

December 2011 Belize Newsletter

Dear Friends of Grand Baymen,

October was, as usual, a slow month on Ambergris Caye. But November saw a major turnaround. Mike and I spent much of October in Florida, attending conferences. We returned to San Pedro for back-to-back conferences on the island and in Belize City. November was surprisingly busy on the island, and in San Pedro Town. The holiday tourism season seems to be starting earlier each year...

For those of us who live here fulltime, the season shifts when the hurricane season ends. That occurs in early November. This year's hurricane season was uneventful for Belize. We hardly even had any notable storms. But we had one scare, with Hurricane Rina passing by. Fortunately, Belize seldom experiences a major hurricane. But we are always thankful once the season has passed. Then we can start seriously planning for the holiday season...

Counting Our Blessings in 2011. As Christmas approaches, we stop to give thanks for this past year. In particular, we are pleased that Baymen Garden's Building A has now been enclosed. The third floor roof was completed on November 19th. The concrete walls are being finished. Very soon work will shift to finishing off the interior of the building.

Many thanks to John Morgan, the construction manager... And to Daniel Camal and his hard working construction crew. They've kept the project on track, working six out of seven days each week, throughout the rainy season.

It's now possible to tour the 12 units, albeit in their rough form. Visitors can take in the sweeping view, looking out over the pools, to the tranquil Caribbean Back Bay. In the summer of 2012 our owners will be taking possession of their completed, new island homes.

Many of our Baymen Garden owners have visited us during the last few months. They come to check on the progress in person. And one owner, Jim Knuff, has already moved to the island. He's renting until his unit is complete. We see him regularly around town. Most Fridays we socialize together at Wine de Vine.

Mike and I are blessed to have met a group of Baymen Garden owners who are fast becoming our friends. By mid-2012 they will also be our neighbors. This is the "community" aspect of Grand Baymen that is unusual, and special, for a new development... We are happy to offer advice to our new neighbors, related to their future lifestyle on Ambergris Caye. After all, we'll be seeing them most days, once they move here. And many of our neighbors have already become ECI shareholders.

In January ECI's Annual Shareholders meeting will be held here on the island. The meetings will be at the Caye Financial Center, across the street from Grand Baymen's resort, (Exotic Caye Beach Resort). The ECI shareholders will have time to inspect the progress at Baymen Garden. Planning for the meeting is now underway...

The Spirit of Christmas on Ambergris Caye. But in the meantime, the Christmas season kicked off the first week of December, with the Christmas Boat Parade. We held a Chill Weekend that weekend. Our visitors watched the delightful parade of brightly flashing, decorated boats while indulging in a scrumptious dinner at the Blue Iguana. The location couldn't be beat. We had a bird's eye view of the parade, from the Blue Iguana dining room.

Christmas is, as always, a serious holiday in Belize. San Pedranos start cleaning and redecorating their homes an entire month before Christmas. During the holidays they spend many days and nights, in their homes, socializing with family and friends. Other than the resorts, many businesses shut down for Christmas week.

Granted, we don't have a "White Christmas" on Ambergris Caye. But there is plenty of Christmas spirit on this island... And many fundraisers are held, to help the needy.

This morning I ran across a thought provoking quote worth sharing. At a recent Sustainable Business event, Tensie Whelan, the President of the Rainforest Alliance, directly quoted Belize's Minister of Tourism. This quote refers to the impact of excessive consumerism on sustainable business. But it also sheds light upon the difference in perspectives of North Americans vs. Belizeans, in regards to how they prefer to celebrate Christmas:

"In your countries, you want to have more; in our country, we want to be more."

When remembering past Christmases in the USA, what comes to my mind is the overwhelming barrage of advertising and consumerism. But the frenzy of Black Friday shopping, to compete for the best and greatest number of Christmas gift deals, has little to do with the spiritual nature of this holiday... Here, during the Christmas season, Belizeans focus on giving their loved ones plenty of their "time", rather than a stack of more "things". Personal time is the most precious commodity, after all.

So this year Mike and I will spend the holidays in Belize, sharing personal time with our close friends and new neighbors. Some are old friends, visiting for the holidays. Others are new friends we've made during our Ambergris Caye journey. There is no doubt that we'll miss our kids and grandkids this holiday season. But we won't miss out on the Christmas spirit of sharing quality time with our friends...

Have a wonderful holiday season. We hope to meet you on our lovely Isla Bonita in 2012, the infamous year the Mayan Calendar ends!

Happy Holidays,

Ann Kuffner Brunette

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Baymen Garden - Building A Progress and Owners

Building A is now more than halfway completed. We've been updating the progress in a blog post whenever we reach a construction milestone, such as completing a floor. Here are the links for this month's blog posts that describe construction progress.

Most significant recent progress is the completion of the roof in November. And one of the posts introduces you to Jim and Mary, one of our Baymen Garden owners. Pictures are included with each blog

- [Baymen Garden Building A Roof Completed](#)
- [Jim and Mary's Handicap Access Condo, Baymen Garden](#)
- [Baymen Garden's Building A Third Floor Completed!](#)

Ambergris Caye Lifestyle and Real Estate Trends

October was a quiet month, but it brought us raucous Halloween celebrations. Upon returning to the island I couldn't help but reflect on some notable differences between the lifestyles on Ambergris Caye and Florida. Thus the 8 Simple Pleasures. And we're repeating the blog entry on Ambergris Caye real estate trends, for those of you who missed it. Many visitors ask us who takes care of our pets when we travel. I explain who cares for Ziggy and AC in the blog about Pampering Pets.

- [8 Simple Pleasures of Living on Ambergris Caye](#)
- [Ambergris Caye's Real Estate Market Trends](#)
- [Pampering Pets on Ambergris Caye](#)

Recent Fall Events on Ambergris Caye

This section includes blog post links for recent conferences, social events and festivals held on Ambergris Caye. Halloween was the biggest holiday celebrated here in October. Each blog includes pictures that give the reader a feeling for the event.

- [Halloween on Ambergris Caye, for People and Their Pets!](#)