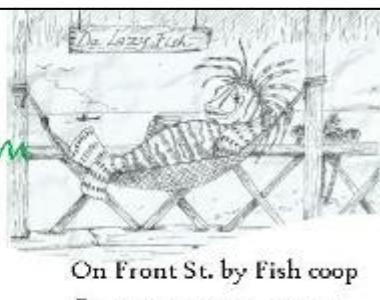
The Chocolate Festival at Lubaantun Mayan site 2013. More than five hundred visitors thronged the grand plaza for performances by the Bak-tun 13 Maya dance group from Maya Centre in Stann Creek district. And other performers from around Belize.

**Battle of the Drums** Last year's Battle of the Drums was won by the group across the bay from Livingston calling themselves Lufuluri Gulfu Iyumoun. Grupo Juchelo (pictured above) from Honduras came in second in an evening distinguished by fine performances from all participating drumming groups.

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# BTIA Welcomes New Members

## Toledo Cave and Adventure Tours

Toledo Cave and Adventure Tours formerly known as IBTM Tours, started more than 10 years ago by Bruno Kuppinger. He moved to Belize more than 15 years ago and got involved rather quickly as a



tour operator named IBTM Tours.

In October 2010 the name was then changed to TCAT (Toledo Cave and Adventure Tours). Bruno has been a licensed Tour Operator and a licensed Tour Guide for more than 12 years.

TCAT offers specific tours each day. Tours include snorkelling at the beautiful Snake Caves, hiking to the 30ft Rio Blanco Waterfalls, swimming in Blue Creek Cave, touring the Belize Spice Farm, visiting

both the Lubantun and Nim Li Punit Mayan sites, cultural tours and much more. These tours all start at 8:30am at your hotel with a minimum of 2 persons.

Contact:

Bruno Kuppinger, J.P.  
Phone: 604-2124 or 664-3559  
[Email:ibtm@gmx.net](mailto:ibtm@gmx.net)  
[www.tcatours.com](http://www.tcatours.com)

## Eladio's Chocolate Adventure

Eladio's Chocolate Adventure is a family business operated in the Mayan village of San Pedro Columbia. They offer daily farm tours, traditional chocolate making, and camping on a 30 acre farm situated just a "sights view" from historical Lubaantun Maya Ruin.

Eladio Pop, his wife Virginia and children started their journey on cultivating the land 25 years ago when he discovered that Cacao was a historic plant that would be sought by the rest of the world one day. Like cacao in ancient times; reminds Mr. Pop how valuable it was to continue farming this tree that produces a luxurious product called **Chocolate**.

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## BTIA Toledo and The Toledo Howler

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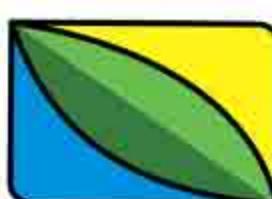
### The Howler is written, edited and produced by:

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Kate Morton: [cottages@hickatee.com](mailto:cottages@hickatee.com)

**Together we're stronger!** Become a part of BTIA and make a practical contribution to the economic development of Toledo District, and benefit from our promotional work. We meet monthly at the Tourism information Centre on Front Street.

### How Do I Join BTIA?

Visit [www.btia.org](http://www.btia.org) to read about BTIA and all the membership benefits and to download an application form. Complete the form and hand it in at the Tourism Information Center on Front St.



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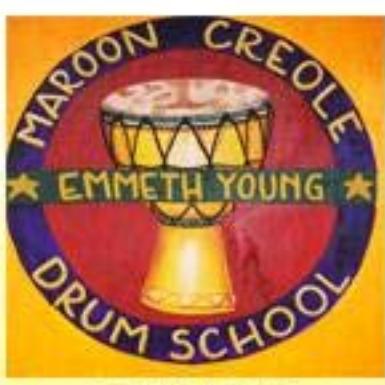
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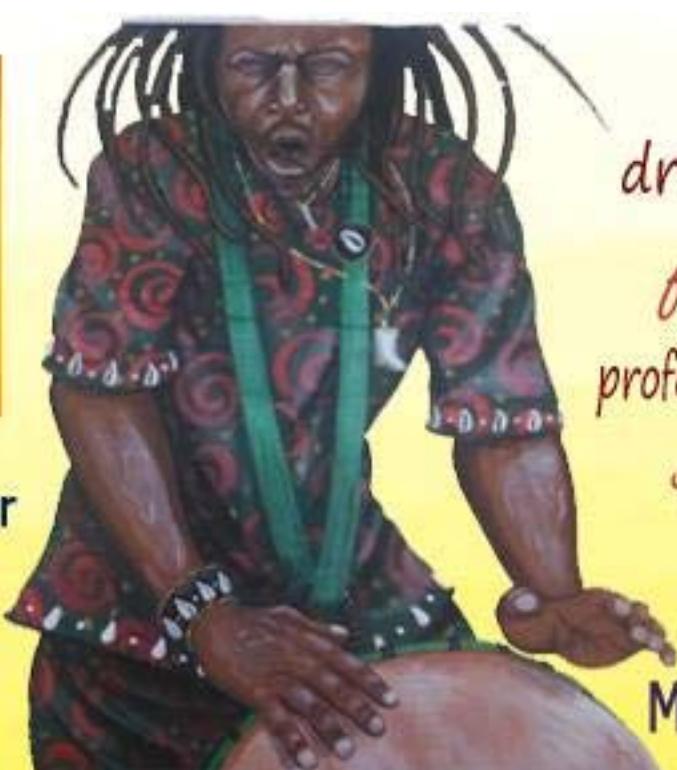


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