

# AfroPanamanian Newsletter



*English opens doors. Read the Newsletter.*

No.6 Vol. I

July 2010

Donation



**Controversy**

Anecdotes

**Poetry**

## 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.



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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

#### *. Where did we go wrong?*

*Considering that most of them were very young then, coming here meant a new start in every way for our grandparents and parents. A good amount of those that came seeking jobs in the Canal Zone then under USA control, already had knowledge and experience in various trades and professions that added to the English they spoke, read and wrote enabled them to meet their goals. Others made their way in Panama City and Colon. Things weren't easy then, nor now; the biggest challenge they faced was the language but they did not give up, there was always the belief of a better tomorrow that made them keep on struggling and, while raising a family, created the foundation for the West Indian colony in this country.*

*By the mid fifties this was a respected group. The sixties came and found their offsprings (babyboomers) if not, on their way to being professionals, integrated to the development of the country.*

*With access to opportunities and intent on seeking a better life style, a good amount of our babyboomers migrated to other countries and those that stayed seem to have forgotten their origins. We have a very weak colony that others only seem to remember for its culinary skills. Is that what we are?*

*What was left out in the teaching we gave our children?*

***It is time to pick up the pieces and rebuild..***

**FEEDBACK (from our June issue)**

Great job Sandra and Ines!!

The memories were amazing, and then some. I love what you have done and am so please to be on your mailing list. Keep it coming and I will pass it on to others. Can you give us some history on quadrille dance among our elders, perhaps some photos.... Love you all.

CHA /Constance Hayes-Alleyne

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The letter so informative. How many remember using the Commissary Books?? I remember having to form the Salad Oil line in Curundu Commissary until my father or mother got there with the book in order to purchase the salad oil. LOL

Miriam

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Dear Inez,

Very interesting and thoughtout information. Wish you much success in this endeavor.

Blessings,

Dr.Roland

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Hi Ines,

Congratulations on your AfroPanamanian Newsletter!

As a cultural promoter, I must say a word on the steel drum. It is known to be the first non-electronic musical instrument developed in the XX Century, its birthplace being **Trinidad and Tobago**.

Cheers,  
Milsa

Dear Milsa:

Thanks for the correction. I admit my mistake. It was based on the old oil barrels. I was relying on my memory, but it is surely proving my age. I went to **Wikipedia**, which I should have done before, and here is an excerpt:

“**Steelpans** (also known as **steel drums** or **pan**s, and sometimes, collectively with [musicians](#), as a **steel band**) is a [musical instrument](#) originating from [Trinidad and Tobago](#)... Steelpans are built using sheet metal with a thickness between 0.8 mm and 1.5 mm. Traditionally, steelpans have been built from used oil barrels. Nowadays, many instrument makers do not rely on used steel containers and get the resonance bodies manufactured according to their preferences and technical specifications. In a first step, the sheet metal is stretched into a bowl-like shape (this is commonly known as 'sinking'). This process is usually done with several hammers, manually or with the help of air pressure...”

**Quadrille**

Here in Panama, Quadrille is coming back into vogue. With the institution of *Dia de la Etnia Negra*, social activities are once more including quadrille and maypole.

Enthusiasts like Calton Francis, The Methodist Church and SAMAAP have been encouraging their young people to practice the dance.

**Maypole**

Schools are teaching their students to wrap the maypole, and some of the adult quadrille groups are now doing the maypole.

I remember attending a Maypole dance at the end of 15 St. Rio, at Mrs. Heslop’s (the organist of St. Christopher’s Church) (Dino Nugent’s grandmother) house, at which there was a tall electric pole from which the ribbons hung, nice pastel colors to match the dress of the participant manning it. They did intricate designs. In, out, in, out, spin, to pleasant music, spider web, umbrella, etc.

This was being done by the members of the Girl’s Friendly Society (girls between the ages of 11 and 13). Alas! Ines was too young.

## OLDEN DAYS SAYINGS:

July

*Ines states:*

I had always heard of “**broke week**”, “**rainy day**”, “**Tambrand season**”, but “**Ben Johnson day**” was new to me. That phrase I heard from a relative. For her, when **things got tight**, not much around, when we couldn’t “**make ends meet**”, it was “**Ben Johnson Day**”.

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Since “**children should be seen and not heard**” and Johnny, besides being “**fidgety**” is a little “**talkamassy**”, he had to be banished when mama was conversing with the neighbor. So, neighbor would say, “come and go to the shop for me, boy”. Johnny could take as long as he wanted, to get back home. There would be no scolding for being away too long.

On the other hand, when mama sent Johnny to the shop, the warning would be, “**don’t let this spit dry before you get back here**”.

