



# IMS Explorer

Dedicated to a giant in the world of Maya Studies, who helped usher in a sense of the spiritual for the ancient Maya ... but who is she?

A monthly newsletter published by the **Institute of Maya Studies**



January 20, 2010 • Maya Long Count: 12.19.17.0.14 • 4 'Ix 12 Muwan • G5

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## Preliminary Report: New Research Expands Size of Chichén Itzá

By E. J. Albright

Chichén Itzá is much bigger and more recent than previously thought, Mexican researchers announced last week.

Archaeologists in the past year have uncovered some 350 previously unknown structures, according to Rafael Cobos, the general coordinator of archaeology at Chichén Itzá. Cobos works for INAH, the federal agency that oversees archaeological sites in Mexico.

Most of the structures were found directly southwest of the previously mapped parts of the city and contain at least 10 *sacbes*, a type of paved road used by the ancient Maya. These newly identified structures bring the total for all of Chichén Itzá to 1,000.

One of the new structures is a ballcourt, which brings the total to 11 found so far in Chichén Itzá. Teams also mapped several *cenotes* (natural sinkholes) and caves, and researchers have found ceremonial items similar to those found at the *Cenote Sagrado* (Well of Sacrifice), indicating that ritual practices extended throughout the region.

Since February, 2009, teams of archaeologists and laborers have been excavating and mapping throughout Chichén Itzá to gather data to determine how the ancient city evolved. Much is known about the period during which it flourished, but less is known about the ancient city's beginnings in the 7th and 8th centuries.

Cobos also revealed that recent studies of the Great Ballcourt indicate that it was built after the period archaeologists believe was the ancient city's peak. According to Cobos, researchers have found evidence that indicates it was built



in the 12th century, not the 10th or 11th century, when Chichén Itzá was believed to have been flourishing. These are the conclusions reached by a multi-disciplinary group of specialists from the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán that have studied data taken from Chichén Itzá.

To build the ballcourt, the Maya had to tear down a wall that stood to the west of *El Castillo*, the great pyramid of K'ukulcan, Cobos noted. This was part of an era that has been called the *Gran Nivelación* (Great Leveling), when the Great Platform that included *El Castillo* and the Temple of Warriors was extended to the north and west, and the Maya constructed the Great Ballcourt and the Platform of Venus.

To level the landscape, the Maya brought in rocks and other fill material (all by human power) to bring the ground level to a consistent height. They covered over previous platforms and structures, and filled in holes as deep as 3.5 meters.

The first official report from last year's excavations and research will be released in spring of this year, Cobos said.

Source: From an original report by E.J. Albright, released 12/14/09 at [www.ancientegypt.com](http://www.ancientegypt.com)

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### IMS Video Presentation (in the Museum Auditorium) January 20:



### "EDGEWALKER: A Conversation with Linda Schele"



Jim Reed,  
Editor

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## The IMS Explorer – Share it with your friends!

When you read the name **IMS Explorer**, doesn't it convey a little more sense of adventure, even if from your armchair or online screen? We hope our new newsletter will open doors to you and your friends for up-to-date happenings in the Mundo Maya and to other discoveries in the world of pre-Columbian studies. We will continue to dig up current information to pique your interest and engender your spirit and also elicit your interaction. So feel free to contact editor Jim Reed ([mayaman@bellsouth.net](mailto:mayaman@bellsouth.net)) or any Board member, whether to comment on an article, or to submit your own article for consideration. *And please consider dropping the paper copy of your IMS Explorer and receive it digitally. You not only will be helping the environment ... you'll get to read our monthly publication in full color!*

*Note: The results of Board member designations and positions for 2010 will be announced in our February issue.*

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#### On the Cover:

Dr. Linda Schele of UT Austin was one of the major contributors in the search to break the Maya code. Come

and see a special video of her lifetime of achievements at the  
IMS on January 20.

### Archaeological Institute of America News: AIA Award for Indiana Jones

When the AIA celebrated its 130th anniversary with its premier gala last year in New York City, the organization (among other things) presented The Inaugural Bandelier Award to Harrison Ford for raising the public's awareness of archaeology through his portrayal of Indiana Jones in the very popular movie series.

