

AfroPanamanian Newsletter



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Season's Greetings



Reduce, reuse, recycle

Anecdotes

Controversy

Poetry

LOS AMIGOS :

Por la superación de la Etnia Negra
(Incorporated to SEAPAT EVENTOS, S.A.)

A group of friends, in Panama, 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.

“For Black history to be done right, we must do it ourselves.” Edward Gaskin

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The editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by our collaborators

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 issued in 1951 as a 10 cent postage stamp, used for years. Permission for its continuous use was given by his grandnephew, Cecil Reynolds.

Editorial

ADVICE FOR LIFE

*“Hope
is being
able to see
that there is light
despite all of the darkness.”*

– Desmond Tutu

Kindness is the language the blind can see and the deaf can hear.

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November Feedback

One year after the death of Nelson Mandela (December 5, 2013), in South Africa John Clegg teaches the children "Asimbonanga" (We have not seen him). (contributed by Leticia Thomas)

We remember Nelson Mandela

These two brief videos will help you remember him, including a new video 'Asimbonanga' written by Johnny Clegg in tribute to Nelson Mandela.

<http://www.news24.com/Live/SouthAfrica/News/We-remember-Nelson-Mandela-20141202>

<http://www.news24.com/Live/SouthAfrica/News/WATCH-Amazing-new-Asimbonanga-written-by-Johnny-Clegg-in-tribute-to-Nelson-Mandela-20141205>

Fellow Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop Emeritus [Desmond Tutu](#) called on South Africans to emulate the anti-apartheid hero's example. *Tutu said:* "He taught us about the worth of a human being - all human beings. When he encountered you he never looked at your dress or your ethnicity or class. He respected everyone for who they were." ***This we should apply all over the world.***

<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Tutu-urges-South-Africans-to-follow-in-Mandelas-footsteps-20141205-2>

[Christmas Spirit, How Great Is Our God!](#) (song contributed by Cecilia Parker)

----- (contributed by Claral Thompson)

KIDS PLAYING INSTRUMENTS INSTEAD OF VIDEO GAMES - YOU WILL SMILE AND TAP YOUR FEET AND CLAP YOUR HANDS AND FEEL GOOD ALL OVER! https://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=eee4-d7FUis

----- (Contributed by Cecilia Parker)

<http://www.jacquelawson.com/viewcard.asp?code=2007134554829&source=j1999>

-----Chinese human Christmas tree (contributed by Cecilia Parker)

<https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/8oqPR5-GLuA?rel=0>

----- **DISSAPPEARING THINGS**



Board buildings, Tram car & chiva

Christmas
by Shirley Johnson

Christmas is the sweetest and
Blessed time of the year
Where hearts are received and
There's a rich atmosphere
Then you feel that Christ Jesus
Is near.

It's compelling to know
The blessing he will bestow
As the nearness of Xmas
Is shown. For we'll
Savor new things, while
The old ones are gone
'Cause the hearts for real
Giving are prone.

Yes it's really the most blessed
Time of the year; when we
Feel the Lord in songs we
Sing, Xmas carols; even hymns!

HE seems to fill just everything
At this special moment in time
Placing them so tenderly into your
Heart and mine!

**Merry Christmas and a Blessed and
Prosperous New Year**

THE YEAR

December, last on the calendar, alas! is here
A daring, unpredictable era, many might say
The ups and downs, so many crises to bear
Give thanks for being, each and every day.

Countless changes occurred, during this time
New rulers, promises of a new era, same old line
To arrest corruption, a almost accepted crime
End the garbage woes, murder, include grime.

The canal expansion works, came to a stand
The builders contracts, duly signed as planned
Backtracked raised the stakes, to then demand
Higher revenues, a bid for more cash on hand.

Urban transportation, is due a massive remake
"Diablos rojos, verdes, piratas", peoples at stake
"Metrobus at best, a much intense headache
The "metro" or subway, a boon for riders' sake.

Cost of living galloped, as a rampant wild horse
"Canasta basica" monitored, just a mere clause
Families stymied, cost of food, rent, is there a
law?
To correct this injustice, which has gone too far.

Christmas, New Years, a time to celebrate
For the blessings enjoyed, in this passing year
Misfortunes, burials, glee, a newborn to cheer
Praise our Lord, with Him, there shalt be no fear.

L. Emanuel

Ancestry by Ines V. Sealy

As I continue delving into my past, I will often present capsules of discoveries in my family tree.