And although playing on moonlight nights was enjoyable, rules in most homes were: “**when the street lights come on you must be inside**” or “**let the sun go down on your back**”. All in all, the idea was “**Don’t let night catch you outside**”. Could we apply these sayings to our children and grandchildren these days? Would they obey?

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“**Cast your bread on the waters, someday it will come back**”

“**You never miss the water till the well runs dry**”

“**Early to bed early to rise**”

“**The early bird gets the best worms.**”

“**Time waits for no one**”

“**Belief kills and belief cures**”. Whatever you believe will affect you.

“**Kill two birds with one stone**”. To include as many errands in one outing

“**If greedy wait, hot will cool.**” No rush.

“**Chief cook and bottle washer**”. Said about someone, who, uninvited, gets involved and takes over the action.

“**Never see, come see.**” Someone who gets excited when they discover something that everyone already knows about.

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**Don’t take a “no” for an answer.**

*By Antonio Cox 4/30/2010*

We are stronger than we think. Just look back at our ancestors, coming from different regions and being placed together, they were forced to understand each other.

Today’s talk is to “**divide and conquer**”. It’s a myth, if you believe in it then it is going to be a reality. “**Not everything you read is true**”. We can be mislead easily if we don’t use logic. No one has to tell you “**what’s wrong and what’s right**” look how far we have come, the road is wide, you write your own destiny. Don’t blame anyone if it doesn’t happen how you want, you must always look back and remember where you came from, where you are and where you are going.

We can learn from others’ mistakes, don’t follow the other one’s footsteps. “**Be yourself**”, if you fall, get up and try again. Our ancestors taught us a lot. They taught us to be strong, if we use those rules in our everyday life we will be successful.

**Tell us about your experiences, both living in the Canal Zone and Panama City.** Many of our ancestors had leased land in the Canal Zone. **Tell us about those and other experiences.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Junta Femenina de Beneficencia</i></b></p> <p><i>Lic. Sandra Patterson Former member</i></p> <p><i>In 1947 the Panama Lions Club’s idea of creating a children’s hospital, made Mrs. Enith Spence get the wheels rolling for a group of West Indian descendant ladies to get together and form the Junta Femenina de Beneficencia to help out in that noble cause. The organization was created on the 3 of July of that same year and in the short space of time of 16 days, held an activity that raised the sum of one thousand nine hundred dollars (B/1,900.00) an extraordinary sum sixty years ago, that was turned over to the Lions Club at a ceremony in the President’s Palace.</i></p> <p><i>That was only the start of what became an institution in our community. During it’s Twenty-five years of existence the Ladies Welfare Group’s leadership, contributed with donations and equipment to a number of institutions such as the Bolivar Old People’s Home, Hogar de Nuestra Señora, Red Cross, the Psychiatric Hospital and others. It is very important to mention that it made possible the opening of the Rio Abajo Health Center by donating the medical equipment required for its functioning.</i></p> <p><i>Junta Femenina gave scholarships and aided students, planted trees at the University of Panama’s campus, also aided victims from fires and floods here in Panama and in the West Indies. Annually in December gave over 300 food packages to needy families. Other activities included teas, cultural programs, honored local and foreign dignitaries, and held three Debutant Balls.</i></p> <p><i>On July 3, 1972 Junta Femenina de Beneficencia celebrated its Silver Anniversary with a Ball at the Hotel El Panama, taking a final bow after a prolific journey of serving the community in many ways and ceased to function not before making a last official contribution to Panama’s Children’s Hospital.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PARQUE LEFEVRE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Translated and expanded by Ines V. Sealy</i></p> <p>Parque Lefevre came into existence through Municipal Ordinance No. 32 of April, 1938, which granted this extension of land to the ex-President of Panama, Ernesto Tisdell Lefevre, whose tenure lasted from January 30 to September 30, 1920.</p> <p>From inception it was a part of Rio Abajo, but under President Ricardo Adolfo De la Guardia, between 1944-45 it was separated.</p> <p>It is geographically divided into 3 sectors: Panama Viejo, Parque Lefevre and Ubanización Chanis. And, It <b>now</b> limits from 1<sup>st</sup> Street Parque Lefevre to the River which separates it from Juan Diaz, since the Streets between 1<sup>st</sup> St. Parque and Carrasquilla, have been added to the San Francisco Borough.</p> <p>With an extension of 6.2 km2, it extended from Dos Palmeras street to the river at Campo Lindbergh. On the north it is bordered by Rio Abajo, to the South, with Panama’s Bay, to the East is Juan Diaz, and, San Francisco to the West.</p> <p>Most of it was pasture land for milk-producing cows belonging to “Hacienda Sta. Elena”. It developed into a community from the sale of lots of land at moderate prices to low income families by his heirs over a period of time.</p> <p>The Lefevre family has built business locales along Via España which they rent, permitting the part of Lefevre which fronts on Via España to be lined with businesses. Along the Sta. Elena Ave. which divides the Panama Viejo section from the Parque Lefevre section is the Jardin de Paz Cemetery belonging to the Lefevres.</p>
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**Mt. Hope Cemetery, a memory to the Builders**  
 by **Anthony McLean H. (continued)**

