

AfroPanamanian Newsletter



English opens doors. Read the Newsletter.

No.11 Vol. I

December 2010

Donation

Merry Christmas



Controversy

Anecdotes

Poetry

LOS AMIGOS :
Por la superación de la Etnia Negra

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.

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

EDITORIAL

IT'S CHRISTMAS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS

AND

***MAY THE NEW YEAR BRING
LOVE, HAPPINESS,
JOY AND ALL GOOD THINGS***

A Special treat for you:, don't miss it
(please copy and paste)

<http://www.creativeminorityreport.com/2010/11/awesome-pop-up-hallelujah-chorus-at.html>

**Get your bound autographed copy of the *AfroPanamanian Newsletter*
at our anniversary celebration on January 15, 2011. Relate your anecdotes
at this informative and entertaining event.**

FEEDBACK (from our November issue)

*We are getting lots of oral feedback on the Newsletter. We thank everyone who feels that what we are doing is worthwhile. What we would be elated about is the assignment to students of homework based on the Newsletter. **That** would make the whole effort more worthwhile.*

---Hi Ines

I enjoyed reading the newsletter, it would have been nice if you gave some background on Foster Bournes, since a lot of our people do not know his background.

Cecil V. Reynolds S.

---Thanks Inez, (*I spell it Ines*)

I read the entire newsletter with great enthusiasm and interest. It is true that West-Indians were always a part of this country since its independence from Colombia. The presence of Africans in Panama goes back even further. Anthropologist traces our strong presence on the isthmus 'before Columbus' and certainly during the Spanish and Portuguese exploration/exploitation of the Americas. I hope at sometime down the road the AfroPanamanian Newsletter will provide insights of this history with your readers.

I must also say...I really like the popular 'feel' and 'voice' of the Newsletter. It genuinely captures the 'people's' authentic experiences, insights and wisdom and most importantly encourages them to share them in a way that creates a village/ community discussion'. This distinguishes the Newsletter and you should make every attempt to keep it so...

Take care, **Butch**

-----Thank you for sending me a copy of the newsletter and for your use of the excerpt.

Stay strong.... Stay well...

Pa'lante siempre

Un abrazo \

Carlos (Russell).

---Great effort in order to preserve our heritage. Congratulations. There was a saying I heard from my greatgrandmother: "**that pickney cry so much that he make bawl go to church**". Carlos Smith

---Watch Soul Train, courtesy of: Carlos Garnett <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6q5-xPbpE00>
(please copy and paste)

---Dear Ines,

Thank you for the informative and timely reproduction of our past contribution to our native home in the form of the Afro Panamanian Newsletter.

The untold story is finally receiving its just due. Please continue, along with the rest of the staff, to bring us the missing pages which fills in the blanks of our history and life as legitimate Panamanians.

Many Blessings!

Dr. Roland Edwards

---PANAM Network is proud to share with the results of its continuing efforts to make a difference in the lives of needy children in the City of Colon... held at St Joseph's Church on October 24, 2010 in Colon.

Looking at the faces of the children and their parents tells the story of why we believe there is hope for folks in Colon, if only we dare to try and be the difference they need.

During the serving of refreshments after the award ceremony, one of the parents approached me and quietly said that she did not finish her secondary education and has restarted her efforts to complete her fourth year. **What we are doing, and seeing her son as a winner is such an incentive for her to complete her education** - this time. Her face told the story more than her words!

It is all possible because of your financial and moral support as well as your prayers. If you have a few dollars laying around or have recently won the lottery, keep us in mind. *Contributions can be made on line at www.panamnetwork.com*

Thank You!

Jorge Brathwaite President PANAM Network

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OLDEN DAYS SAYINGS:

Coming from “back-a-yonder” with “one hand in front and one behind” **she is talking about** “top notch” stores from which to make her purchases as if she were not “in need”. **Thinking that** “if your eyes don’t see your heart won’t leap” and “what you don’t know won’t hurt you” **she is trying to fool everybody and making a “poppyshow” of herself. But some of us know that she arrived here with her “two long hands” so we can’t be fooled. We won’t “keep malice” with her, only “chalk it up to experience” and hope that she doesn’t get “in the family) way” while she is fooling herself. “As long as there’s life there’s hope” that she will “wake up and smell the smoke”.**

Remember these?