To me, this was an excellent idea, because there is no way the AIA could

purchase ads that would reach out to a younger generation and instill a curiosity in the field of archaeology as Ford's films have done. They possibly have awakened a deep desire to choose a career in archaeology in many young hearts, and hopefully some of them will receive an AIA award at a future date.

A sumptuous Maya "feast" was created for the 450 attendees using ingredients available to the ancient Maya, including a traditional Maya beer derived from cacao. Submitted by Pat Manfredi.

### IMS Lecture Series Summary for October 2009:

By Beth Wein and Steven Mellard

Welcome to our continuing series of IMS program summaries.

On November 18, IMS president Marta Barber presented a program on one of the major sites in all of Yucatán. Her program was entitled "**Calakmul: The Power of the Snake Kingdom**".

Calakmul in Yucatec Mayan translates as follows: *Ca* – two; *lak* – adjacent; *mul* – mounds. The original name is *Oxte'tun*, Place of Three Stones. The site was rediscovered in 1931 by Cyrus Lund of the Mexican Chicle Company. It was mapped in 1990 revealing over 6,750 structures, larger than Tikal. Calakmul is located within a biosphere reserve created in 1989 containing over eight million acres and it is adjacent to the Guatemalan border with the Petén region.

During the Classic Period, Tikal and Calakmul were arch-enemies, with Tikal being conquered in 562 CE. This marked the rise of the *Ka'an* (Snake) Kingdom as numerous monuments from the area refer to this entity. At Dos Pilas, a component polity of the Snake Kingdom, excavations have uncovered a hieroglyphic stairway that tell of the conflicts between Calakmul and Tikal. Two recently discovered tablets from La Corona positively identify that site as the long sought after Site Q, a secondary capital of the Snake Kingdom.

Calakmul contains some impressive architecture, including 116 stelae and some wonderful murals. Structure 11 is composed of six levels of construction



and shows the full chronology of the 1,200 year history of Calakmul (300 BCE – 990 CE). It is about 150 feet in height, making it one of the tallest structures in the Yucatán and it contains 38 rooms, eight hearths, a sweat bath, an altar, and tombs.

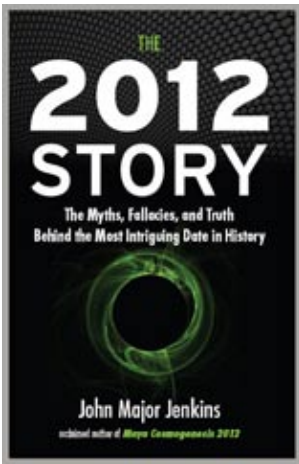
One of these tombs was of *Yuknoom Took' K'awil* who ruled from 702-731 CE. This tomb was found to contain some exquisite jade masks and coral.

A frieze from Sub-structure 2C-1, and dating from 390-250 BCE, is one of the best preserved in the Maya region.

Structure I, dating from the Pre-Classic and part of the North Acropolis, contains an outstanding mural, recently completely excavated, depicting scenes of everyday life of the upper class (above).

In 695 CE, a reconstituted Tikal defeated Calakmul as told on Lintel 3 from Structure I. Calakmul begins its long decline in 731 CE, and its last record is inscribed in 909 CE.

This program was very entertaining and the accompanying photos terrific. It was a perfect introduction to the site that eighteen IMS members will be visiting this month in Mexico.



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**Comments by Jim Reed:**  
**The 2012 Story**

**The Myths, Fallacies and Truth Behind  
 the Most Intriguing Date in History**  
**By John Major Jenkins**

*"Writing this book was an immense undertaking that had to accommodate new developments in the ever-shifting features of an evolving field. Because of its curious crescendo in our immediate future, and therefore unlike any other topic, 2012ology ("twentytwelvology") has been growing exponentially with a unique set of issues and attractions. This accelerating growth of interest in the public arena is driven primarily by urgent doomsday scenarios spun out by the mainstream media and opportunistic writers. And yet the date is not simply a new-fangled gadget invented by the marketplace. It is a true artifact of the authentic Maya's Long Count calendar, which has suffered the cut-and-paste cosmologizing of wannabe wizards, pocket-protector prophets, and celebrity showmen. This heady stew is all stirred up in the Google cauldron, making a dangerous potion for the unsuspecting newcomer. As you step into this ever shifting discussion it will be helpful to have some historical background and a guiding survey of who has been saying what. This is part of what this book offers."* (From the Introduction)