**--- It was a good playground too.**

Other than tombstones, Mt. Hope was full of mango trees and crabs. Hairy mango was all over the place, number 11 was plentiful and turpentine mango was rare but available. Mango season will have us all with crocus bags filling up with mango but the green hornet, the Canal Zone cops, will be lurking in the shade to chase us away. Some people loaded up with crabs also, but I did not like that idea. During the dry season it was a very good place to skate. With the winding concrete path, the steep incline, no cars, nor buses it was just great.

## On the Social Side

<p><i>Junta Femenina Presidents (1947-1972)</i></p> <p><i>Miss Vivian Witter, (Five terms)</i> <i>Mrs. Eurel Davis</i> <i>Mrs. Dorothy Haywood</i> <i>Mrs. Paulina Boza</i> <i>Mrs. Louise Thompson</i> <i>Mrs. Zenobia Warner</i> <i>Mrs. Icelene Solomon</i> <i>Mrs. Lilia Garay</i> <i>Mrs. Germaine Henry, (Four terms)</i> <i>Miss Irma Spence</i> <i>Miss Linda Henry</i> <i>Mrs. Ambrozine Jamieson</i> <i>Mrs. Lilian Dudley</i></p>	<p><i>Lic. Sandra Patterson</i></p> <p><i>Not so long ago social life was an active one for young and not so young. There was always something going on and someplace to go: a fashion show, tea, floor show, cantata, picnic, boat ride or a dance sponsored by clubs and held at halls that belonged to various societies, hotels and others.</i></p> <p><i>These activities favored local talents and promoted internal tourism. Some were a yearly event that you didn't dare miss: Health Bureau and Altamira's visits to different towns in the interior, Concentricos pre carnival dance, Avanti's Red Top dance in Panama and Románticos' in Colon. And don't forget St. Paul's church fund raising Fiesta and St. Christopher's Garden Parties just to mention a few.</i></p>
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### **OPPORTUNITIES: (forwarded by Antony Brown)**

**SCHOLARSHIPS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS:** Though there are a number of companies and organizations donating money for scholarships to African Americans, a great deal of the money is being returned because of a lack of interest or awareness. Money shouldn't be returned to donating companies because we fail to apply for it.

Please pass this information on to family members, nieces, nephews, friends with children etc. We must get the word out that money is available.

If you are a college student or getting ready to become one, you probably already know how useful additional money can be.

(If clicking on the link doesn't work, then type in the Web site address manually.)

1) BELL LABS FELLOWSHIPS FOR UNDER REPRESENTED MINORITIES <http://www.bell-labs.com/fellowships/CRFP/info.html>

2) Student Inventors Scholarships <http://www.invent.org/collegiate> <http://www.invent.org/collegiate/>

3) Student Video Scholarships <http://www.christophers.org/> /vidcon2k.html

4) Coca-Cola Two Year College Scholarships <http://www.coca-colascholars.org/programs.html>

5) Holocaust Remembrance Scholarships <http://holocaust.hklaw.com/>

6) Ayn Rand Essay Scholarships <http://www.aynrand.org/contests/>

7) Brand Essay Competition <http://www.instituteforbrandleadership.org/IBLEssayContest-2002Rules.htm>

8) Gates Millennium=20 Scholarships (major) <http://www.gmsp.org/nominationmaterials/read.dbm?ID>

9) Xerox Scholarships for Students [http://www2.xerox.com/go/xrx/about\\_xerox/about\\_xerox\\_detail.jsp](http://www2.xerox.com/go/xrx/about_xerox/about_xerox_detail.jsp)

10) Sports Scholarships and Internships <http://www.ncaa.org/about/scholarships.html>

11) National Assoc. of Black Journalists Scholarships (NABJ) <http://www/.nabj.org/html/studentsvcs.html>

