

## Katun Celebration El Pilar 3 July 2016

The weeks leading up to the Katun were intense, coordinating all the details and collaborators. Our experience of engaging friends and associates was wonderful. With the dawn of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July we were ready, the core team was up and out with alacrity and as the minutes and hours past until our opening at 12 o'clock, the puzzle came together. The date was in the rainy season, but aside from a brief shower just before the inauguration, we had an exceptional day. People from all over the Maya forest and beyond joined in the celebration. Friends of El Pilar are growing.

The story began with the rediscovery of El Pilar and the work at the site with the government archaeologists.

Twenty years ago, a

full Katun, launched the establishment of the boundaries of the El Pilar Archaeological reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna. The theme of the new archaeological reserve would be the Maya Forest featuring archaeology under the canopy, engaging the local community in their own resources and their own history.

We had a host of support from businesses with funding, with the lunch buffet, beer and herbal teas, with security and oversight, transport, chairs, tables, and tents, and set up with the El Pilar team with their donated green T shirts! Everyone threw in their weight in the arrival organization, the décor and set up, the direction and reception, and overall good cheer.



We had some 200 guests with at least 100 support in the entertainment (Garifuna drums, marimba, steel band, flutist and marching band!) It was a convivial scene! The runners who started in Bullet Tree Falls came into Plaza Copal victorious with smoking copal incense and chanting El Pilar as a refrain to Cynthia Ellis Topsey's Call for Peace! She welcomed all "to this awesome historic event at El Pilar, one of the most wonderful sites in Belize and in the world. Here you will experience



archaeology under the canopy, and we're celebrating, having having fun, with people from all walks of life, and from all over the world."

Notable words were generously given by several people. Retired Brigadier General Lloyd Gillet praised the ideals of El Pilar for asking, "How can we enhance peace through archaeology? And I think that's a very beautiful question!"

Justice Courtney Abel hailed the peace effort by adding " that El Pilar existed thousands of years before borders existed... and actually sits on on a very interesting site. It actually spans not only Belize, but also a large area - a large sector - of Guatemala, which brings us to a very live topic in both countries." He proposed that there can be "Archaeology for Peace" to work together to develop a shared heritage at El Pilar.



The Katun honored supporters who have left us: Harriot Topsey whose government archaeological leadership established the reserve, Godsman Ellis whose tourism partnership brought in the first grants to define the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna, Elias Awe with Help for Progress ushered in the community participation component for El Pilar. A varied program included music, games, food, drinks, and tours of the wonders of El Pilar. Special speakers hailed the wide and important efforts promoted at El Pilar. Everybody enjoyed the Marimba and Panerrifix steel band. By 4 pm we were all ready to pack it in. With monumental efforts, we got all the major goods, equipment, and materials out of Plaza Copal and stored at our wonderful supporters at SoPilar so that the core group could be on their way down to Cayo before sunset. Exhilarated and exhausted!



## Katun Program

Program: 12pm- 4pm

2 pm:

Part I MC Vanessa Neal with support Rene Villanueva

1. Prayers Decon Cal
2. National Anthem: Mr Pitts
3. Welcome Remarks Lloyd Gillet Ret Brigadier General
4. Reflections Justice Courtney Abel on World Peace
5. Runners for Peace with Cynthia Ellis Topsey
6. Cynthia Ellis Topsey introduces Teo Williams
7. Cynthia Ellis Topsey introduces Anabel Ford celebrating FU WE TEAM
8. Introduces Forest Garden
9. Master Forest Garden Narciso Torres and Estela Quewell present Seeds of the future: Ramon, Guanacaste, Allspice, Hule, Ixpelon
10. Cynthia Ellis Topsey on the importance of El Pilar
11. Thank you Cynthia Recognition to BDF Youth Cadets and their support
12. Garifuna peace songs