**Izapa, Stela 11**



Author John Major Jenkins next to Stela 11 at Izapa, 12/2006. The stela appears to portray the astronomical meaning of the Long Count end-date. (From page 157)

Your *IMS Explorer* editor has known and befriended JMajorJ for almost a Katun (20 years). I first contacted John in 1992 after the release of his book *Tzolkin: Visionary Perspectives and Calendar Studies*. I had found someone very knowledgeable in Maya calendar studies; one with whom I could really share the intense passion I feel for the ancient and living Maya.

I fondly remember one late night phone conversation when we arrived at the epiphany that the ancient Izapan skywatchers had first consciously set the end-date of their 5,126-year Long Count calendar to a winter solstice in our era, then back-tracked to set the start date to August 11, 3,114 BCE, at a time when the sun was at zenith. We

never received any verification by other Maya scholars until Dr. Susan Milbrath admitted this in her article "Just How Precise is Maya Astronomy?" in the December 2007, Vol. 36, Issue 12, *IMS Explorer*.

This was a major milestone for John and indicative of the heavy cross he has had to bear over the years. Like me, John doesn't have a Ph.D. He is an "outsider" to the scholarly world. But maybe, in a positive way, his independent research has led him to many conclusions that the established scholars would never have investigated. They don't teach perennial wisdom in our colleges ... They don't teach about Maya Creation Centers, a galactic alignment in our times, or even

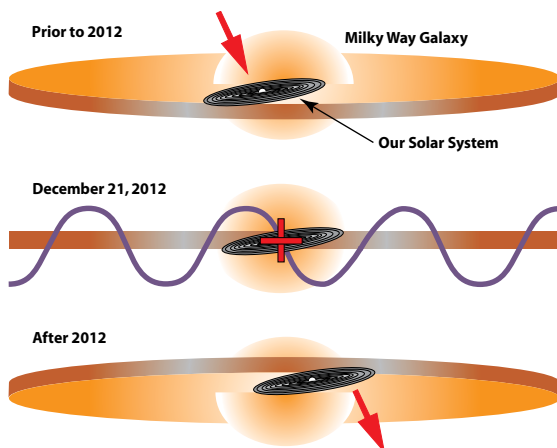
"spiritual transformation" in our universities. Maya scholars are having to play "catch-up" in this modern Maya 2012 ball game.

And they dropped the ball at last year's Tulane Maya Symposium. With its theme of "Maya Calendars and Creation", one would think some new research or insights would have been shared concerning 2012. Many of the key "2012 players" were in attendance, including Barbara and Dennis Tedlock, Robert Sitler, Marc Van Stone, Victoria and Harvey Bricker, and JMajorJ. But America's top astronomer and keynote speaker Dr. Anthony Aveni (who just released his own book about 2012) offered up only a humorous reflection on "what's out there" and "what 2012 is not", with nothing "new" brought to the table. I personally felt very "let down". And it is interesting to me that none of the above mentioned Mayanists are a part of the Tulane Maya Symposium planned for this year.

One thing very important to John was that he was able to present his challenging ideas in a presentation for the IMS on August 20, 1997. He mentions this within and on the back book cover of *The 2012 Story*. When he released *Maya Cosmogogenesis 2012* in 1998, John was actually putting 2012 "on the map". And I thank him for dedicating the poem "One Hunahpu" (that appears in the frontispiece) to me.

John broke new ground on identifying why 2012 was important to the ancient Maya, offering a new

**The Solar Plane aligning with the Galactic Plane?**



What the galactic alignment is not: the sinusoidal orbit of our solar system above and below the galactic midplane over some 250 million years.

From page 234 of *The 2012 Story*. Illustration by Jim Reed.

