

# Afro Panamanian Newsletter



No.2 Vol. I

February-March 2010

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Poetry

Controversy

Anecdotes

## LOS AMIGOS:

### Por la superación de la Etnia Negra

A group of friends decided to join forces to work on the rescue of values, customs and cultural traditions bequeathed to us through our ancestors. These have been displaced by others, thus losing a large part of our Black Heritage. We are evaluating all these forgotten traditions and values and highlighting figures as examples for future generations.



**Editor : Sandra Patterson**

**Assistant: Ines V. Sealy**

#### MEMBERS

**President  
Anthony Cox**

**Treasurer  
Fernando A. Goldson**

**Others  
Ines V. Sealy  
Sandra M. Patterson  
Roberto L. Alleyne**

Cover Page: The stamp which appears on the cover was proposed to the Canal Zone Government by Mr. George W. Westerman (r.i.p.) accepted and used as a 10 cent postage stamp for years. Permission for its continuous use was given by his grandnephew, Cecil Reynolds.

## EDITORIAL

### WHY WE ARE LATE

February is a very short and hectic month. Also, there are many things going on which delay whatever we may have done about the Newsletter. Anyway, here we are, with information for February and March.

#### A little help for the soul

**Frederick Douglass said:**

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing out the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightening. They want ocean without the awful roar of it's many waters".

## FEEDBACKS

### A NEWSLETTER IN ENGLISH? Yes, why not?

We have given in to the Spanish speaking public for too long, neglecting our culture. Our churches have changed their services to either Spanish or bilingual, there is no longer in English newspaper except for a page or two in the Star & Herald. English taught, specially in public schools, is less than average for survival. We have kowtowed a lot.

Most Blacks from West Indian descent don't realize the true importance of knowing their background. They have been absorbed by a different culture and forgotten where they came from, their parents, grandparents, etc. haven't taught them the importance of knowing their origin. "You can tell a person what to do, but you can't make them do it if they don't want to".

Most of the young ones are eager to know their roots which is based on speaking English, but no one has the time to teach them. The older ones say that their parents are to be blamed; in part, they are right, the parents and grandparents didn't realize how important speaking English would be in today's world.

The race is swift, but there is still time to conquer, the elders have to get up off their laurels and teach them, or else we are going to be an extinct culture, absorbed by the Giant.

The end result of maintaining this Newsletter in English would be, to get young people reading in English, helping them, in the process, to get better jobs, with better wages.

### ON THE HOMAGE



The majority of people with whom we speak about the homage to maestra Elma have had a child or two under her tutelage and should have some good anecdotes that we can enjoy.

Maestra Elma has had her nose to the grindstone for over 50 years, and with the help of her able staff has graduated or touched the lives of many of the professionals of today in many fields, both here and abroad.

Maybe you would like to have your anecdote or a compliment included in the biographical booklet that will be published. Your contribution of \$75.00 will get you on the inside back cover. \$60.00 on a whole page; ½ page will be \$30.00 and ¼ page \$15.00.

Be sure to set aside **Sunday, May 9, 2010** to be present at this homage, to be held at the Salon Centenario of the Panama Hotel. The fun begins at **4 p.m.** Start having your \$25.00 for the high tea and program that's going to be offered. Don't miss it.

## TRANSLATION OF SOME OF THE ALUMNI COMMENTS on Facebook

**Alex Manyoma** No talking at the table, neither shouting, you don't eat with your fingers nor do you put your elbows on the table...I was there but I don't remember my classmates.

**Marisela Itzel** Greetings alumni. The truth is I was there in pre-kinder & kinder... as well as the majority of my family! So that I don't remember much =(... But I'll visit my parents and scan some old photos!

**Leika Daniel de Grady** wao what a time... I rode with senora Gutierrez & senora Almanza,, jajaja; how many remember the audition tests & the eye tests taken upstairs in Director Elma De Payne's house... jaja

**Tanny Di. Daniel** They covered our eyes & put buzzing earphones over our ears; downstairs was the eye test, in the area where we took tipico lessons... am I right?

