



IMS Explorer

This December 2012 issue is dedicated to all of the modern Maya who are celebrating the birth of the new sun. May we all be blessed with a long cycle of living in harmony with the planet and each other.

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



December 21, 2012 • Maya Long Count: 13.0.0.0.0 • 4 Ahau 3 K'ank'in • G9 An affiliate of the Miami Science Museum

2012: What will you be doing? Where are we headed?

IMS members distributed questionnaires to a handful of the Maya scholars attending the 6th Annual Maya at the Playa Conference. The following is a synopsis of their answers to some of the 2012-themed questions:

How aware do you think the ancient Maya were about the precession of the equinoxes?

This is somewhat of a hot topic among Maya scholars and responses varied depending on the responder's own areas of interest and research. **Debra Walker** believes that the ancient Maya were very aware of precession, also being especially cognizant of local zeniths and antizeniths (nadirs). (*See her photo caption below.)

Gerardo Aldana thinks that the ancient Maya may have been qualitatively aware of precession, but that he sees no evidence that they were quantitatively aware. **Mark Van Stone** responded affirmatively, noting that **Barbara MacLeod's** research on the 3-11-Pik interval/title convinced



Debra Walker is now affiliated with the Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida. Her interests include the Maya civilization, ceramics, trade, religion and cultural transitions. Photo: Marta Barber.

*Just as the sun passes through the zenith, that is, directly overhead, twice a year as viewed from any location within the tropics, so it also passes twice a year through the point directly beneath the observer. This point is known as the antizenith or nadir.

The antizenith passage of the sun may seem a totally esoteric event since, unlike zenith passage, it is not directly observable. Yet some human cultures, including the Maya, do seem to have had an interest in identifying the dates of solar antizenith passages and marking them with appropriate observances.



M@TP presenters **Takeshi Inomata** (center) **Norman Hammond** (right) and IMS president **Rick Slazyk** (left) take time out for a Kodak moment. Inomata is from the University of Arizona and Hammond hails from Boston University. Photo: Marta Barber.

him that they did know about precession with some precision. See Mark's "Part I - Introduction to the '2012 Issue'" at www.famsi.org/research/vanstone/2012/2012Part1.pdf (**See his photo caption below.)

Amanda Harvey believes the ancient Maya had extensive knowledge about astronomy including the precession of the equinoxes. **Bruce Love** does not think the ancient Maya were aware of precession at all, while **Stanley Guenter** continued on page 2

Mark Van Stone is a Professor of Art History, Southwestern College, and a Maya expert specializing in Maya hieroglyphs and calligraphy.

**In the PDF mentioned above, he writes "Barbara MacLeod has been working with an unusual Maya concept, a significant interval of time they called '3-11-Pik' (or '3-11-Baktun', to use the traditional epigrapher's name for the 144,000-day/400-year period). 3 x 11 x 144,000 days is 4,752,000 days, or 13,010.5 years, half the length of the Precession cycle."



Photo: Marta Barber.

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This is our special December 2012 issue - A total of 12 pages to honor 12/2012 !

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Jim Reed, Editor

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2012 Survey: What will you be doing? Where are we headed?

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thinks that they might have been aware, but not that much.

Do you plan to do anything special, or be anywhere particular on 4 Aha 3 K'ank'in, December 21, 2012?

Most of the scholars that responded to our questionnaire do not have any particular plans for that special day. **Amanda Harvey** says that she will probably be celebrating somehow, somewhere, but has not made any specific plans as yet. **Stanley Guenter** joked that he will probably be worshipping the god of the age – Santa – and doing some last-minute shopping. **Mark Van Stone** will be at Chichén Itzá with some Mayanists and friends.

Explorer editor **Jim Reed** reports that he and a friend will rent a car and drive around Guatemala on their own, avoiding crowds, groups and large Maya sites. He plans on spending time with Santiago Billy (see October issue) at his hotel on Lake Petén Itzá and having Billy guide them to the sites of Naranjo and Nakum. Reed plans to then visit with a family of friends in Puerto San José, on the Pacific coast of Guatemala. On 12/21, due to the angle of the coastline in the Department of Escuintla, they should be able to view the new sun rise over the ocean. Reed notes that Maya scholars, **Michael Grofe**, **Barbara MacLeod** and **John Major Jenkins**, will be spending 12/21 in Copan, as part of a 2012-themed conference tour.

The Maya Conservancy has planned a group tour to visit sites along the Pacific coast of Guatemala then enter Mexico to spend the three days around 12/21/2012 at Izapa. Izapa is considered to be "ground zero" for 2012 celebrants, and a conference with Izapa researcher **V. Garth Norman** and archaeologist **Mary Lou Ridinger** will take place at the planetarium in Tapachula.

We put Long Count calendar glyphs in the mastheads of our monthly *IMS Explorer* newsletter. Our editor would like to know if he should continue showing the 13 Bak'tun, as if we're moving towards the 14th Bak'tun, or should he not show the 13 in the Bak'tun position, and have the new cycle start at 0.0.0.1?

Bruce Love answered that in his opinion, December 22, 2012 should be 0.0.0.0.1, but he is aware that many scholars believe that this Long Count cycle should continue on to the 14th Baktun. **Stanley Guenter** says that this cycle should definitely continue on through the 14th, 15th and 16th Bak'tuns.