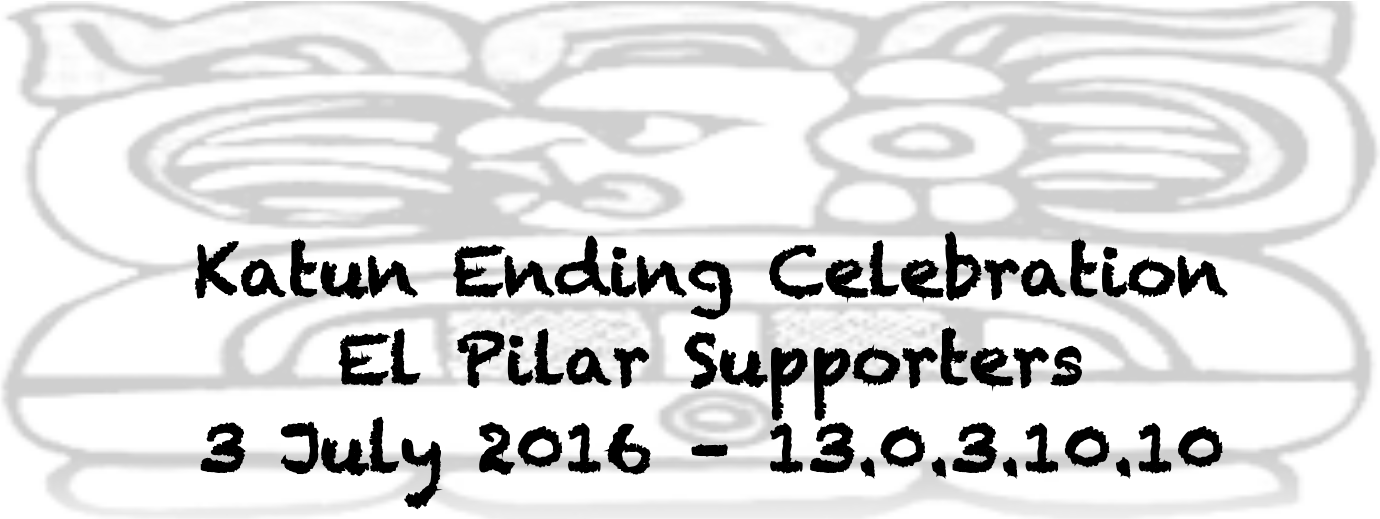
Media:

<http://www.7newsbelize.com/sstory.php?nid=36864>

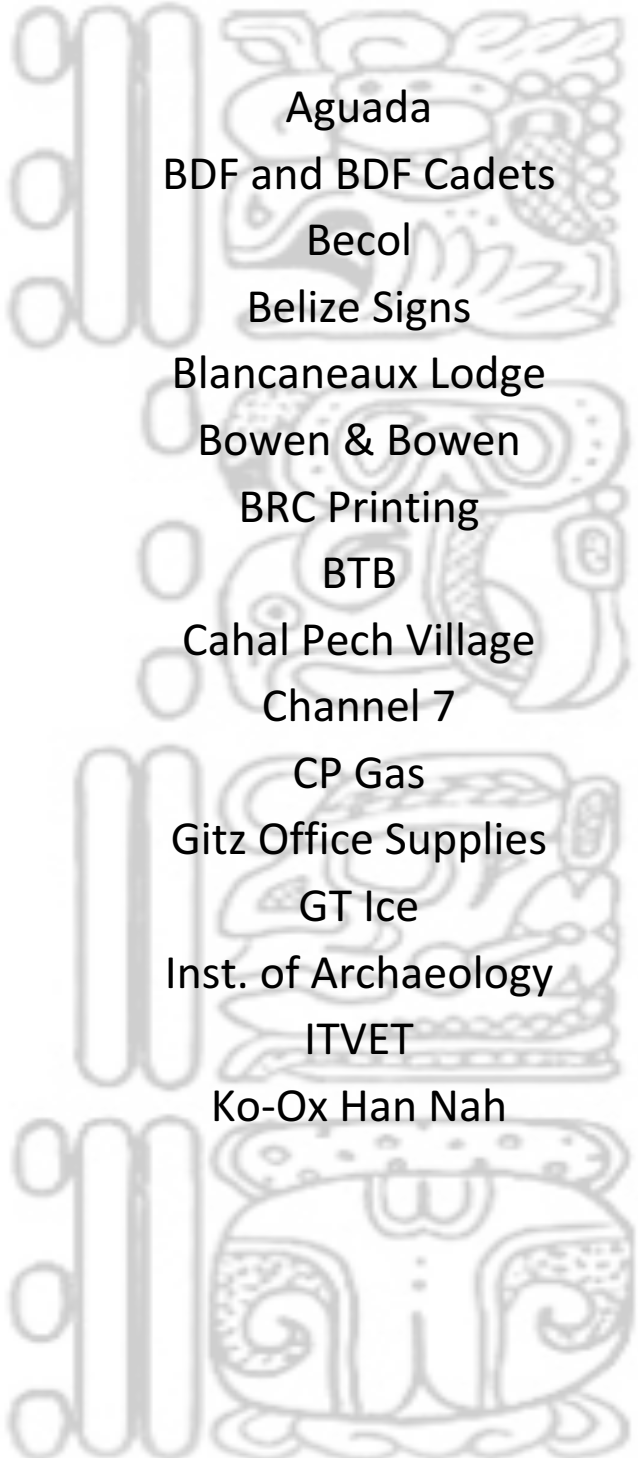
<http://ambergiscaye.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/453815/off-the-beaten-path-in-el-pilar-belize.html>

<http://ambergiscaye.com/pages/mayan/mayasiteselpilarphototour.html>





# Katun Ending Celebration EL Pilar Supporters 3 July 2016 - 13.0.3.10.10



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