*"Then there is the issue of how the galactic alignment gets confused with the orbit of our solar system around the Galactic Center. ... I can't emphasize this enough: This is a big problem with the 2012 material, and it is unfortunately muddying the waters for the integrity of the precessional basis of the galactic astronomy. ... We are some 64 light-years above the midplane, moving outward, reaching a maximum distance at about 85 light years. In comparison, our solar system is roughly 25,000 light-years, give or take 2,000 light-years, from the Galactic Center."*

Excerpt from pages 234-235.

*continued on page 5*



# INAH Turns Mounds Into Monuments at Chichén Itzá

by Dr. Steven Fry, with assistance of Sid Hollander

Among some of the oldest structures in the Chichén Itzá archaeological zone is the Casa Colorada group. During the final months of 2009, a team of archaeologists and workers from Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), under the direction of José Francisco Osorio León, have been excavating several of the buildings, looking for clues that they hope will provide them with answers as to the early settlement of the ancient city.

The group consists of several buildings. It is named after one of the buildings, Casa Colorada, which is Spanish for Red House. It also has a Mayan name, *Chichanchob*, which according to INAH may mean "small holes." In one room of the building there are extensive carved hieroglyphs that mention rulers of Chichén Itzá and possibly of the nearby city of Ek Balam, and contain a Maya date inscribed which correlates to 869 CE, one of the oldest such dates found in all of Chichén Itzá.

While the Casa Colorada is in a good state of preservation, other buildings in the group, with one



Excavations reveal a triangle of stones, highlighted with white line.



INAH workers uncovered an older ballcourt behind a newer one (with red mortar).



Reconstruction at Casa Colorada and the ballcourt, October 2008 (l) and October 2009 (r).

exception, are decrepit mounds. One building is half standing, named *Casa del Venado* (House of the Deer). The origin of the name is unknown, as there are no representations of deer or other animals on the building.

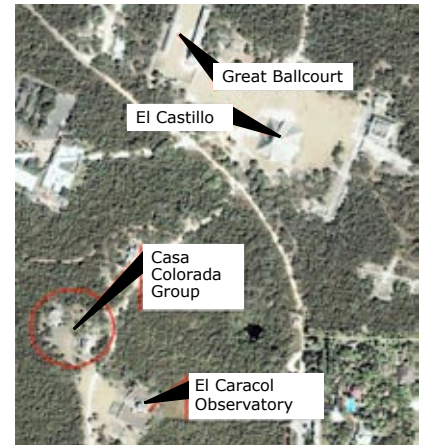
Adjoining the Casa Colorada is a ballcourt which until very recently was in ruins. This is the focus of study by INAH archaeologists.

The current excavation and re-assembly is occurring on what is the backside of Casa Colorada. The construction, which includes a ballcourt (one of 11 found so far at Chichén Itzá), is of more recent origin than the Casa Colorada. According to Dr. Peter Schmidt of INAH, the best evidence indicates that Casa Colorada was built first, as indicated by the architectural styles and building materials employed. For example, the corners or edges of the Casa Colorada's exterior are rounded, much like the Pyramid of the Magician at Uxmal. The surface stones on the main construction of Casa Colorada are clearly rougher than the well polished surface stones of the ballcourt and associated building.

Until recently, tourists who walked between El Castillo to the north and the Caracol and Las Monjas to the south would stroll through the rubble of the former ballcourt. That pedestrian traffic has now been re-routed to the east.

The ballcourt, which runs north-south, appears to be about 7 meters wide and 17 meters long, although I was not able to measure. In addition to the re-assembly of the basic parts of the ballcourt, INAH has also re-assembled a walled area on the north side. This area was formerly open and tourists passed through it.

The ballcourt actually consists of two ballcourts, one built atop another. The older court is about



Satellite image of Chichén Itzá showing the orientation of the Casa Colorada Group.



In the east side of this area, opposite the ballcourt, is a wide set of stairs leading up to another platform.

2 meters shorter than the "current" ballcourt.