Gerardo Aldana notes that following computations based on Palenque's west Tablet of the Inscriptions, we should keep

Beverly West and Pat Manfredi work the IMS tables



During the four days of the M@TP conference, the lobby of the Government Services Building in Bunnell, FL, took on the feel of an Oxford University annex. Courtesy of FlaglerLive.com



L) Stanley Paul Guenter from Idaho State University and R) Marc Zender of Tulane University. Together they led a hieroglyphic workshop for beginners. The title of Guenter's individual lecture was "Groupthink and Maya Studies: Common Misconceptions about an Ancient Civilization"; and that of Zender's was "Reconsidering the K'iche' Maya Popol Vuh." Photos: Marta Barber.

the 13 while moving to the 14th Bak'tun. **Mark Van Stone** points out that in the same inscriptions, the ancient Maya computed past 13.0.0.0 to the 14th Bak'tun and the 20th Bak'tun (that would be 1 Pik'tun).

Debra Walker went further, noting that we should consider keeping the 13 in the Bak'tun position and go ahead and add a 0 in a new Pik'tun position (20 times the 144,000-day Bak'tun period).

What do you see as the future of Maya studies, now that the hoopla of 2012 will soon be behind us?

Mark Van Stone sees everything improving after that fateful day in December. **Debra Walker** envisions Mayanists developing a history of the Maya region that would become the only "real" American history and making it more "public". **Gerardo Aldana** thinks overall awareness of the Maya has been raised that may translate into more interest by the public in the Maya and possibly more scholarships.

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2012 IMS Board of Directors:

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This special December 2012 issue is dedicated to the modern, living Maya

They have survived and they have triumphed in spite of centuries of oppression. The best news is that all over the Mayalands, people are returning to the spiritual traditions of their ancestors. They only ask that we stop sending them genetically-modified corn seeds.

13.0.0.0.0: The End of an Era and the Dawn of Another

Archaeologists, academics and tourism authorities from Guatemala gathered at the headquarters of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, DC, on October 2, 2012, to explain the meaning and interpretation of the thirteenth Bak'tun, which according to Maya tradition marks the end of 13 Bak'tuns and to Maya scholars, the beginning of the 14th Bak'tun.

The event, part of the preparatory activities for the 43rd OAS General Assembly, to be held June 4 to 6, 2013, in Guatemala, highlighted the legacy of the Maya civilization and its importance as a Cultural Heritage of the Americas, and provided the context to discuss its cosmology, relevance and interpretation of history.

Introducing the event, OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza highlighted the importance of history in understanding the present, and remarked on the efforts made to deepen the understanding and interpretation of the Maya culture. "From the work of Yuri Knorozov, in the early



A Maya performance group entertained during the festivities, by Maria Patricia Leiva/OAS.

fifties, until the recent discovery of Maya scribe calendrics in Xultun, the Maya culture gradually reveals its secrets and dazzles us with its rich civilization and science," he said.

The leader of the hemispheric institution noted that the process to decipher, understand and interpret the Maya culture accelerated in recent years due to the development of the region. "The peace agreements and democratic deepening in Mesoamerica gave us greater stability, which allowed a boom in the study of the Maya civilization," he noted, and recalled that according to the Maya calendar, the OAS



General Assembly in Guatemala will be held during a "period of renewal." The institution's annual meeting "will help us to learn more about and get excited about the cultural richness that the Maya world offers," he concluded.

Francisco Estrada-Belli, Professor in the Department of Archaeology at Boston University, spoke about the beginnings of the Maya civilization, focusing on the archaeological discoveries and efforts to understand the culture, its symbolism, mythology, art, wealth and ritual forms. 📌

Source: www.thebahamasweekly.com

2012 Survey: What will you be doing? Where are we headed? *continued from page 2*

"But mostly it means that we can get back to work!"

Amanda Harvey notes that while coming from a biological perspective, she thinks we will move towards more stable isotope studies and other hard science research, like DNA. **Bruce Love** sees Mayanists as getting back to business as usual.

Stanley Guenter feels that Maya studies will return to normal, and it will be harder to get as much attention. "This could be a blessing or a difficulty."

What will be your focus of attention in 2013? Excavation and field work? Research and writing projects?

Mark Van Stone wants to continue offering his iBook titled *2012: Science and Prophecy of the Ancient Maya*, available at: www.markvanstone.com.

Gerardo Aldana will be working to complete a manuscript about the Venus Tables in the Dresden Codex.

Amanda Harvey will continue working towards her Ph.D., depending on grants and data collection. She

added "We write in our sleep, so the writing process never ends."

Bruce Love will keep going on with his research and writing and recommends that you visit www.discovermam.org.

Stanley Guenter will continue working on the analysis of materials found by his colleagues, as well as other writing projects.

Debra Walker has kept busy with a major digitization project on the existing collection of artifacts (about 300,000 items) from the site of Cerros. You can access the Florida Museum of Natural History's Cerros Research Online Catalogue, at: www.flmnh.ufl.edu/latinarch/cerros/gallery.htm. Next year, she hopes to work at the Middle Preclassic site of Yaxnohcah which was discovered in 2004 by Ivan Šprajc and is located in Campeche, approximately 26 km northeast of El Mirador.

Editor's Note: Well, I can't believe that in a few weeks the whole 2012 hype will be over. I've been following the 2012 story since it began in the mid-90s, and to a

degree, intimately involved. I still have two draft copies of Word doc versions of John Major Jenkin's *Maya Cosmogenesis 2012* that he sent me to review before its publication.

