

## Reflections on The Cruiser's Life...and Loss

February 7, 2018 by Guest Reporter, Tortugese

It is one of life's immutable laws that we can only experience the first time once. So, it is that all we visitors to the Rio Dulce vividly retain those initial impressions, regardless of whether the sun shone or the rain-forest shed tears, hard-wired into our respective psyches.

However, many times we return, we cannot completely recreate these first pictures but, in compensation: the more we return, the greater the treasures we unfold. Doubtless, this is why so many of us (cruisers, primarily, but others too) return year after year like migrating birds.

As every annual flight gifts us with meeting more fellow passagers (some less passing than others) we are confronted with another of life's - laws: for every one we meet and greet, they eventually weigh anchor and bid adieu. For every hello there is an inevitable goodbye.

Such vague musings impressed themselves upon me on my return to the Rio this year to find that the loss of good friends was accountably greater than in years past. Such losses are, of course, very personal but I believe many, if not most, will be mourning the handful of Rio characters who have left us for good in the past year. What can one do when confronted with such losses - and, yes, grief - on revisiting a venue which is expected, however naively, to offer at least comfort if not pure hedonism? Well, we could, very reasonably, resort to the siren call of "carpe diem." This, bearing in mind the average age of Rio cruisers, is a perfectly practical response as "live for the day" seems certainly more attainable than "live for the decade!" However, I feel (no, Guatemala encourages me to feel) that there is an alternative, perhaps complementary, response.

Whilst those closest to loss truly grieve, we all hear the bells' toll, especially keenly if the departee is inordinately young. How then can we assuage the despair or discomfort with the rationale of inevitability? Just as a forest fire seems initially catastrophic we know that the opportunities for new growth confer longer term benefits. At a more mundane level, cruising sailors appreciate the need to discard old gear before packing aboard new - even if we constantly forget to do this and the one-way-valve which is our boat inexorably increases its draught!

If consolation lies in new-replacement - growth, we first find this in our own families, children and grandchildren. When far from home we have to cast our search more locally and many find the opportunity to help the children of the Rio Dulce rewarding. One such worthy cause is Casa Guatemala, caring for and educating disadvantaged children, where I've enjoyed the privilege of witnessing the fruits of its altruism. There are other river initiatives which involve cruisers (\*see below) which I'm sure are equally gratifying. To whichever of these we choose to contribute, let it be that the beneficiaries include ourselves as we acknowledge the consolation of life's compensatory renewals. \*Some local organizations worthy of your assistance! If we have inadvertently omitted one, please contact the Rio Dulce Chisme Vindicator editor, Jody Aston, via email: [jody.riodulcechisme@gmail.com](mailto:jody.riodulcechisme@gmail.com) Ak™ Tenamit, <https://www.aktenamit.org/> Chisme article: [http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=595&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=595&Itemid=5) Casa Guatemala, <http://www.casa-guatemala.org/> Chisme article(s): Too numerous to list! Click "Search This Site" in the menu on the left-hand side of this article, type "Casa Guatemala" in the search field and click the circle for "All words" - your pick of articles! Casa Guatemala has been on the Rio Dulce for even more years than the Rio Dulce Chisme Vindicator, which has covered the Casa™s yearly outstanding programs and events throughout each year. For starters, here™s the End of Year report by Executive Director, Heather Graham:

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1412&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1412&Itemid=5)

Community Tuition Grant Program Cayo Quemado, Kelli Doll Kelli at [seas2see@gmail.com](mailto:seas2see@gmail.com) Chisme article(s): NOTE: The results of the most current fundraiser will be published next!

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1410&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1410&Itemid=5)

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1368&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1368&Itemid=5)

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1363&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1363&Itemid=5)

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1309&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1309&Itemid=5)

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1300&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1300&Itemid=5) GirlsEmpo, or in Spanish, ASOEMPO (Asociaci3n Empoderamiento) Livingston, <http://girlsempo.org/> Chisme article(s):

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1280&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1280&Itemid=5)

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1193&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1193&Itemid=5)

Pass It On Guatemala, <https://passitonguatemala.org/> Chisme article(s):

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1338&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1338&Itemid=5)

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1335&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1335&Itemid=5)

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1256&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1256&Itemid=5) The Rios Fund, Guatemala, Seacacar Ca3n Natural Reserve (El Boqueron), <https://www.riosfund.org/lodge> Chisme article(s):

[http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1371&Itemid=5](http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1371&Itemid=5)