The west wall of the ballcourt adjoins the back wall of the Casa Colorada. The east wall of the ballcourt adjoins another building, which until recently was just a mound of fallen stone. This building originally consisted of a platform base with a columned building atop, overlooking the ballcourt. At the time of my visit the platform's three outer walls had been re-assembled to a height of about three meters, and the top was still rubble. The original structure on top of platform has six foundation stones for columns, arrayed across the face that overlooks the ballcourt. Six free-standing columns would create seven porticos.

Archeologists have sorted out many stones finished at the same angles used to create a vault, with rough backsides and finished angled faces which are characteristic of the stones used on the inside walls of vaults. The vaults appear to be of typical Maya design, inverted v-shaped stone ceiling/roof structures. Dr. Schmidt explained that INAH plans to continue excavation of the top of the platform, exposing the materials needed to reassemble the original 6-columned building with a vault.

*continued on next page*



## Casa Colorada

continued from previous page

There are also two groups of finished stones that nicely fit the triangular shape and size of ends of the roof, like gables in a Western house, that enclose the ends of the vault. There are also sufficient characteristic cornice stones to create a cap around the top of the building, indicating that the original structure had a vaulted roof with decorative crown features on top of the platform overlooking the ballcourt.

On the east side of this platform, opposite the ballcourt, is a wide set of stairs leading up the platform.

The stairs rise from a *sacbe*, a Maya raised road, of which dozens crisscross Chichén Itzá. Across the *sacbe* from this building is another mound commonly called Maudslay's Temple, after the 19th century archaeologist Alfred E. Maudslay. According to INAH archaeologists, there are detailed plans to excavate and re-assemble Maudslay's Platform in the future, but they are awaiting funding.

This ballcourt is typical of most ballcourts at other Maya sites in the area, such as Uxmal and Coba, where there is a short wall of one or two meters that supports an angled bench of two to four meters that then joins a vertical wall.

The Casa Colorada ballcourt features six nicely carved bas-relief panels, each representing a group of four ball players, dressed in traditional costume. Each of the four corners of the low interior walls of the ballcourt has a single panel and two more small panels are inlaid opposite each other in the center of



INAH archaeologist José Francisco Osorio León inspects assembled cornice stones, part of a cap around the top of the structure (l) and also one of the six carved bas-relief panels (r).



the low facing walls of the court. The bas-relief panels are no more than 1 meter tall and less than 2 meters wide. The figures carved into them are wearing the characteristic Maya ball player's costume: plumed headgear and protective pads, as well as a ball at their feet.

According to Osorio León, there have never been any rings or posts found in the area. From an athlete's perspective, this court would be much easier to score in than any other court I've seen in Mayaland, due to its smaller size. This court is about the same length, but easily 30 percent narrower than the ballcourt at Uxmal, and likely only 10 percent of the size of Chichén Itzá's Great Ballcourt. The size differences raise interesting questions about changes in significance and societal functions of their ball games over the span of four centuries at Chichén Itzá.

The latest reconstructions appear to include materials of high quality and interesting design, with very few missing pieces so far. The INAH workers have been assembling what appears to be a considerable quantity of well-mated and well-matched stone work. To my untrained eye, it appears to be very different in style from the earlier



Detail of one of the carved bas-relief panels that features one of the four ball players dressed in traditional costume.

constructions of Casa Colorada and the Casa del Venado, as well as other buildings around that plaza.

When INAH's Osorio León and his team finishes the 6-columned building on top of the ballcourt's platform, the area will be a very nice addition to the larger complex that already has several exceptional buildings, such as the Caracol and Las Monjas. This more modest construction, from my perspective, is an excellent use of limited government funding. Good bang for the buck!

For the latest developments on the excavations at Chichén Itzá, see the American Egypt Daily Blog.

Source: Thanks to Dr. Steven Fry and Sid Hollander for this informative report. Text and images courtesy of: [www.americanegypt.com/feature/casa\\_colorada.htm](http://www.americanegypt.com/feature/casa_colorada.htm).

## The 2012 Story

continued from page 3

reconstruction of ancient Maya thought. Key questions were posed: When and where did the early Maya devise the calendar that gives us the cycle ending in 2012? Why did they place this cycle ending on December 21, 2012, and how did they think about it? These questions led him to discoveries and conclusions that integrated the domains of astronomy, mythology, prophecy and spiritual teachings.