I wish all of the Mayanists the best in the future and trust the excavations and research into all things Maya will continue in earnest. Mexico and Guatemala have spent millions to draw crowds to the Mayalands to celebrate 12/21. I only hope that future monies will continue to be invested in preserving Maya sites and cultural traditions, although I hear Guatemala has invited the tourists, but not Maya spiritual elders, to Tikal for their planned 12/21 festivities. I fear that if not enough tourists show up, it might be a bust for investment in future site restorations. 📌

Green subscribers: Please note that this color web-version of our special 2012 December Explorer has 4 extra pages than the print version.

You have made a wise decision to go Green, i.e., color! Thank you very much. Now it's time to share a gift subscription with the Mayanists on your list!



Program Recap for 2012 • Our 41st Year for the IMS!

Offering educative public programs with a focus on Maya and Mesoamerican studies.

January 11:

"The Golden Age of the Maya"

with Marta Barber

January 18:

"The Meaning of a Maya City"

with Dr. Edward Kurjack

February 8:

"Digging Deeper in the Dry Tortugas"

with Michele Williams, Ph.D., RPA

February 15:

"Long Distance Trade and Identity Maintenance at Early Classic Chunchucmil" with Traci Ardren, Ph.D.

March 14:

"Images of Indigenous Identity in Coastal Ecuador" with Sarah Nohe

March 21:

"Wealth, Equality, and Trade at Mayapán" with Clifford T. Brown, Ph.D.

April 11:

"Getting to Know: Maya Vaults"

with Joaquín J. Rodríguez III, PE, SECB

April 18:

"The Huastec Culture: History and Sculpture" with Marta Barber

May 9:

"Amazon River Explorer Francisco de Orellana" portrayed by Robert Dawson

May 16:

"Izapa: The Stela 5 Creation Story and World Ages" with V. Garth Norman

June 13:

"Between Two Volcanic Eruptions: The Ancient Maya Village of Cerén"

with Payson D. Sheets, Ph.D.
University of Colorado-Boulder, CO

June 20:

"The Last Days of a Maya Royal Court: Evidence from the Royal Palace at El Perú-Wak'á, Petén, Guatemala"

with David F. Lee, Ph.D. Wak'á
Research Foundation, St. Louis, MO

Garth's wife, Cheryl.



Featured Maya scholars at the IMS this year include Garth Norman, Payson Sheets and Francisco Estrada-Belli.

July 11:

"The Relationship Between Visionary Plants and Iconography in the Art of Tiwanaku, Bolivia, ca. 300–900 CE"

with Constantino Torres, Ph.D.

July 18:

"Bolon Octe and Venus in the Dresden Codex" with Victoria R. Bricker, Ph.D.

August 8:

"Archaeology and Chicle: A Sticky Combination" with Dr. Anne Stewart

August 15:

"Maya Codices and the Books of Chilam Balam: Spanning the 'Conquest'"

with Dr. Bruce Love

September 12:

"The Olmecs and Their Magnificent Masterpieces" with Batia Cohen, Ph.D.

September 19:

"A Visit to Nakum, Guatemala"

with Keith Merwin

October 10:

"The Maya Civilization: Art & Architecture"

with Rick Slazyk, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP

October 17:

"The Making of Maya Civilization: A Surprising New Perspective from Northeastern Petén"

with Francisco Estrada-Belli, Ph.D.

November 14:

"The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology"

with James O'Kon

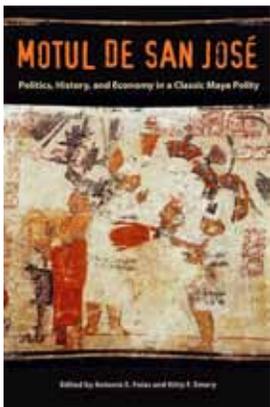
November 21:

"New Discoveries in Pre-Columbian Archaeology in 2012" with Marta Barber

December 12:

IMS Annual Business Meeting and December Birthday Party





A book review compiled by Editor Jim Reed

Motul de San José: Politics, History, and Economics in a Classic Maya Polity

Edited by Antonia E. Foias and Kitty F. Emery

Motul de San José (Ik') is famous for its beautiful pottery vases painted in multiple colors with scenes of court rituals and hieroglyphic texts (called the Ik' Polychrome Style). The site is located in the tropical lowlands of the Petén in northern Guatemala, approximately 3 km north of Lake Petén Itzá, and 32 km southwest of Tikal.

ISBN 978-0-8130-4190-2, University Press of Florida, available at: www.upf.com

The site and its environs have been explored since 1998 by the Motul de San José Archaeological Project co-directed by the editors of the book, Dr. Antonia Foias, Professor of Anthropology at Williams College, and Dr. Kitty Emery, Curator of Environmental Archaeology at the Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida-Gainesville.

This volume addresses a major debate in Maya archaeology – the nature of political organization during the Classic period. Numerous researchers present a coherent interdisciplinary body of archaeological and environmental data from the Motul de San José polity to delve deeper into the various models of the ancient Maya political and economic systems.

Shifting attention away from the general concepts of centralization vs. decentralization, the various chapters shed light on the internal relationships between political inferiors and superiors, between primary and subsidiary centers, on the development of an administrative cadre (or proto-bureaucracy), and on the nature of economic control by the elite in this small polity of the Central Petén Lakes of northern Guatemala. The value of this monograph is threefold: its focus on questions of politics and economics, its integration of archaeological and environmental datasets, and its detailed multi-disciplinary research perspectives.

