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THE BOSTON & MAINE CONNECTION



Imagine that if you could buy just one fish, you could save a tree, a way of life, a whole community and contribute to the preservation of nearly one fifth of the world's fresh water reserves. Would you buy it? Would you spend the \$3.79 it will cost you?

There's just one catch and it is actually a very small one; the fish needs to be one of the wild caught ones from the Amazon Rain Forest.

Sidestep the cloudy controversy around farm raised vs. wild caught. These fish, if they aren't harvested, will die off in huge numbers, so you are doing them a favor when you add them to your home or office aquarium where they can live as long as ten years.

Last month I journeyed to **THE Amazon**, the real and original one, not Jeff Bezo's online emporium. In the Amazon rain forest in Brazil I discovered the close connection between Boston and Maine and yes, the Amazon Rain Forest. Most folks don't know this yet, but there are more similarities than you might think swimming just below the surface. Here are two examples of ways to innovate. Entrepreneurship is alive and well there.

I met the founders of the first air water manufacturing plant in the world. Bottled in the heart of the forest from condensing high humidity air, Amazon Air Water will enter the premium water market while returning 25% of the profits back to the community to fund school supplies, computers, tools and the protection of local culture. They were one of the important sponsors of the Piaba Festival that I met during my travels.



New England Aquarium biologist and Project Piaba co-founder, Scott Dowd who often demonstrated his great skill of being a good listener.

Project Piaba itself is the 25 year collaboration between the fishing families of Amazonas, Brazil and a non-profit organization headquartered in Boston and led by co-founder and New England Aquarium biologist Scott Dowd. Their focus on the ornamental fish trade in the Rio Negro basin of the Amazon has created some incredible connections, friendships and good business. This region in Brazil supplies more than 80% of the cardinal tetras and other beautiful fresh water fish for home aquariums and public aquariums and zoos worldwide.

Project Piaba has quietly helped build structure and support for the entrepreneurial community of over 20,000 people in a sustainable lifestyle model. With nearly one fifth of the entire fresh water of the planet earth residing within the boundaries of the Amazon, we all have a large stake in protecting this ecosystem which does not rely on harvesting the forest or polluting the water in the pursuit of mineral extraction. These wild caught ornamental fish have a high birth rate and a major die-off in low water season so the capture and export of these live fish have worldwide benefit.

I found amazing similarities between Mid Coast Maine fishing communities and those in Mid Coast Brazil once you got beyond the salt water ocean of Maine vs. freshwater for as far as the eye can see in the Amazon.

The annual Piaba festival was inspired by Scott Dowd's project and celebrates the fishermen and women of Barcelos and the Rio Negro region of Brazil. For one long twenty four hour period the population doubles and friendly competitions between cardinal tetra and discus fish groups take place in a performance space built especially for it; The Piabadome. You don't get to choose the group you represent. You are born into one or the other and you gain or lose points based on how respectful you are of the other group's performance. Cheer them on and gain points, be passive or leave early and your team loses points! How's that for collaboration?

This August Brazil will honor the Piaberas & Piaberos, officially for the first time, by hosting a celebration the night before the start of their next fishing season.

The Amazon is everything you might imagine and nothing like you think and it is at risk of being destroyed by the scarcity of traditional work, over regulation, misunderstanding, and controversy that the locals know is as much myth as reality. Sound like Maine's fishing communities? It sure does.

Want more information? Want to apply entrepreneurship principles to your community? Drop me a line and I can send you an invitation to the online worldwide community that supports Project Piaba or I can put you in touch with like-minded world citizens to help preserve your unique part of the world.

THE BOSTON & MAINE CONNECTION, a monthly column hosted by Keith Spiro and Marketplace Access and Understanding LLC. Keith has more than thirty years invested in the Boston & Maine connection. He is a business strategist and community builder, interested in high impact projects that can make a difference for communities. He is also the Visual Correspondent for Xconomy, a digital high tech and Bio tech focused news media outlet; To contact Keith e-mail: impact@marketplaceau.com



Homemade elaborate costumes were a big part of the storytelling during the Piaba Festival.

The Amazon & Project Piaba Story & Photos by Keith Spiro



Three of the four founders of the socio-environmental project Amazon Air Water. Cal Junior, Paulo Ferreira, Ricardo Rozgrin, and James Figueiredo de Araujo Lima Junior expect to cause two revolutions in their industry when they are fully operational and employing nearly 200 people.



The universal language of smiles and Tshirts. His, a gift from a fellow traveler. Mine, A well understood fish from the Harpswell Festival.

33rd Annual Moxie Festival Theme Winner Announced

LISBON, ME - The Moxie Festival Committee is pleased to announce the 2015 Moxie Festival theme: "Celebrate Moxie the Maine Way." Robin (Rogers) Arsenault, a fourth generation Mainer who grew up in Lisbon, won the annual theme contest that drew contestants from across the country.

Her father William Rogers and his brother Jack Rogers started Rogers Insurance Agency in Lisbon. She graduated from Lisbon High School in 1974 and immediately married her high school sweetheart, Dale Arsenault and has worked for 29 years as a loan officer for the Lisbon Community Federal Credit Union.

"Over the years, my family and I have participated in many of the Moxie Festival parades and activities. It has been one of our families treasured weekends. The Moxie Festival is something



The 2015 Moxie Festival theme winner Robin Arsenault (center) with Tracey Steuber, Lisbon's Economic and Community Development Director (left) and Gina Mason, the Moxie Festival Parade Coordinator.

Mainers talk about all year long," said the Lisbon native.

She received a gift box with Moxie items from the Maine Art Glass Studio and a gift certificate

to Kennebec's (The Moxie Store) both in Lisbon Falls.

Floats for the Moxie Festival Parade this year will be judged on their interpretation of the theme,

"Celebrate Moxie the Maine Way." The Moxie Festival parade includes over 100 units such as miniature ponies, Kora units, Moxie floats, historic Moxie vehicles, dancers, and much more. The Parade starts at 10 am at Capital Avenue, travels down Rt. 196 and up Main Street before concluding at North and South Streets.

According to Lisbon Public Safety Officials, over 50,000 people attend the three-day Moxie Festival. The Town of Lisbon has approximately 9,077 residents.

Since 1982, The Moxie Festival in Lisbon, Maine has been held on the second weekend in July. For more information and a schedule of events, go to www.MoxieFestival.com and like the Moxie Festival on Facebook. Moxie was designated Maine's official soft drink on May 20, 2005. The Moxie Festival will be held from July 10-12, 2015.

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