Now, in *The 2012 Story*, John revisits and re-answers these questions and offers so much more. With clarity, fairness, and a thorough familiarity with the eccentric personalities involved in the 2012 story (including me), he explains recent breakthroughs, clears away the debris of misconceptions, and guides us into the heart of a fascinating and timely subject.

For me, it is all very exciting! This is the first time that I have ever had my own Index entry in a book! Check it out soon. *Jim Reed*

An interesting tie-in is this carving on dark jade that Linda Schele did while visiting with Mary Lou and Jay Ridinger of Jade S.A., in Antigua, Guatemala.



Like Izapa Stela 11, Linda features the image of a deity emerging from the womb of the cosmic jaguar-toad, who represents the cosmic Milky Way Goddess. Linda was ahead of her time!

# The Panti Medicine Trail:

By Mark F. Cheney

Traditional garden setting  
and a replica shaman's  
hut at Ix Chel Farm.

Upon entering the neatly manicured grounds of Ix Chel Farm near San Ignacio, Cayo, Belize, I was impressed with its tropical beauty and surprised by its unexpected sophistication. Here was the entrance to the Panti Maya Medicine Trail, so named after Don Eligio Panti, Maya healer extraordinaire. Where was the jungle trail, where the healing greenery, and where the biodiversity? Finally, beyond the gift shop sitting next to a refreshment stand was the jungle, a shaman's hut and the famous trail.



Panti died in 1996 at the age of 101. This venerable healer and shaman had devoted his entire life to helping his people with their problems, both physical and spiritual. In 1983, at the age of 86, he accepted a non-Maya apprentice. Rosita Arvigo could see that what Panti did for his people was something that should be preserved by someone, and that someone turned out to be herself, trained as a naprapathic physician. She created the Ix Chel Tropical Research Center and Foundation, named after the Maya moon goddess and guardian of the rain forest, the powerful consort of Chaac, the rain god.

In 1987, in conjunction with a study being made of tropical plants by the National Cancer Institute, the Belize Ethnobotany Project was formed, which has contributed over 2,000 tropical plants to the NCI for research purposes. In 1993, the government of Belize established the world's first medicinal plant preserve on 6,000 acres of rain forest. It is known as the Terra Nova Medicinal Plant Reserve and is run by the Belize Association of Traditional Healers of which Dr. Arvigo is a founder.

Appropriately, as we started on the trail, we were shown the giant *Ceiba* tree, sacred world tree of the Maya, believed to be



"Yax Che," or the first tree on earth. The Maya believed that its roots reached through the center of the Universe into the nine levels of

the Underworld, its trunk into the thirteen levels of the Upperworld, and its branches into Heaven. At its crown sat "Hunab K'u," the creator, contemplating his world.

The *Ceiba* is also the

national tree of Guatemala and is commonly known as the cotton wood or kapok tree. The "cotton" was used for stuffing pillows and mattresses, especially in times past. It has had many other uses for the Maya, both medicinal and practical. The leaves are boiled with sugar into a cough syrup. The traditional dugout canoe of the Maya was carved from its soft trunk (not able to endure as others made of hardwoods will).

The Breadnut or Ramon tree, "*Chacox*," provided a staple food for the ancient Maya. The fruits were boiled and eaten like small potatoes, or ground into gruel and sweetened. The cooked, ground nuts could also be combined with corn meal to make a more nutritious tortilla.

Some plants along the trail have endowed modern medicine with new pharmaceuticals, especially the Wild Yam or "*Cocolmea*," which provided natural hormonal substances (e.g. *dioscorea*) and chemical clues for steroids, and contraceptive and menopausal medications. It has been chewed by Maya women for ages as a natural birth control substance. Although it is not completely effective, its properties were evidently often helpful.