**Lino Ornano** Yeh.. I remember those tests. I can't believe you people remember.

**Carol J. Thomas Thompson** Mavis, I know that you have good photos of those times! Hope you dust some off.

**Richard Thompson** Hi to all, great pleasure to meet you even though it's through this medium, I hope to have you all at my home sometime, my cel is 6621-0586, call me and let's see if we can start a campaign to find all the others, a hug to all, I love you and miss you a lot, and thanks to Tanisha for giving me the info on the group, a kiss, see you soon. Hey who remembers the Feria Cristobalina at the Gringo de la Guardia gym and the halloween at the school we always saw the same movie jajajajaja, and for Christmas, a woman dressed as Santa Claus, jajajaja, what a time .

**Tanny Di. Daniel** Richard,, you gave the Director many gray hairs... the poor thing...

**Mario Maxwell** hi classmates!!!! This is and will be the best school in the whole universe. I have several photos, but I will have to look for them, don't worry, they're coming.....LOL

**Lino Ornano** Wao... you all took me back

On Facebook, there is a group Escuela San Cristobal, join up and participate in the exchange.

## OLDEN DAYS SAYINGS :

### “What if”

“**Everything happens for a wise purpose**”, Columbus conquered the Indians or Aborigines of the so called New World called “America” and brought slaves from Africa to harness the harsh climate of this New World.

Europeans never saw so much riches in their lives, like they saw in the so called New World. The other Europeans went to Africa to enslave Blacks, bringing them to the New World to get rich by selling them.

More gold and diamonds was found in Africa than any other part of the world today.

What if these events had never occurred? Where would civilization be today, God knows what he is doing. “**Everything happens for a wise purpose**”



“**While the grass is growing, the horse is starving**”.

If one has done some work for you and you don't pay on time, or promise to pay in the future, this saying applies. .

If there is alimony to be paid, and it doesn't reach on time, this saying applies. If there is a court case pending, and the hearing is postponed, those waiting on the verdict can apply this saying,

“**Nothing tried, nothing done**”. Be positive, don't say I can't do it, you must try.

“**You dress up like a potato salad or dress to 49 or dress to kill or bug down**”

Applied if you are very, very well dressed. **Dress to kill, also**, when you are dressed up but not coordinated.



“**Ah don't have much education, but much studiration.**” I'm not as dumb as you think.

“**I come to drink milk, not to count cow.**” Whatever goes on, I'll look the other way.

“**You can't have the cake and eat it too**”.

When you have a test coming up and you don't study and fail, then you shouldn't complain, since you didn't do what needed to be done.

So you fell asleep at the wheel and had a wreck because you had been night owling. “**You can't have the cake and eat it too**”. Oh oh, if you survive.

The same goes for “**Burning the candle at both ends**”. This refers to overdoing. “**Trying to spread yourself out too thin**”.

“**Practice makes perfect.**”

“**Try and try again, boy, soon you will succeed.**”

## THE UNTOLD STORY

Many of our ancestors had leased land in the Canal Zone. When the time came to stake their claim, they or their relatives were either negligent or they didn't have the money or something.