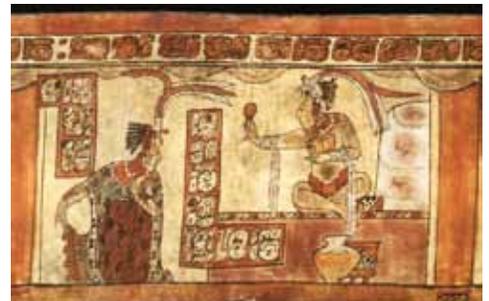
I believe the editors have met their goal to present to the public a rich body of data and interpretations based on six seasons of fieldwork in the Motul de San José Polity including the capital city of the same name and its peripheral satellite sites. They have presented classic archaeological data from settlement mapping, ceramics, lithics, figurines, and the like, alongside non-traditional

data from soils, epigraphy, animal remains, and chemistry. The epigraphic and artistic evidence from the Ik' Style polychromes illuminates details of political organization not available in other parts of the Maya lowlands where only the royal elites are recorded on large, public stone monuments.

I recommend the book to true Mayanists and look forward for the next stage of debates on social, political and historical issues in Maya archaeology. Dr. Antonia Foias maintains an excellent website featuring the collections of the Motul



Yaxchilan King Bird Jaguar IV (752-768 CE) (top right) with one of his two wives from Motul de San José, Lady Wak Jalam Chan Ajaw.



K2573. A lady from Tikal bows to a ruler from the Ik' site. ©Kerr. Check out the Kerr Maya Vase Database at www.famsi.org

de San José Archaeological Project, at: <http://unbound.williams.edu> 📖

IMS Fellowship Membership Announcement

It is with great pleasure that I am able to announce three (3) new "Fellows" to the organization. Although it is not the intent for this award to be given annually, it is necessary to recognize these individuals for their contributions to this organization.

Candidates are nominated solely at the Board's discretion, based on outstanding commitment, dedication, generosity and service, both past and present, to and on behalf of the Institute of Maya Studies.

These candidates have satisfied the criteria for this award and were approved by the Board of Directors.

We look forward to their continuing service and inspiration, and congratulate them on receiving this award. The award presentation was held on November 21, 2012 at the Museum of Science, Miami, FL.

Patricia Manfredi – Pat is a long-time member of the organization and has served in several capacities as an elected member of the Board of Directors. Her latest contribution has been as Program Chair. She is passionate about letting others know of IMS. She has been a frequent companion in travels with the IMS.

She has always helped us to raise funds, especially by donating books from her personal collection. Her hospitality at Maya at the Playa conferences had earned her the moniker, "Divine Pat." The IMS editor lovingly refers to her as "Lady Jaguar."

Ray Stewart – is currently serving as vice-president on our board. He's also served as president, carpenter, locksmith, driver and lecturer. Through the years, there hasn't been a job – big or small – that Ray has not been a part of. Although many may know him as the better half of another "fellow," Ray has been an essential member of this organization.

Dr. Anne Stewart – If there is presently a member who epitomizes the IMS that would be Anne. She missed being a Founding Member by only a year or two, and ever since, she's devoted her energies to making this organization be what it is today. It's impossible to list all the positions that Anne has filled for IMS. Anne is the "Fellow" among "Fellows." 📖

– IMS President Rick Slazyk,
AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C

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A special IMS shout-out goes to out-going Program Chairperson Pat Manfredi – here receiving blessings from a K'iche' Maya spiritual guide in Tak'alik Ab'aj. Pat has also been my main proofReeder! Muchas gracias, Lady Jaguar, te adoro! JR ;>)

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MayaBall reenactment at Xcaret, Quintana Roo, Mexico.

12/21/2012: The Game Ball Goes Through the Goal-ring!

by John Major Jenkins

Editor's note: I posed the same 2012-themed questions that we posed to the scholars at the Sixth Annual Maya at the Playa Conference to the man I consider to be the "Godfather of 2012", my good friend, John Major Jenkins. Since he penned The 2012 Story, John offers us another chance to put it all into perspective – at such a poignant point in time.

How aware do you think the ancient Maya were about the precession of the equinoxes?

The evidence, of many types, points to a conceptual awareness of the precessional shifting. The early evidence, from scholars such as Gordon Brotherston, Eva Hunt, and Marion Popenoe Hatch, was summarized in my 1998 book *Maya Cosmogenesis 2012*.

As presented in my 2010 paper at the 75th meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, a Classic Period awareness of the alignment of the solstice sun with the crossroads/dark rift is strongly suggested by the astronomy within the dates on Tortuguero Monument 6. Unless an extremely unlikely level of quadruple coincidence is going on here, this unavoidably points to an ability of the early Maya to accurately calculate precession at the very origin of the Long Count calendar (1st century BCE).

Recent work on Sidereal Year intervals in Maya inscriptions by Michael Grofe, the 3-11 Pik formula by Barbara MacLeod, and my work on the two 2012 inscriptions and the archaeo-astronomy at Izapa, all factor into



Tat Rigoberto Itzep and other K'iche' Maya spiritual guides preside over John Major Jenkins as he makes an offering during the reactivation of the sacred fire ceremony near the Group F Ballcourt, Izapa, 2010.

a definite "yes" for the precession question, in both the qualitative and quantitative domains.

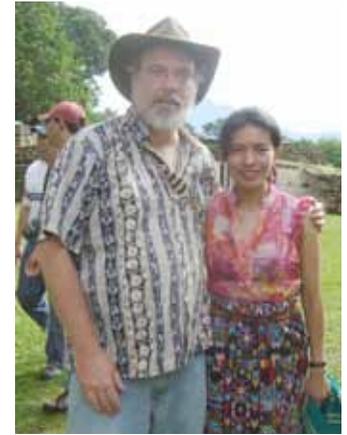
Do you plan to do anything special, or be anywhere particular on 4 Ahau 3 K'ank'in, December 21, 2012?