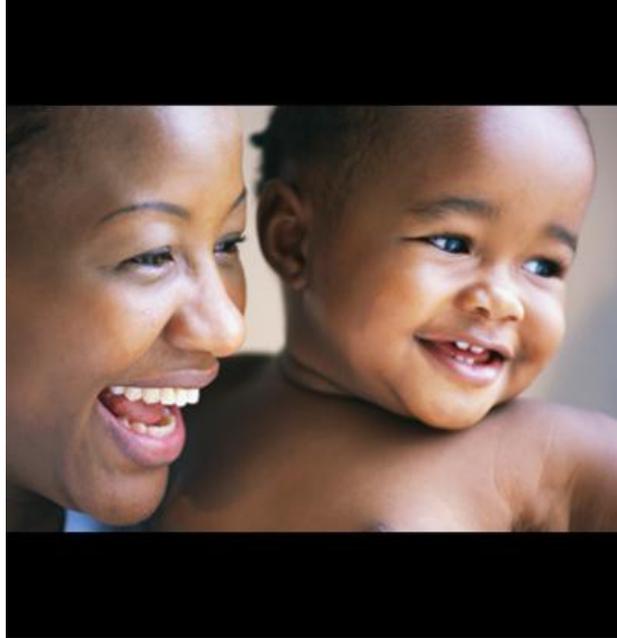
I may have mentioned that my mother was born in St. Lucia, so, on my last vacation, St. Lucia was included in the route of the Cruise. What a joy it was to be able to obtain from the Civil Status Registry of St. Lucia, my mother's birth certificate, facts about her brothers and sisters, and her mother and father's marriage. With a little more time, I probably could have done more. But thank God for small mercies. We were still able to tour the Island.

December 2014

Being Panama officially a Roman Catholic country, Mother's day is celebrated on December 8th, the date of the Immaculate Conception.

Mother's Day Celebration among Afro Caribbean descendants

by Dilsia Mariela Miller Collins-Alleyne



Out of my curiosity I decided to do a research on Mother's Day celebration among the Caribbean countries to see how our ancestors celebrated this holiday; this is what I encountered:

Countries like, Haiti, Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, Dominican Republic, celebrate Mother's Day in the month of May same as the United States of America.

When looking up information on the history of Mother's Days, even in the local newspaper of these Caribbean countries, they make reference of Anna Jarvis, daughter of Ann Reeves Jarvis who following her mother's death in 1905, conceived a Mother's Day as a way to honor the sacrifices mothers made for their children.

I learned that in May 1908 she organized the first official Mother's Day celebration at a Methodist church in Grafton, West Virginia (USA), it's said, that day thousands of people attended a Mother's Day event at a Wanamaker's retail store in Philadelphia. The celebration was successful, so Mrs. Jarvis decided that it should be placed on the national holiday calendar, she stated that holidays in America were based on male achievements, after a massive campaign urging the adoption of a special day honoring motherhood.

By 1912 many states, towns and churches had adopted Mother's Day as an annual holiday. She had even established a mother's day International Association to promote the cause. In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson officially established the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

I kept reading and found that among the Haitian community, Mother's Day is one of the most important holidays and it's celebrated in May during the Haitian Heritage Month.

In Barbados, they honor motherhood, Mothers, grandmothers, stepmothers and foster mothers. It is not a national holiday, but it's one of the most celebrated days.

In Guyana In 2012 a mother of the year was selected, they look for someone with values and committed to the children's education.

(cont.)

(Cont.)

For Jamaica I highlight this **poem** that talks, teaches and makes us proud of our Caribbean moms. It's called:

A Jamaican Child's Mother's Day Tribute

By Kerri-Ann M. Smith. Published May 28, 2006

Shi used to seh, Children should be seen and never heard; and pickeney fi min' dem business.

And wi used to shut wi mout And listen. Mama did love wi! Shi taught us wisdom and patience.

Shi used to seh, Come tan up inna di kitchen and watch what mi doin. One day it aggo come een handy. And wi used to push up wi mout And watch and learn. Mama did love wi! Shi taught us how to be independent.

Shi used to seh, Wi fi listen to wi teacha. And if wi get beaten Shi aggo beat wi two time pon top a it. And we used to behave and show respect. Mama did love wi!. Shi taught us discipline

Shi used to seh, Wi fi study wi school work and read til it kill wi, and if wi neva dweet she used to cuff wi inna wi head. And wi used to read and read til wi yeye dem sore. Mama did love wi! Shi taught us the value of an education.

Shi used to seh, Wi fi lef grown people tings alone and if wi come inna har house Wid any young baby, Shi woulda beat wi til wi sof'. And wi used to fraid fi even look pon a bwoy too hard. Mama did love wi!. Shi taught us to respect ourselves.

Some ah wi madda come and gone. Some ah wi madda dem still here. Noh matta how much beatin'. Noh matta how wi did poor. Noh matta how shi hard wi childhood was, wi still deh love wi mama more and more Mama wi love yuh!

Throughout the Caribbean they will organize presentations with bands in a Gala extravaganza. **The Mighty Sparrow** and other artists are also included in the presentations.