“Lawks!” me ears ringin’, somebody talking me name. I have to bite me tongue, so them bite them own tongue and stop talking me name. Brrr! My blood run cold. Somebody walk ovah me grave.

“Don’t sit on the table, you won’t get married.” “Don’t sweep my foot, I want to get married.” “Your mother don’t dead yet, take your hands off your head.”

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Preparation for Christmas*By Ines V. Sealy*

Clean this place. I want to see it “spick & span” when I get back. Even if you have to use “dutch cleanser”. Remember, next week is Christmas and your father has to “shellac the floor”. I’m going to need all the baking pans. Make sure the oven is clean. We have to put the leaf (extension) in the dining table (this mahogany table was round when it sat Four people, with the leaf, it sat Six to Eight people).

A night or two before Christmas the mixing bowl comes out and the batter for the plain and fruit cake (fruits steeped in brandy for as long as a year) is prepared and baked, probably all night. And Christmas Eve the ham is being baked, meanwhile, Daddy is shellacking the floor, putting the boards from block to block to walk on so as not to get stuck to the shellacked floor. In some homes it would be putting down the “congoleum”.

Christmas morning, bright and early, Ma is preparing the Cocoa tea, ham & eggs, egg nog from scratch: eggs from the chickens down in the yard, Carnation milk, Domino sugar, nutmeg, the hand held egg beater from the commissary, warm nip stout from the Chinese shop, whip it up to a froth. Sit to the table and have a whooping breakfast, that is, after Daddy comes back from the 6:00 a.m. Shepherd’s parade.

MAMA HAD ENOUGH*By Melvin Brown*

*White wash, the old bunch of you—
pure white wash, said a Barbadian Woman
to a Jamaican Man.*

*Grandma, Tilly and Me
come quick, said Papa gasping,
it don’t take much to see
Papa steam up!*

*Two hours and a scream
was the complete tale of a fist fight
at the Gold roll fountain.*

*Tilly cried, she heard Papa
had lost his job- while turning
a Caucasian behind all kind of colors...*

*But fo right now Mama felt good,
it was Sunday and the Lord will provide
Because Mama had enough
for coconut rice and chicken!*

THE UNTOLD STORY

There are so many wonderful memories that we all shared when we were youngsters back in the "good old days". I will love to share some of mine with your readers. CG

GROWING UP IN PARAISO

By Carlos Garnett

Growing up in the wonderful community of Paraiso, Canal Zone was a life full of joy, happiness, and fun.

We had the **Clubhouse** where we would go to buy our favorite treats, such as Rickey, [*bread pudding*] Mamallena, Cinnamon bun, cookies, soda, Butterfinger chocolate bar, bread & cheese, ice cream, etc. It was the young folks' meeting place especially when there would be a good movie on that night. [*the theatre was a part of the Supply Division, which also included the Clubhouse and Commissary*]

Going to the movies was one of the highlights in our lives. We would go to the Clubhouse and get our snacks for the movies. Some would buy the bread and cheese and take out the middle of the bread, stuffing it with cheese and chasing that down with a soda or Rickey. I used to love my cup cakes and soda [*soda and rickey were served from the soda machine like we see at McDonald's, but it was operated with a handle like the "one arm bandit" in the casinos*]. Usually when the movies were over, everybody would go their separate ways and some of us would go off somewhere with our girl friends or boy friends to [*do some necking*] pet.

There would be small groups walking home independently of the others, that is, when they had not seen a horror movie. I can still remember two movies which caused everybody to walk home together, that was when we saw the **Creature from the Black Lagoon** and the **The Thing**. Everybody was scared after seeing those movies, so everyone walked home close to each other. There were others but those two were the most memorable of all.

LOCAL –RATE LIFE ON THE CANAL ZONE

By Ricardo "Butch" Millett

It is common knowledge among us, and we always say it...our life on the Canal Zone was unique in many ways. The larger historic events that marked the 19th century world and specifically American politics as it assumed its place as an imperialist power and purveyor of racial theories on the superiority of the 'Caucasian' played itself out in the creation of the Panama Canal Zone.