I will be speaking at "The Great Return" conference in Copan, Honduras, where "2012: The Beginning" – the film that features my work – will be shown (see trailer at www.2012thebeginning.com).

In your opinion, how should our editor show the 13 Bak'tun in the mastheads of our monthly IMS Explorer newsletter?

The Creation Texts at Quirigua refer to the Base Date of the Long Count (in 3114 BCE) as the end of a previous 13-Bak'tun cycle (13.0.0.0.0). But then, all subsequent Long Count dates throughout Maya history are calculated as if this Base Date was conceptually, and mathematically, equivalent to 0.0.0.0.0. This provides evidence for how the Maya conceived of Era (or World Age) cycles within the Long Count system, and a 13-Bak'tun CYCLE is evident. In addition, the 260-day cycle can recycle back to 4 Ajaw after 13 Bak'tuns have elapsed, but it does not do so after 20 Bak'tuns.

At Izapa, which is the culture that many scholars agree was involved in the formulation of the Long Count calendar, we find an interest in solar zenith-passage dates (indicated by the three Group B gnomons) and the December solstice date (indicated by the alignment of the Group F ballcourt). It is striking that August 12 and December 21 are the dates in the tropical year indicated by these monuments – the first day and the last day of the current 13-Bak'tun cycle. Based on these



John Major Jenkins and Ixquic Poz (a Maya representative from Zunil) in the Group F Ballcourt at Izapa, 2012.

considerations, December 22, 2012 should thus be called 0.0.0.0.1. We may thus suspect that a 13-Bak'tun cycle concept was intended at the origin of the Long Count, but later machinations by Classic Maya kings might have introduced other alternative latter-day perspectives generated by other factors.

Janaab Pakal's use of the future 20th Baktun cycle-ending (in 4772 CE), for example, seems motivated by his need to craft rhetoric propaganda, exploiting a circumstance of his accession date. The distinction between intentions at the origin of the Long Count and the unorthodox manipulations of later kings should be explored further, which I do in my forthcoming book *Time Conscious Kingdoms*.

What do you see as the future of Maya studies, now that the hoopla of 2012 will soon be behind us?

Maya scholars came late to treating 2012 seriously as a valid artifact of ancient Maya thought (as documented in my 2009 book *The 2012 Story*). The Tortuguero monument, as of 2006, forced a serious consideration. My focused work on this topic, going back to the 1980s and generating eight books and hundreds of essays and interviews, with presentations in both academic and popular venues, has for the most part not been accurately treated. Ironically, as we now have some scholars recently interpreting how the ancient Maya thought about 2012, we find the same ideas I published years ago being repeated (namely, astronomy and an ideology of period-ending renewal). The "hoopla" in the

continued on page 8

12/21/2012: The Game Ball Goes Through the Goal-ring!

continued from page 7

popular marketplace is to be expected, and I have offered critiques of that arena for over twenty years (see <http://Update2012.com>), as summarized in my chapter in Dr. Joseph Gelfer's anthology *2012: Decoding the Countercultural Apocalypse* (2011).

I'm concerned that Maya Studies – having reluctantly been forced to address 2012 by the mainstream attention to it – will possibly, after 2012 passes, return to avoiding the deeper currents of Maya spirituality and the more challenging aspects of reconstructing ancient Maya astronomy. The 2012 topic has apparently been largely an annoyance, notwithstanding the new breakthroughs in understanding Maya astronomy and the two "2012" inscriptions.

Many hope that things will "get back to normal." In anticipation of this regression, I launched the field of "2012 Studies" in 2009 and have now posted over twenty research essays on the website for The Center for 2012 Studies: <http://thecenterfor2012studies.com>. It features my SAA presentation on Tortuguero astronomy and the lengthy and revealing debate with scholars that ensued, sponsored by the Maya Exploration Center in late 2010.

Editor Jim Reed and John Major Jenkins strike a pose along the scenic route to Panajachel, above Lake Atitlán, 2010.



What will be your focus of attention in 2013? Excavation and field work? Research and writing projects?

Well, I'm interested in documenting this period of time and how 2012 has been treated in many sectors of society. I've already compiled a massive dossier documenting all the various exchanges and critiques, running over 20+ years, and the sequence of publications and events by myself and other people, including scholars, writing on 2012. This is in service to future historians wondering what happened and who said what, a necessary precaution since the narrative is already being rewritten and has already been bowdlerized by a biased media. At some point this dossier will be annotated and made publicly available.

Despite these difficulties, I am grateful for all the support from the Institute of Maya Studies through the years, and maybe someday the recording of that slide-show presentation I gave at IMS in 1997 will be released. Thanks to Jim Reed the video of my 2011 presentation at the IMS is publicly available on YouTube at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZE_WBFEXLnc.

In any case, I do plan to continue my work with The Maya Conservancy while writing and publishing on a wide variety of topics. I also expect more 2012 inscriptions will be found, providing even more evidence for my "2012 alignment theory," and I am open to continuing my research efforts to reconstruct ancient Maya cosmology.

I even have one more book (fiction), touching upon Maya themes, that is lined up for publication next year. An area of interest for some time now has been the traditional books arts, and I plan on producing limited-edition hand-bound books with letterpress printing equipment that I have rescued and restored. My latest offering was released last month and was partially produced in my printing studio. It is formatted as a booklet called *Reconstructing Ancient Maya Astronomy*; check it out at: <http://alignment2012.com/zzz2012-in-2012.html>. 🏠

Editor's Note: I first crossed the Mopan River on this ol' ferry more than 35 years ago when I lived for 1-1/2 years with some friends who had purchased a parcel of land behind Succutz, within view of Xunantunich. As Belize prepares for future visitors beyond 2012, this may be the best news yet!