- 12) Saul T. Wilson Scholarships (Veterinary) <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mb/mrphr/jobs/stw.html>
- 13) Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund [http://www.thurgoodmarshallfund.org/sk\\_v6.cfm](http://www.thurgoodmarshallfund.org/sk_v6.cfm)
- 14) FinAid: The Smart Students Guide to Financial Aid scholarships) <http://www.finaid.org/>
- 15) Presidential Freedom Scholarships <http://www.nationalservice.org/scholarships/>
- 16) Microsoft Scholarship Program <http://www.microsoft.com/college/scholarships/minority.asp>
- 17) WiredScholar Free Scholarship  
Search[http://www.wiredscholar.com/paying/scholarship\\_search/pay\\_scholarship\\_search.jsp](http://www.wiredscholar.com/paying/scholarship_search/pay_scholarship_search.jsp)
- 18) Hope Scholarships & Lifetime Credits <http://www.ed.gov/inits/hope/>
- 19) William Randolph Hearst Endowed Scholarship for Minority Students  
<http://www.apsanet.org/PS/grants/asp3.cfm>
- 20) Multiple List of Minority Scholarships <http://gehon.ir.miami.edu/financial-ssistance/Scholarship/black..html>
- 21) Guaranteed Scholarships <http://www.guaranteed-scholarships.com/>
- 22) BOEING scholarships (some HBCU connects)  
<http://www.boeing.com/companyoffices/educationrelations/scholarships>
- 23) Easley National Scholarship Program <http://www.naas.org/senior..htm>
- 24) Maryland Artists Scholarships <http://www.maef.org/>
- 26) Jacki Tuckfield Memorial Graduate Business Scholarship (for AA students in South Florida)  
<http://www.jackituckfield.org/>
- 27) Historically Black College & University Scholarships <http://www.iesabroad.org/info/hbcu.htm>
- 28) Actuarial Scholarships for Minority Students <http://www.beanactuary.org/minority/scholarships.htm>
- 29) International Students Scholarships & Aid Help <http://www.iefaf.org/>
- 30) College Board Scholarship Search <http://cbweb10p.collegeboard.org/fundfinder/html/fundfind01.html>
- 31) Burger King Scholarship=20 Program <http://www.bkscholars.csfa.org/>
- 32) Siemens Westinghouse Competition <http://www.siemens-foundation.org/>
- 33) GE and LuLac Scholarship Funds <http://www.lulac.org/Programs/Scholar.html>
- 34) CollegeNet 's Scholarship Database <http://mach25.collegenet.com/cgi-bin/M25/index>
- 35) Union Sponsored Scholarships and Aid <http://www.aflicio.org/scholarships/scholar.htm>

(more to come)

ENGLISH SERVICES ARE BEING HELD AT 6:30 P.M. ON SUNDAYS AT HOSSANNA BY PASTOR ROBERT ROBINSON. “MISION VIDA INTEGRAL”
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*On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, the USA celebrates its 234<sup>th</sup> birthday; the 14<sup>th</sup> is the 221<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the declaration of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality in France that started the great changes for mankind. Simon Bolivar, the Venezuelan leader who freed five South American countries from Spain and held Panama in his dreams to be the capital of Latin America, was born on the 24<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Line for Attention to Tourists**

EXCERPTED FROM PANAMA DEVELOPERS BLOG, expanded by Ines V. Sealy

It is called Line for Attention to Tourists. **Panama Developers Blog** states: "ATP has allocated the phone #178, the purpose of which is to provide immediate response to tourists in trouble: be it an accident, robbery, violence, etc. They tell me that someone, who speaks English, will come and help the tourist navigate the difficulty." The center passes the information to the Tourism Police, who do the follow-up. It is supposed to operate 24 hours, but at the moment only operates until 11:00 p.m. until new employees are appointed, since the contract of the old ones expired.

I called at 9:10 p.m. July 9, 2010. Got an answering machine, then rings, but no answer. Called again at 7:12 a.m. July 10 and got Yolanda, who gave me all this new information, and said that it is a governmental call center operated with one unit per shift, who may have been at lunch when I called last night.

### **THANKS!!!**

Ines' yahoo e-mail was hacked. The hacker suggested that she was stranded in UK, without help and needed donations to get back home.

Thanks to the Lord, she has never gone to the UK nor was she stranded there. But, that e-mail served to know how many of my friends and acquaintances are concerned about me, for which I am humbly grateful.

### **PUTTING FUN & JOKES ASIDE**

By Antonio Cox 7-22-10

They were close friends: a Jamaican and a Barbadian. Each addressed each other by their nickname: "*Jamaiky*" & "*Bagee*".

One Sunday afternoon they were sitting in the park "**shooting the breeze**" like always. "*Jamaiky*" complained to "*Bagee*" that he was tired of the White man cursing him for no reason at all. "*Bagee*" told him: "when the White man cuss me, oi cuss him back". "*Jamaiky*" was "**fed up**" with the whole situation, so, when he went back to work, his mind was set to curse the White man back.

He did, and got fired. When he went back to the park that Sunday, he told "*Bagee*" that he had cursed the White man. "*Bagee*" said "good and what happened?" "*Jamaiky*" told him, "me get fired". "*Bagee*" asked him what he had done. He said he had told him everything he had in his mind. Then "*Bagee*" asked "he hear you?" "*Jamaiky*" replied "of course". "*Bagee*" then told him, "when I cuss he, oi cuss he in moi moin"