The 'builders of the Panama Canal', and their progeny experienced a life of 'racial segregation and discrimination' sanctioned and legitimated by law worst than any Southern (or Northern) American state. We got it from all sides of the Canal Zone experience (internally on the zone, externally in Spanish speaking Panama). The cauldron of hate, prejudice, systemic and personal racial discrimination spewed its ugly venom on our great-grandparents, grandparents, and parents whose dogged strength and wisdom alone kept us inoculated as reasonably possible.

Ours is a remarkable history of not only surviving but also striving in the ugliest manifestations of a racist government. Much wisdom needs to be captured and passed along to our children and all of the 'least advantaged' suffering the indignities of highly systemic policies that limit opportunities based on racial/ethnic factors.

This is not Carlos' responsibility but also ours collectively. (Kudos to Carlos Russell, Melva Lowe, Dr. Maloney and all the other writers, scholars, commentators, bloggers and conscious folks among us who have already embarked on this path...and please forgive me if I have not explicitly mentioned your name...you are in my heart and you are the spirit that now moves me.)

"We had the blade and they had the handle": to rebel against them, at the time, would have been unproductive

THE 50's & 60's

I Remember the '50s

This was written in 1957 while I was still in High School

By Ines V. Sealy

A Thousand Miles Away from here and *In the Still of the Night*, our friend, *Long Tall Sally*, decided to take a walk to the *Heartbreak Hotel*. On the way, she met *Jim Dandy*, a *Soldier Boy*, who thought it a good idea to accompany her.

The rain began to fall but because of her insistence to *Share* the shelter, *A Miracle in the Rain* did not occur. They quarreled. It ended leaving Sally *All Shook Up*. He began to apologize, "I'm Sorry", he said, "Please forgive me *Baby Baby*, *I Promise to Remember* that you're *One in a Million*; also that *Love is a Clown*, and we are *Out in the Cold Again*."

"I'm Ready" she said, "to go into the hotel now." She spoke to him as they entered. "I'm so Happy, and I knew from the Start that this place would be *Goody Goody*."

The music from the juke box in the hotel was loud and enticing, so they started to *Rip it Up*. *Over and Over Again* they fed the juke box *Just Because* they wanted to be *Slipping and Sliding* so.

Tired and fagged out, they came out of the hotel, and trying to cool off, took a plane at the airport just down the road, in which they flew away to their *Paper Castle on Blueberry Hill*, where they got married and never returned until "*When Rock 'n' Roll Came to Trinidad*."

So Long, See you Later Alligator. This is the tale of the *Creation of Love* which ended in *Teenage Love* for grownups.

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ABOUT CLUBS

By Fernando A. Goldson

Since in the 40's and 50's, being a member of a social club was one heck of a presentation card, in the late 1950's, a group of teenagers from the San Miguel and Calidonia area of Panama City, formed a social and sport club which they called *Elegance*.

The club sponsored a few small night-of-funs in Rio Abajo and Carrasquilla. But then it became

JAZZ MESSENGERS

In the early 1960's the *Elegance Club* was revamped with new members and a change of name to the *Popular Jazz Messengers*, including: *Ricky (Tully) Richards*, *Calvin Thomas*, *Juan Vidal*, *Errol Dunn*, *Rolando (Primo) Cousins*, *Claude (Cande) Walker R.I.P.*, *Albert Earl*, *Carlos (Baby) Walter* and *Sherlock Walker* came into being.

Jazz Messengers in 1964 promoted their First big event: a floor show and dance at *Hotel El Panama*, *Salon Bella Vista* featuring the *Comets Combo* from *Paraiso*.

1965, still remembered by many, they oversold a boat ride at *Pier 18*. One may ask, what is the deal? they had done nothing different than other clubs. The big deal is, they were ahead of their time. None of the members was over 20 years of age, at the time.

Congratulations to an outstanding Afrodescendant!! New York Times Article, published on November 17, 2010. (please copy and paste)

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/18/arts/18director.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=Historian%20will%20direct%20schomburg%20center%20in%20harlem&st=cse

Did you invite Him?