New Ferry Servicing Xunantunich

A familiar fixture of Xunantunich, the original hand-cranked ferry, is destined to a well earned retirement from its home and workplace for the past 37 years. It is intended that this unique and popular icon will find a final resting place within Succutz as a heritage point of interest and pride, for visitors and locals.

Since 1975, the ferry has withstood the tests of nature and time, transporting overnight tourists, schoolchildren, local visitors and more recently, cruise passengers on their journey to discover the sacred world of the Maya. The old ferry was transporting around 50,000 visitors a year and up to 300 visitors a day on peak visitor days.

On November 1, 2012, her responsibilities were taken over by the new Xunantunich Ferry, which was launched and blessed in true nautical style as she embarked on her maiden voyage across the Mopan River. The new ferry is capable of transporting up to four medium SUV vehicles at a time, which is a substantial increase on the capacity of the original vessel, and it can accommodate the higher mini-buses of today's tourism era.

Of course nostalgia has its place and the much loved hand-crank mechanism will continue to pique the interest of all aboard. It does have an installed electrical drive system with a manual backup hand-crank system.



Director of Belizean Archaeology, Dr. Jaime Awe, cranking the new Xunantunich Ferry.

Other improvements in the Cayo area include updating the facilities and interpretation at the archaeological sites of Actun Tunichil Muknal, Cahal Pech and Xunantunich. New bathrooms, trail improvements and interpretation at Cahal Pech are planned for early next year; and new bathrooms and the inauguration of an entirely new visitor interpretation center at Xunantunich are planned for summer 2013. 🏠

Source: www.ambergristoday.com 🏠

MayaBall Makes a Comeback: The 2012 Chajchaay Tournament

by Jim Reed

I was really impressed when I learned (though *facebook*) that teams of young Maya men were bringing back glimpses of the ancient form of competitive sport in the Highlands of Guatemala, especially in towns located near Lake Atitlán.

The images of the teams, all dressed in their colorful game-wear, struck a cord with me. I wanted to know more about this special competition that was being planned to coincide with Highland Maya celebrations for the Oxlajuj Bak'tun. I entered my enthusiastic comments at the bottom of the post and hit "reply".

Almost immediately, a person responded from Sololá, Guatemala. So began a welcomed conversation with José Mucia, Coordinator of the 2012 Chajchaay Pelota Maya de Cadera Tournament. For 12 years, he has been the man behind the helm of Instituto Kukulk'an, a group dedicated to reviving what I have termed here, "MayaBall" – the sport of their ancestors. This 2012 series of games is sponsored by Instituto Kukulk'an, and José wants me to be sure to give them credit for all these colorful and interesting photos.

I asked José the meaning of the word "Chajchaay", and he said that it signifies "el canto de la pelota" or "the song of the rubber ball" in Qanjobal Mayan.

The overall motive is for the players to become elastic just like the rubber used for the ball.

The phrase "Pelota Maya de Cadera" means "Maya Hip Ball", a reference to the fact that the primary intent is to keep the ball in play by bouncing it off the hip. José has coordinated a weekend series of matches in various towns in the Highlands, near or around Lake Atitlán. The tour-about is called "Q'ij Saiq" and the festive ensemble includes, the teams, the coaches, the refs, theatrical group Sotzil, and appropriately enough, a Sutuhil hip-hop artist.

This year, for José and Instituto Kukulk'an, the traveling festival is timed to celebrate the period-ending of the Bak'tun. It began with two games in Sololá on October 21. The series of two-game tournaments continued in Colmalapa (10/28), Xesapual (11/4), and Tecpan (11/11). The single-game semi-finals took place in Xesapual (11/25) and Chaquijya (12/2). The final faceoff of the two teams that have made the most LupLups, will take

MayaBall on tour: Maya Day at the sporting complex in Punta Gorda, Belize, featured an exhibition performance by a

13-member entourage from Instituto Kukulk'an (including two spiritual guides). Over 500 spectators came to watch the Chajchaay and the spiritual ceremonies associated with it.

"The Ballgame played by their Maya ancestors was swift and dangerous. It was a contest of athletic skill and ritual spectacle where ballplayers reenacted the eternal struggle between light and dark, order and chaos. According to the calendar, this current 5,126 year-long-cycle of time that we live in began on August 13, 3114 BCE when the Hero Twins, Hunahpu and Xbalanque, defeated the Lords of Death in an Underworld Ballgame. It all comes to a close on December 21, 2012.

Now with this Maya cycle of time rolling towards its end, the Ballgame is once again being played". (Source: www.wooloo.org)



Official game-ball used in the recent MayaBall tournament, positioned in a corn stalk before the game begins.



The double goal-ring is called a "LupLup". Opposing teams will gather separately before and after a match, burning copal and offering prayers.



Festival Q'ij Saiq 2012 began on October 21, in Sololá.



The inaugural games were played right on the courts outside the gymnasium, in front of the municipal buildings of Sololá.



place in Panajachel, on the shores of Lake Atitlán, on Dec. 16 – the Sunday



Saqui Ukyá. La bebida de los jugadores. mmmm que rica!

before the looming fateful Friday. José says that some of the men have been training for years, and that it involves not only physical training, but also spiritual training. Each game is a spectacle, and each team comes proudly onto the field, each person physically and mentally involved with the performance. The highest honor is to be chosen as "Player of the Game".