Another, possibly more effective contraceptive, was made by the Bull Hoof or "*Ki Bix*" plant, steeped into a tea. If the proper quantity is drunk over a certain period of time, it is reported that it can cause permanent infertility, and its properties are presently being studied by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Red Gumbo-limbo tree was one of the most interesting species that we saw on the trail. Having a very red bark resembling a dark skin, it is referred to by the local people as the "Naked Indian" tree, the Mayan name being "*Chacah*." Locally, a tea made from the somewhat shaggy bark has been successful in combatting both internal and external infections. A chemical analysis of the bark, done in the United States by a noted

ethnobotanist, Dr. Janis Alcorn, demonstrated antibiotic activity.

A principle of nature known as the "doctrine of signatures" was explained by our guide. This principle asserts that certain clues in a plant's appearance indicate its medicinal value. As an example, the Gumbo-limbo is good for rashes, and its bark is the color of irritated red skin.

The Cockscur tree, or "*Zubin*" in Mayan, has a stinging thorn, which signals that it is useful for another sting of the jungle – snake bite. Maya men known as bushmasters report that they carry some of the bark and root of the Cockscur to be used in case of snake bite. First, the bark is chewed and the juice swallowed, then the bark is placed over the bite as a poultice. As the victim heads for more effective treatment, he chews the root and continues to swallow the juice. This first aid purportedly delays the effects of the venom long enough to save a life.

Another signature is displayed by the Cross Vine (*Cruxi*) plant. Don Panti once taught his protege, Rosita Arvigo, "When a leaf crosses a branch it is a sign that the plant is blessed with medicinal powers." This is not to be confused with the signal given by the *Chicoloro* plant which has branches that form a distinctive cross, indicating that the action on the human body is both dramatic and potentially toxic – a danger sign. It is a member of the *Strychnaceae* family which produces the poison strychnine; however, it also has medicinal properties when properly prepared and used. Cousins of this plant provide the poisonous sap that coats the tips of darts for blowguns used by the ancient Maya.

We were shown only about a dozen such trees and plants. However, the *Field Guide*, sold in the shop of tinctures and salves at the trailhead, lists thirty-two common tropical plants that provide food, shelter, medicine and tools for the Maya, and useful cosmetics and pharmaceuticals for us, as well, if we will have the wisdom to learn from the ancients.

## Institute of Maya Studies Line-up of Presentations!

**January 13, 2010: IMS Explorer Session (Classroom-style):**

### "Monster Mouths and Towers of Deception"

with **Rick Slazyk**



*A full frontal monster mask at Chicanná, Structure I.*

In the Yucatán peninsula, south of the Puuc hills, a distinctive style exists known as the Río Bec or Chenes style of Maya architecture. In this style (sometimes treated as two separate styles) ornamentation is the dominant factor. In the photo to the left is the monster doorway at Chicanná, Campeche, Mexico. The doorway itself is the mouth of the monster. Although highly stylized, look for the eyes above the door and a series of pendulant teeth below the eyes and hanging into the doorway.



*Towering pyramids at beautiful Río Bec.*

Nowhere has ornamentation and simple delusion been taken to such extremes as at the sites of Río Bec, Xupuhil and Becán. In this form of construction, functionality has given way to effect. At these sites, the builders – not willing or not able – to complete spectacular pyramid building as at Tikal, simply built facades. The pyramids seen here at Río Bec were built only for effect. The stairs up are impossible to walk on and the "buildings" at the summits are solid and have no rooms. Surely this indicates that the mere presence of the pyramids, even phony pyramids, were an important part of legitimizing the site. Our own **Rick Slazyk** explains it all.

— **January 20: IMS Video Presentation (in the Museum Auditorium):** —

### "EDGEWALKER: A Conversation with Linda Schele"



*A classic Kodak moment in Maya Studies: Linda Schele and David Stuart, 1985. Photo by George Stuart.*

In January 1998, famed Mayanist Linda Schele gave a long, filmed interview in which she talked freely and frankly in her own inimitable style about her life, work, and philosophy. This has been edited, together with extra visual material, in order to make a 50-minute documentary tribute. When she died of cancer in April 1998, at the height of her powers, Linda Schele was the dominant personality in the field of Maya studies – a subject of abiding fascination for a public enamoured of mysterious Maya sites and seemingly impenetrable inscriptions; an ancient culture which left behind a legacy of incredible images of beauty, power and terror.