By Sandra Patterson

Once again it's that time of the year... December when everyone seems to be going crazy preparing for the big day and the coming new year.

Houses go under a complete transformation: paint, curtains, furniture and whatever needs and doesn't need to be changed or fixed. Decorations are put up, fruits are soaked in liquor for the cake, presents are bought and put under an adorned tree while children await Santa's arrival.

Activities in the kitchen begin at least one week before with cake baking, sorrel is made, rum punch and ginger beer too, then the ham and turkey are baked. On the eve of "D" day it's cooking time: Ma is in her domain, and you better keep out of her way if you can't give a helping hand.

Finally the day arrives; relatives and friends come over for dinner, Ma, proud of her skills, receives congratulations, gifts, hugs and kisses are shared out, toasts are made, good wishes given to each and all.

But what do we celebrate?

Oh it's Christmas!

And who is the honoree?

With all the hustle and bustle it seems like we have forgotten the real meaning of this season and to invite the most important person in, the honoree, the son of God to the big celebration.

Christmas is not only another celebration, it has a very profound meaning: to bring the honoree into our hearts, to let him be our guide in every way.

The sharing of gifts, hugs and all those things we do for Christmas, is a way to show that God gave us, so we can give. For mankind to reflect over his lifestyle and get back on the right track. Amen.

TOTAL HONESTY or THE GOOD THIEF

Taken from the Darwin Awards sent out on the e-mail:

As a female shopper exited a New York convenience store, a man grabbed her purse and ran. The clerk called 911 immediately, and the woman was able to give them a detailed description of the snatcher. Within minutes, the police apprehended the snatcher. They put him in the car and drove back to the store.

The thief was then taken out of the car and told to stand there for a positive ID. To which he replied, "Yes, officer, that's her. That's the lady I stole the purse from."

Come and Celebrate Kwanzaa with us

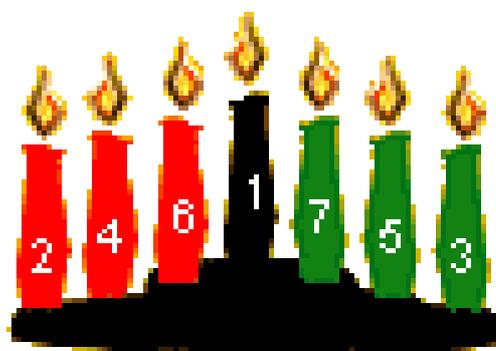
Bring a Platter to share and \$5 Sunday Dec. 26, 2010 2-6 p.m. Rio Abajo Methodist Church hall

Confirm at 221-4276 or afropanamaniannewsletter@gmail.com

The Seven Principles (Nguzo Saba) of Kwanzaa are:

- **Umoja** (oo-MOH-jah): **Unity**
Success starts with Unity. Unity of family, community, nation and race.
- **Kujichagulia** (koo-jee-chah-goo-LEE-ah): **Self-Determination**
To be responsible for ourselves. To create your own destiny.
- **Ujima** (oo-JEE-mah): **Collective work and responsibility**
To build and maintain your community together. To work together to help one another within your community.
- **Ujamaa** (oo-jah-MAH): **Collective economics**
To build, maintain, and support our own stores, establishments, and businesses.
- **Nia** (NEE-ah): **Purpose**
To restore African American people to their traditional greatness. To be responsible to Those Who Came Before (our ancestors) and to Those Who Will Follow (our descendants).
- **Kuumba** (koo-OOM-bah): **Creativity**
Using creativity and imagination to make your communities better than what you inherited.
- **Imani** (ee-MAH-nee): **Faith**

Believing in our people, our families, our educators, our leaders, and the righteousness of the African American struggle



On the seventh and final day of Kwanzaa all candles in the Kinara are lit.

When the night is done, the family takes one last drink from the Unity cup and the candles are extinguished. Kwanzaa is over till next year.

(taken from the official Kwanzaa site)

Merry Christmas

I'm sending this note to advise you
That taxes have taken away—
The things I found most essential
My reindeer, My Workshop, My Sleigh.

Now I'm making my rounds on a donkey
He's old, crippled, and slow
So if you don't see me Christmas
I'm out on my ass in the snow.

Gas Line Cards