To see their past and future posts, search "Chajchaay" on *facebook*. 🇬🇧

Mundo Maya Events Reach Fever Pitch as Calendar End Looms

A funny thing happened on the way to Dec. 21, 2012: The visions of apocalypse that got the whole world counting down to the supposedly fateful date turned into a celebration of Maya culture, past and present. In Mexico, the Mundo Maya resides in states of Quintana Roo, Yucatán, Campeche, Tabasco and Chiapas; and the swirl of festive events is reaching fever pitch. The “end of the Maya calendar” is proving to be bigger than Christmas, and in Mexico that’s no mean feat. There are an estimated 500 Maya-themed events taking place in the region.

New monuments to the Maya

Two long-planned major museums dedicated to showcasing the Maya legacy have recently opened, long after their planned debut dates, but in time for the 2012 hoopla. With their similar names and similar goals – to exhibit artifacts from the ancient Maya civilization in modern, state-of-the-art galleries – the casual observer can be excused for confusing the two.

The **Gran Museo del Mundo Maya** (Great Museum of the Maya World) in Mérida, Yucatán’s capital, holds anthropological, historical and archaeological displays. Employing more than 6,000 tons of steel –



L) The Museo del Mundo Maya in Mérida utilizes more steel in its construction than the Eiffel Tower. R) The Palacio de la Civilización Maya is just 8 miles from Chichén Itzá.



an Eiffel Tower’s worth – in an aggressively modern and highly technological design, it examines Maya culture both past and present.

Hundreds of ancient artifacts are included in its cavernous showrooms – four for permanent exhibitions and another for temporary displays. The museum was built on land adjacent to Mérida’s convention center on the Mérida-Progreso Highway/Calle 60.

The **Palacio de la Civilización Maya** (Palace of Maya Civilization) was built on a nearly 1,000-acre site in the impoverished village of Yaxcabá, about 8 miles southwest of Chichén Itzá, primarily to house artifacts excavated from the famous Cenote Sagrada (Sacred Well). Many of the objects have never been on public display before. Like the Mérida museum, this one also contains relics on loan from the former Museum

of Anthropology in Mérida. The “palace’s” most notable resident, and its centerpiece, is the *Mujer de las Palmas* (Woman of the Palms). Recovered from a cenote near Tulum in 2002, it is as much as 13,000 years old – the oldest skeleton found yet on the Yucatán Peninsula.

Taking advantage of Yaxcabá’s topography, the museum is anchored by the town’s cenote (*Abán*), that the Maya regarded as sacred doorways to the underworld, and a ceiba tree, their symbol of the link between heaven, earth and the underworld. The long, white path tying the museum’s facilities together represents a *sac-be*, the raised limestone causeways that connected the ancient Maya cities. 🏛️

Source: From an article posted 10/24/12 by Christine Delsol on Francisco Chronicle Online at: www.sfgate.com. Renderings by Cortesía.

Guatemalan Maya Upset Over Doomsday “Deceit”

The “golden age” of the Maya civilization may have occurred over 1,000 years ago, but more than half the population of the Central American nation of Guatemala are of Maya descent and many still celebrate ancient customs. So, as we approach 12/21/2012, it’s little wonder they are upset that one of their calendars has been hijacked and misinterpreted as a prophet of doom.

But this time, the anger isn’t directed at the West’s “messianic thinking,” Maya leaders have accused the Guatemalan government of perpetuating the myth that the Maya Long Count calendar predicts the end of the world for financial gain.

“We are speaking out against deceit, lies and twisting of the truth, and turning us into folklore-for-profit. They are not telling the truth about time cycles,” commented

Felipe Gómez, leader of the Maya alliance Oxlaluj Ajpop.

The entire “Maya doomsday” nonsense centers around the mistaken belief that the ancient civilization had some magical ability to foretell the Apocalypse. But they didn’t. In actuality, it focuses on a calendar cycle that runs out this year. This calendar, the Long Count, is a wonderfully complex system that spans around 5,200 years and is of huge spiritual significance to the Maya people.

In a statement released by Oxlaluj Ajpop, the end of the cycle simply “means there will be big changes on the personal, family and community level, so that there is harmony and balance between mankind and nature.”

On the one hand, it’s somehow gratifying to see the Maya region profiting from tourism revenue, but it’s coming at the cost of



Oxlaluj Ajpop provides education to spread recognition of sacred Maya sites, to promote the conservation of knowledge of natural medicines, and to promote the protection of the natural environment.

the Maya alive today who would rather their beliefs and customs be communicated correctly.

Unfortunately, a common theme prevails: In the pursuit of profit, nothing sells better than fear. A fact, it seems, not lost on the authorities of Guatemala. 🏛️

Source: From an article posted on: <http://news.discovery.com>. Submitted by Scott Allen.

IMS Annual Business Meeting and December Birthday Party – December 12

Officially dubbed the Annual Members Meeting, members seldom think of it as that. Think fellowship, food and fun! Think bargain books and other desirable items. Think "Happy Birthday" to the IMS.

The IMS has now been together for 42 years!



As established in the bylaws, the event takes place on the second Wednesday of December, in this case December 12. We combine our anniversary party with a short business meeting, a few short committee reports and the announcement of the new board members elected that evening to the 2013 Board of Directors. If you haven't mailed in your ballot yet, you can even bring it to the event. Also, there's our Book Sale – bring some, buy some!



The IMS Annual Affair • Wednesday, December 12 • Have a drink and a piece of cake too!

Feel free to wear your favorite get-up ... it's a chance to wear your huipil and jade!

