

AfroPanamanian Newsletter



English opens doors. Read the Newsletter

www.afropanameniannewsletter.mex.tl

We encourage our web readers to feel free to use our links to find scholarships, jobs, grants and others.

No.3 Vol. III

April 2012

Donation

*Happy Easter
Footprints in the Sand*



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.
“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

Just a Reminder

When we decided to publish a newsletter in English, beginning in 2010, it was to be done using the latest in technology, to print each number and sell copies at a reasonable price which we felt could be twenty five cents, even offering the first edition free of charge.

But then came our first dilemma: Mathematically this does not work because the cost of printing is way over the stated sale price.

After debating we decided to use internet communication, for the advantage it offers of a wider range of public and being able to present it in color.

For those who, not only don't have, but know nothing about computers, hard copy is still available.

*For the time being we will not specify a price but ask for your reasonable donation **per number.***

*But we have **bound** together each year's issues. We now have the 2010 and 2011 bound volumes which are available at \$20.00 per copy. The cost of binding went up, like everything else in this country.*

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

Feedback (from Feb-Mar Newsletter)

<p>AfroPanamanian organization in Colon can be found at this site: http://www.fundacionetnianeacol.org/ (Taken from El Condor)</p>	<p>When you have a little more space please include in religious guides of our churches the Rev. John Spalding of the Anglican church in Rainbow city on the Atlantic side and maybe mention the age of Christ Church by the sea where close members of my family attended for many years (mother, grandparents uncles etc., my uncle Granville still attends mass every Sunday and he is 95 years old (young) "Miguel B. Charris D."</p>
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----- Barbados Diaspora Conference scheduled for August 7 - 10, 2012

If you are of Barbadian descent, this may be of interest to you!

In October 2011, a delegation was sent by the Government of Barbados to meet with Panamanians of Barbadian descent and friends of Barbados. The purpose was to generate interest in the Barbados Network Consultation 2012, the second Barbados Diaspora Conference scheduled for August 7 - 10, 2012, in Barbados, at the Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre; with educational, community and social activities starting on August 2, 2012. The timing of the Barbados Diaspora Conference coincides with the annual "**Crop Over**" festivities, therefore, enabling attendees to participate in both events.

Subsequently, an official invitation has been extended to the Panamanian group to attend this Conference, through Mrs. Sheila Wilkinson, who is acting as a liaison. The invitation is also extended to all Panamanians of Barbadian descent and friends residing in New York and efforts are being looked into to organize an excursion. This would be a great opportunity to get acquainted and reconnected with our "Bajan" roots and, maybe, even with some long-lost relatives and friends living in Barbados.

If you are interested in making this trip, please contact Mrs. Claudia Dunn-Moodie as soon as possible at 718-291-6115. Also, please feel free to share this information with all who may be interested in participating in the Conference and joining us on this occasion.

<p>Hi Inez, Have been enjoying newsletter. Really enjoyed the rhymes we use to say and play as kids. I have two grandnieces. I am going to share with them. Also the histories of different ministers. They all should be in the museum. By the way it would have been nice to have put dad's picture in if I had known. There is also a picture of my grandad Rev. Sealey a forerunner of the UGG in the museum. Good way to preserve the history. Keep up the good work. Judith Stewart Sealey (Parrish.)</p>	<p><i>Thank you Judith:</i> <i>If you can send me the pictures, at a later date we'll use the photos for another report, for instance the Salem Soup Kitchen, if you have any info or can get it for us.</i></p>
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Get your bound copy of the AfroPanamanian Newsletter (see page 3)

It was our intention to continue charging 15.00 per bound copy of the AfroPanamanian Newsletter, but, like everything else in Panama, the cost of printing went up, so the price is now \$20.00.

Olden Days Sayings:

<p>“Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise” “Rise and shine” “Put that in your pipe and smoke it” “He has a roving eye” “Out of sight ... out of mind”</p>	<p>“When the cat is out, the rats take possession” “Fly by night”= not genuine” “keep the ghost out of your pocket” “mash mouth” “At your beck and call” “Kerosene radio”</p>
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THE GOOD OLD DAYS

POEM on clotheslines... (thanks to Miriam Wilson)