A Community Mother's Award black-tie brunch and reception. Or a Mother of the year selection. Aside from the evening festivities moms are pampered with a Spa Brunch, Momi and Me spa packages that include facials, manicures or pedicures, full body aromatherapy etc.

Other traditions on this day are cards, baskets of flowers and gift giving, church going, family lunches and dinners, as well as Sunday outings at various parks and beaches across the islands.

THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

Ines V. Sealy 12/26/14

Preparations, most of the year,
savings for the season
but nowhere in the air,
is the reason for the season.

Repairs have to be made
in time for the month of December
to be sure that on that day,
everything is ready for the members,



Family, friends and neighbors
invited to taste the goodies
prepared many days before
to be presented at the parties.

But, have we thought of Jesus?
His b'day we supposedly celebrate.
His blood, willingly he gave us,
to us save from sins; deliberate.

Think of him, love him, serve him.
He is the reason for the season.

The Dark

by Luis Greenidge Barker 11/20/2014

I

At first there was only dark
Suddenly a small circle of lite
Which gave me a view of a group of lions
Peacefully sleeping, as cats love to do

II

The circle turned into a square
And I saw the herd of gazelles
Running and jumping restlessly,
Displaying their unmistakable tones of
cream and brown

III

The square opened completely
And I found myself surrounded with huts
Made out of canes and clay
Perfectly coned shaped roof, made of
branches and straws

IV

The women with their children tied to their
back
Were cutting the wheat while singing
And making beautiful sounds of some
melody
I could not understand, but need not to

V

One of them looked at me, giving me a
graceful smile
Disclosing two rows of pearl white teeth
So perfect that it seem like a sculpture
Sculpted by a very special angel

VI

Her lovely deep black skin, could only be
compared with a panther
Skin so smooth and beautiful
Forcing silk and velvet
To lower their heads in envy and shame

VII

The sunlite began to move away
Giving space to the dusk and the dancing fire lite
Once again the beautiful sound of music so loud
It could be heard at a very far distance

VIII

As the music took over, dancing ladies jumped in
the center,
Laughing and movement perfectly synchronized,
While the fire gigantically reflected their shadow
Against the round huts.

IX

The joy of the moment and the sound of the drums
Made way into my body, heart and soul
Giving me a floating sensation
Since I was drunk with joy and happiness

X

Through the shadows I saw that graceful smile
again
And it finally came clear to me, that somehow
Someway I had been transported to family past
And I was looking at my great, great, greatest
mother

oo0oo

Short shorts

by Ines V. Sealy 2/12/2014

Nowadays women are bent on
showing as much as they can:
short shorts, short skirts, belly-out
sheer materials, you name it.

Where did decency go?
Shorts are not bad
sometimes they serve the purpose,
but not for a fad.

Some are even more decent
than the skirts & dresses women sway
leaving more skin to the view of the gents
But, there's a time & place for them anyway.

Let's Rescue Panama

By Ines V. Sealy 12/24/14

Now that the government has changed and accounts are being revised everywhere they touch, puss spouts out. No wonder other countries got the impression wrong.

The Republic of Panama is not, after all, "under the table and through the back door". That is what the new government has to prove: Nothing is done "under the table and through the back door".

Confidence in the country's government has to be restored after Martinelli's foray. Therefore, transparency in actions are the order of the day

Laws that have loop holes should be revised and covered to straighten out shady actions done by some and by others ordered.

Appointed officials should follow rules taking care to do what's right, showing imparciality in their judgements, promoting equality for everyone, and not might.

<h1>Happy Kwanzaa</h1>	
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*Kwanzaa seeks to enforce a connectedness to African cultural identity, provide a focal point for the gathering of African peoples, and to reflect upon the **Nguzo Saba, or the seven principles**, that have sustained Africans.*

It is celebrated December 26 through January 1.

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Christmas Recipes (taken from *Recipes from the West Indian Cuisine*) published by St. Christopher's Episcopal Church.

<p style="text-align: center;">Sorrell</p> <p>Ingredients:</p> <p>Sorrell Ginger clove cinnamon stick water sugar</p> <p>Procedure: Pick sorrell (remove seeds) wash petals and set aside. In enough water boil ginger, cinnamon and clove for about 30 minutes. Then add sorrell and continue boiling for 10 minutes, then remove from the hear, cool and strain and sweeten to taste. Serve ice cold.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yucca Pone</p> <p>Ingredients:</p> <p>½ pound melted margarine 6 pounds yucca grated 2 grated coconuts 2 cups brown sugar 2 Teaspoons cinnamon powder 1 Teaspoon clove powder 1 ½ Teaspoons nutmeg powder 2 Teaspoons vanilla 10 cups water</p> <p>Procedure: Mix coconut, yucca, sugar and 4 cups of water, mix thoroughly. Add remaining ingredients placed in greased and floured pan. Baked in oven at 350° for approximately 1 hour or until well done. Let cool.</p>
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