January 16: IMS Presentation:

"The Mirador Basin: The Cultural and Natural Legacy in the Cradle of the Maya Civilization"

with Dr. Richard Hansen



Major investigations in the Mirador Basin of northern Guatemala have revealed an extraordinary concentration of large and early ancient Maya cities nestled within the geographical confines of an integrated cultural and natural system. The research has demonstrated both the size and scale of human settlement, primarily during the Preclassic periods, within the basin. The resultant social and political centralization in the Middle and Late Preclassic periods led to the construction of the largest pyramids on the planet, the largest ancient Maya cities, the first "freeway" system in the world, and the first true state-level society in the Western Hemisphere.

Dr. Richard D. Hansen, an archaeologist from Idaho State University, is the current director of the Mirador Basin Project, and according to his discoveries there, he thinks that the more than 45 mapped sites in the Mirador Basin may have formed the earliest well-defined political state in Mesoamerica.

All meetings are 8 pm • Institute of Maya Studies • Miami Science Museum • Maya Hotline: 305-279-8110

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Cha...Cha...Cha...Changes... A New Look, a New Feel for 2013!

by Editor Jim Reed

Greetings Maya enthusiasts!

The timing is right ... It's the end of a K'atun, a Bak'tun, and a Long Count calendar cycle – I feel the need to shake things up a bit!

Composing each issue has been my labor of love for more than half-a-K'atun, and now I am going to make a few changes to the IMS Explorer.

The newsletter masthead will be only two columns wide. It is designed to resemble the look of the masthead you see on our IMS website.

Each month, we provide two public educational programs, and I have always shown the date of our second-Wednesday-of-the-month presentation in the masthead by visually portraying the date in Long Count calendar glyphs. I will continue to do so.

I am going to abandon the ongoing search for an "Explorer of the Month". I have always preferred to honor a person who is mentioned in an article in the same issue, and as the Haabs role by, that goal has become a little harder to accomplish.

We've got a new accent color; instead of blue, I am going to use a color that reminds me of the

color of the rich and fertile soil of the Puuc Hills of the Yucatán.

Here, I present this new typeface. It is named Gill Sans and this typeface will allow me to fit more text in any article – more than with the Verdana family typeface you see in the rest of this issue.

If you look closely at the January 2013 issue above, you can see that I have decided to use the 13 in the Bak'tun position. Even though this Long Count cycle may have a designated length of 13 Bak'tuns (as per the *Popol Vuh*), I believe the evidence shown in carved-in-stone examples demonstrates that at least some of the ancient Maya sky-watchers also used the Long Count to mark days towards the completion of a Pik'tun cycle of 20 Bak'tuns.

Also 86ed, "Coming Up Next Month". This space will be for an extra article for you special Green subscribers!



Upcoming Events at the IMS:

December 12, 8 pm: *IMS Annual Affair "IMS Annual Business Meeting and Anniversary Fiesta"* – Join with us as we celebrate 42 years together! We're planning food, fellowship and fun. There will be a book sale – **bring some, buy some** – and share some cake and a drink or two. The fiesta follows our official annual business meeting that includes a few short reports on the state of the organization, a tally of the votes, and official announcement of the newly elected IMS Board members for 2013. It's free for all members, please attend!

January 9, 2013 – *IMS Explorer Session "Getting to Know the Maya"* – with **Dr. Anne Stewart**. The IMS is initiating an eight-month series of classes about the Maya. Learn what you don't know about our favorite ancient (and modern) culture.

January 16, 2013, 8 pm: *IMS Program "The Mirador Basin: The Cultural and Natural Legacy in the Cradle of Maya Civilization"* – Social and political centralization in the Middle and Late Preclassic periods led to the first true state-level society in the Western Hemisphere, with director **Dr. Richard Hansen**, from Idaho State University.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

December 27: *Lecture "Masterpiece of the Day: Coronation Stone of Motecuhzoma II – Stone of the Five Suns"* – Theme of the Gallery Talk at the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL. Info at: www.artic.edu/event/masterpiece-day-coronation-stone-motecuhzoma-ii-stone-five-suns



January 3–6: *Annual AIA Meeting "AIA Annual Meeting"* – The 114th joint annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America and the American Philological Association will be held in Seattle, WA. The three-day annual event is the highlight of both organizations' academic programing and is an important forum for scholars to present new ideas and current research. More info available at: <http://aia.archaeological.org/webinfo.php?page=10096>

Through January 5, 2013: *Exhibition "For I am the Black Jaguar": Shamanic Visionary Experience in Ancient American Art"* – At the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University, Atlanta, GA. *More info at:* <http://carlos.emory.edu/black-jaguar>

Through Jan. 13: *Exhibition "Maya 2012: Lords of Time"* – The exhibition features over 100 remarkable objects, including artifacts recently excavated from Copan. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, PA. Get additional info at: www.penn.museum/upcoming-exhibits/995-maya-2012-lords-of-time.html



Feb. 22-24, 2013: *Tulane Symposium "KAANAL: The Snake Kingdom of the Classic Maya"* – The Tenth Annual Tulane Maya Symposium and Workshops will explore one of the largest ancient Maya political entities – the kingdom of Dzibanche and Calakmul. The Hieroglyph Forum and the Workshops will focus on newly discovered texts from La Corona and elsewhere. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Peter Mathews of La Trobe University. Also featured will be both M.A.R.I.'s new exhibit, "Faces of the Maya" as well as an on-going exhibit of Merle Greene Robertson's rubbings at the Latin American Library. See the speakers and program at: <http://mari.tulane.edu/TMS/program.html>