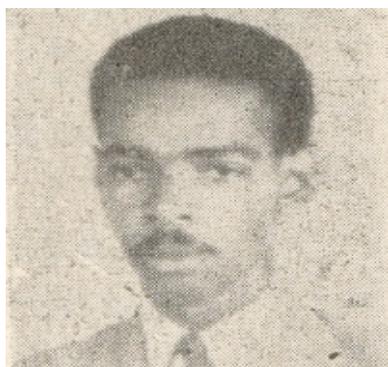


A clothesline was a news forecast, To neighbors passing by,
 There were no secrets you could keep, **When clothes were hung to dry.**
 It also was a friendly link, For neighbors always knew
 If company had stopped on by, To spend a night or two.
 For then you'd see the "fancy sheets", And towels upon the line;
 You'd see the "company table cloths", With intricate designs.
 The line announced a baby's birth, From folks who lived inside,
 As brand new infant clothes were hung, So carefully with pride!
 The ages of the children could, So readily be known
 By watching how the sizes changed, You'd know how much they'd grown!
 It also told when illness struck, As extra sheets were hung;
 Then nightclothes, and a bathrobe too, Haphazardly were strung.
 It also said, "On vacation now", When lines hung limp and bare.
 It told, "We're back!" when full lines sagged, With not an inch to spare!
 New folks in town were scorned upon, If wash was dingy and gray,
 As neighbors carefully raised their brows, And looked the other way.
 But clotheslines now are of the past, For dryers make work much less.
 Now what goes on inside a home, Is anybody's guess!
 I really miss that way of life, It was a friendly sign
 When neighbors knew each other best... By what hung out on that line.

THE UNTOLD STORY

West Indian Descendant Researchers, Writers, Historians, etc.

Armando “Lele” Fortune was born in Panama to West Indian parents, February 16, 1921. A graduate of the National Institute and as an Economist from the University of Panama, most of his life was dedicated to the research of the history of Panamanians of West Indian Descent, their trials and tribulations and unrequited contributions to the development of the country of their birth.



He did some teaching in Government schools, worked as the private secretary to one of Panama's renown poets, *Ricardo J. Alfaro*. Besides working as a journalist at the “La Nacion” newspaper he was also a member of the Panamanian Academy of History.

Most of his works, some of which had been published from time to time by the Lottery Magazine “*Loteria*” include: *Los negros en Panamá*, *Fray Bartolomé de las Casas y la esclavitud del negro*, *Los negros cimarrones en Tierra Firme y su lucha por la libertad* were compiled by Gerardo Maloney into “*OBRAS SELECTAS*”, published in 1994.

We lost him on the 26th of March, 1979.

His father, Fortune, was better known for his ability to deal with the government offices in his trade as a “**Mango Tree**” lawyer.

The AfroPanamanian rights activist, sociologist, poet, civic leader, President of the II Congress of Culture of the Americas, Honorary President of the Congress of the Panamanian Negro, First Black Director of the Government TV station, Director of the Department of Sociology of the Univ. of Panama, **Gerardo Maloney** was born in Panama, of West Indian descendant parents, in 1945.

After studying at the Autonomous University of Mexico on a scholarship, he entered the academic staffs of the University of Panama and the Sta. Ma. La Antigua University in the City of Panama.

He has been the author of poems which he wrote both while abroad and at home. Of many articles and books, even movies and documentaries, all on the subject of Blacks

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Leticia C. Thomas Brereton has set out to analyze the Panamanian Creole English as portrayed in her writings and the publication of her book, *DICTIONARY OF PANAMANIAN ENGLISH*.

She has studied vastly in the United States of America: McGill University, Columbia University, Long Island University and New York University.

She says that the English spoken in Panama is a Creole because it has “multilingual roots”: English, Spanish, French, African (various parts).

Although this Creole is used in several parts of Panama: Panama City, Colon and Bocas del Toro, these words may have diverse meanings according to usage and area.

She analyzes the history of the West Indian immigration to Panama from a different perspective to the regular historian who goes to the chronological facts. She goes to the influence on the country from the linguistic point of view.

THE UNTOLD STORY (cont.)

Alberto Smith Fernandez



Born and educated in Panama City, Architect Alberto Smith Fernandez, in his adult life, researched, organized, participated and lectured in congresses, seminars, meetings, groups, looking for ways to make life more equitable and just for impoverished people and the Black Ethnic community in general.

A graduate of the University of Panama, he worked for the Ministry of Public Works for eight years (1956-1964), from then until his death in (1988?), he was employed by the Directorate of Engineering and Housing Division of the US. Army as Chief of the Construction Inspection Branch, where he had entered as a Construction Inspector.

Besides he was co-partner with Leroy Rogers in their Architectural business "Rogers & Smith" designers of the first St. Christopher's Auditorium and other important structures.

Along with Mr. Walter Smith, another one of our intellectuals dedicated to the improvement of life for Blacks, although from a spiritual venue, Alberto organized the First Black Poetry Recital in Panama in 1974.

He also participated in many other poetry readings, besides serving as judge in recitals held by the Department of Artistic Expressions (DEXA) of the University of Panama. Toward this goal he spent many hours researching the Black contribution to this country, in libraries here in the City and abroad.

Haydee Beckles is the strong person who having been physically affected at birth causing a physical deficiency found the will to excel.



She was born on October 8, 1956 at the Gorgas Hospital, at which time the use of forceps caused her brain damage and doubts as to whether she would survive. Three days after birth she was operated on. As far as they were concerned her survival was a miracle, but, this survival was not without daily problems: health problems, ambulatory problems, respiratory problems, academic problems, community problems, home problems, Ethnic problems, you name it.