*This video documentary is no longer available; see it on the big screen now!*

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## IMS Explorer

Newsletter of the  
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New website address:

[www.instituteofmayastudies.org](http://www.instituteofmayastudies.org)

### Coming up next month:

In our February issue, we present the second and final part of Stetson University's Dr. Robert Sitler's abridged article about December 21, 2012.



Xkampechhaltun, by KHM.

Also, we'll have a new article about the Maya site of Xkampechhaltun, Yucatán, by our good friend Karl Herbert Mayer, of Mexican, Austrian Bureau.



Maya ceremony at Pascual Ab'aj, Chichi, photo by Robert Sitler.

**Thanks for helping the IMS "Go Green"!**

### Upcoming Events at the IMS:

January 6, 2010: **IMS Board Meeting**  
All IMS members are welcome to attend.

January 13: *IMS Explorer Session*  
**"Monster Mouths and Towers of Deception"** – Architect **Rick Slazyk** examines the architectural style of Río Bec and Chenes. Known for their intricate depiction of monster mouths and impressive towers, this area of Mexico's State of Campeche is dotted with dozens of sites that may not be too large but they are certainly beautiful. Many show the influence of what is called the Petén style due, certainly, to its closeness to Guatemala's lowlands. Don't miss this lecture from one of our most knowledgeable members.

January 20: *IMS Video Presentation*  
**"Edgewalker: A Conversation with Linda Schele"** – A few months before her death in 1998, Linda Schele talked about her dedication to the Maya, her first professional love. Trained as an art historian, Schele was instrumental in making the study of Maya hieroglyphic writing a discipline to be pursued. Don't miss it. She was a giant among the best and she made you laugh along the way.

### Upcoming Events and Announcements:

January 8–9, 2010: Symposium  
**"Building Transnational Archaeologies"** – Theme of the 11th Southwest Symposium to take place at Centro INAH Sonora, Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico. More info available at: <http://sw-symposium.binghamton.edu/inglespagina/introd.htm>

January 14, 2010: *Archaeology Lecture*  
**"Digging Deeper in the Dry Tortugas: Archaeology Month Adventure 2009"** – Dr. Michele Williams and Brian Conesa will present their data and photos about the excavations in the parade grounds at Ft. Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas. At the Deering Estate Auditorium, 16701 S.W. 72nd Ave., Miami. More info available at: <http://sw-symposium.binghamton.edu/inglespagina/introd.htm>



February 26-28, 2010:  
**"Great River Cities of the Ancient Maya"** – The ancient lowland Maya civilization of Mexico and Central America

is often celebrated for its achievements in an environment unique for its lack of rivers. Nevertheless many major lowland Maya cities were indeed located along important rivers. These "River Cities" provided the rest of the Maya lowlands access to the resource-rich highlands to the south, as well as contact with to both the Caribbean and Gulf coasts. At the Middle American Research Institute and the Stone Center for Latin American Studies at Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. Keynote speaker: David Freidel. Presenters and workshopers include: Robert J. Sharer, Arthur A. Demarest, Marc Zender, Marcus Eberl, Takeshi Inomata and our good friends Jason Yaeger, M. Kathryn Brown, Gabrielle Vail and Christine Hernandez. More info at: [www.tulane.edu/~mari/MayaSymposium2010.htm](http://www.tulane.edu/~mari/MayaSymposium2010.htm)

Ongoing: Museum Exhibit  
**"Art of the Ancient Americas"** – Theme of an ongoing art exhibit at the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL. Get more info at: [www.miami.edu/lowe/art\\_ancient\\_americas.htm](http://www.miami.edu/lowe/art_ancient_americas.htm)



## IMS Explorer

Please note that all articles and news items for the *IMS Explorer* must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor by the second Wednesday of the month. E-mail news items and images to [mayaman@bellsouth.net](mailto:mayaman@bellsouth.net) or forward by postal mail to: Jim Reed, 936 Greenwood Ave NE, Apt. 8, Atlanta, GA 30306