### Tell us about them.

There were many families living between Summit and Gamboa in what was called Obispo. Also down the lines between Gamboa and Gatun, their only means of transportation being the train.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THOMAS MORRISON –</b> Canal Zone Leased Land Farmer <i>by Roberto A. Alleyne</i></p> <p>Before the tons of produce were trucked from the interior to the cities of Panama and Colon, there were several dozens of West Indians farming land and providing fresh produce and ground food to the farm markets for both cities. After several hundreds of original canal diggers remained willing and unwillingly in Panama, some had no canal related employment and resourcefully dedicated themselves to farming on land provided by the Canal Zone Government. Among those, my Great Grandfather, Thomas Morrison. Although his papers were issued from Jamaica, “grandma” (my Great Grandmother) nicknamed him *<i>“Bagee”</i> – creating the inference that he was a Bajan. The US Consul declaration claimed that he returned to Colon from Jamaica on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1919, and that he had previously resided in Panama from 1912 to 1917.</p> <p>Canal Zone Government records show that he was awarded leased land of five hectares, (License No. 14 C.W.) on February 1<sup>st</sup>. 1922, on the West of the canal, South of Gatun Dam. The actual location was called Loma Bracho, however, pre-canal construction records refer to that general area as “Loma Borracho”. Grandpa agreed to pay a yearly rental to the Panama Canal for the use of the agricultural land at the sum of \$5.00 per hectare and also agreed to comply with basic sanitary rules to include a pit privy and to avoid pollution of the soil elsewhere with</p>	<p>human excrement.</p> <p>These conditions were also required for some dozens of Chinese Gardens along the major highways throughout the Canal Zone. However, the Chinese had the advantage, that their crops were guaranteed for purchase by the Commissary Division which had first call on their produce and then, after their needs were satisfied, the surplus was sold to individual purchasers, although the gardeners were to give priority on sales to residents of the Canal Zone and members of the US Armed Forces.</p> <p>On December 13, 1941, the authorities certified that Grandpa was still holding his license No. 14 and that he resided on the land with his wife Caroline, both aged 65, along with Two employees: David Zoon and his wife Martha, 64 and 53 years of age, respectively and, Norman James, age 65.</p> <p>Grandpa died on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1941. David and Norman remained on the plantation. After delivering produce to the Colon Market one day, one of them was murdered by a US sailor to steal the money he had been paid for the produce. It was said that the sailor was shipped out of the country for trial – who knows!!</p> <p><b>COMMENTS:</b> <i>We’ve heard that some Barbadians, hearing that hiring was going on in Jamaica to come to Panama, travelled to Jamaica and were contracted as if they were Jamaicans. So that, maybe, “Bagee” was a Barbadian</i></p>
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*Charles Mason on Paraiso Hill*

*By Ines V. Sealy*

I must have been less than Two years of age when I was taken to (Charles Mason) my grandfather's land behind the railroad track on the Paraiso hill. I remember us arriving at the Pedro Miguel train station, then going with my grandfather on a horse into the bushes behind there. Since he died in 1941, when I was 2, I must have been under that age. He lost his sight and I remember him living with us in Parque Lefevre before he died.



*Get Ready For the First week in August.*

**OUR TRIP TO JAMAICA WILL BE COSTING ABOUT \$1,300.00**

**Travel may include connection in Miami, which will require a US visa. A Jamaican visa will also be necessary. Let's wait until June to apply for our Jamaican visa at the Jamaican consulate here in Panama, since its only valid for Three months. Those abroad can meet us in Miami or in Jamaica.**

Follow this link to Jamaica's National Anthem [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS3\\_vxvqqh0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS3_vxvqqh0)

**FREE ENGLISH CLASSES**

THE MINISTERIO VIDA INTEGRAL an evangelical denomination, located beside the Delta Gas Station in the little cross street across from ULACIT is offering English for primary and High School students **free of charge**. Contact them at Cel.:6747-5822 Robert Robinson.

They also offer tutoring on an individual basis. Family counseling, seminars and other languages

**Scholarship announcement for Afro Descendent Young People**

The Department of International Law of the Secretariate of Judicial Affairs of the Organization of American States (OAS), is pleased to announce the present convocation for the concession of Four (4) scholarships for Afro descendent young people of the OAS member states, for them to participate in the XXXVII International Law Course: "International Law and its transformation in the Contemporary World".

For further information, enter the following web page:

[www.facebook.com .../esp/XXXVII\\_Curso\\_Derecho\\_Internacional...\\_afrodescendientes.pdf](http://www.facebook.com.../esp/XXXVII_Curso_Derecho_Internacional..._afrodescendientes.pdf)

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Please spread the word. Thank you

And don't forget the **census May 16th. 2010.**

**FACTS THAT WE SHOULD KNOW**

*By Sandra Patterson*

**The Panama Railroad:** built between 1850-55 is the world's first transcontinental railroad. There is no official count but estimate is that more than 12,000 people of various nationalities died during it's construction.

La Pulida Ave. former name of the road that leads along the back end of Corregimiento de Río Abajo starting at Ave. 12 de Octubre to Vía Domingo Díaz is since last march 2009 named **Ave. Cirilo McSween** to honor that extraordinary afropanamanian of West Indian ancestors who helped out the government during those days of the negotiations and signing of the Panama Canal treaty

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