Just before adulthood, after she had learned to write, she began to write her experiences down in poetry. These poems and her autobiography she published in 1993 in Spanish: "*MEMORIAS DE ALGUIEN QUE QUIZO CAMBIAR*".

And she later published, "*DE BLANCO A NEGRO: LAS COSAS QUE ME PASAN A MI*" which she wrote for persons with no handicaps, to show that although things happen to her, they also happen to others at a different level. Written for people who say "I can't do it".

"Where there is a will, there is a way"
LOS AMIGOS are highlighting figures as examples for future generations.
HAYDEE IS ONE TO FOLLOW.

OPPORTUNITIES (a repeat from the November 2011 Newsletter)

1. Wake Forest University has an opportunity for minority students to attend its MBA program for FREE, and so far, the response has been very poor. Please pass along this opportunity to your friends, families. This is a great school and a tremendous opportunity to attend a top graduate school. See the website below, the contact person is: Derrick S. Boone, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Marketing, Rm. 3139 Worrell Professional Center, Babcock Graduate School of Management - Wake Forest University_ WINSTON_SALEM N.C 27109-8738 email: derrick.boone@mba.wfu.edu or visit www.wfu.edu phone# toll free (866) 925-3622
2. Black Male Teachers needed. Do you know any Black Males who are seniors in high school who want to go to college out of state for FREE? The CALL ME MISTER program offered by 4 historical black colleges in South Carolina, Benedict College, Chaflin University, Morris College and South Carolina State University - visit the www.callmemister.clemson.edu/index.html details online application or call 1.800.640.2657
3. Harvard University is offering free tuition to families of HONOR STUDENTS and their income is less than \$125,000 per year. Visit www.fao.fas.harvard.edu or call 617.495.1581.
4. Syracuse University School of Architecture is desperately seeking young women and men of color interested in pursuing a 5 yr. professional degree in Architecture. Contact: Mark Robbins, Dean School of Architecture, 201 Slocum Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244-1250 (315) 443-256 www.soa.syr.edu/index.php
5. A free pair of eyeglasses from Target for any child ages 12 and under brings a valid prescription for glasses from their doctor. You can find stores with optical departments at www.target.com
6. APPLY NOW - If you have/know young adults between the ages of 18-31 with a High School Diploma. Can earn up to \$100,000 and earn benefits. The Federal Aviation Association is taking application for Air Traffic Controller School visit the website: www.faa.gov/jobs_opportunities/airtrafficcontroller

[Clarification on Scholarships Offered by the US Embassy in Panama \(Mar 30 \)](#) The U.S. Government, through its Embassy in Panama, offers a wide range of scholarship and exchange opportunities for everyone from undergraduate and graduate level university students and teachers to high school students and English teachers. There are even scholarship opportunities to study within Panama for those who would like to study English. <http://panama.usembassy.gov/pr033012b.html>

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The U.S. Embassy in Panama announces new waiting time

The U.S. Embassy in Panama announces that the wait time for non-immigrant visa appointments is approximately two weeks, and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. <http://panama.usembassy.gov/pr020612.html>

FHI 360 Seeks Panamanian Partner (Jan 5)

Global development organization FHI 360 is seeking a request for proposal from a Panamanian partner for an exchange program on sports and social change. <http://panama.usembassy.gov/pr01052012.html>

Did you miss the SAMAAP Fair?



This gastronomic and cultural fair presents many West Indian foods such as: coo coo, foo foo, bun, turn over, coconut cake (chip-chip), cow foot soup, rice and peas and coconut, fish, ackee, and codfish, souze, etc.

Turning coo coo

by Ines V. Sealy

Coo coo is a cornmeal mixture which includes okra, water and salt. We feel it is a Bajan staple, but peoples migrating from Africa are also preparing it in the US. Maybe not with the same ingredients but with the same principle.

The best coo coo is the mixture that has a smooth bonding of the okra and cornmeal. Have you heard of, or eaten lumpy coo coo, or coo coo soup?

To obtain this smooth binding of ingredients, one has to be very careful when preparing the mixture. After boiling the okra and salt until the okra is soft enough to be mashed, the cornmeal is introduced. The first 15 minutes of stirring is important, neglect of these first 15 minutes can result in lumps (lumpy coo coo) that will take hours and lots of “**elbow grease**” to eliminate with the “**coo coo stick**”. That is when you have to “**turn the cornmeal**”. It also avoids the cornmeal from sticking to the bottom of the pot.

Too much water can produce coo coo soup. Dinner is ready when the “**coo coo stick**” stands tall in the center of the pot.

*Our “**coo coo sticks**” were made by our cabinetmakers: benches, kitchen cabinets, our cutting boards, scrubbing boards and bath boards, guys coming from the West Indies with their skills.*