

AfroPanamanian Newsletter



English opens doors. Read the Newsletter

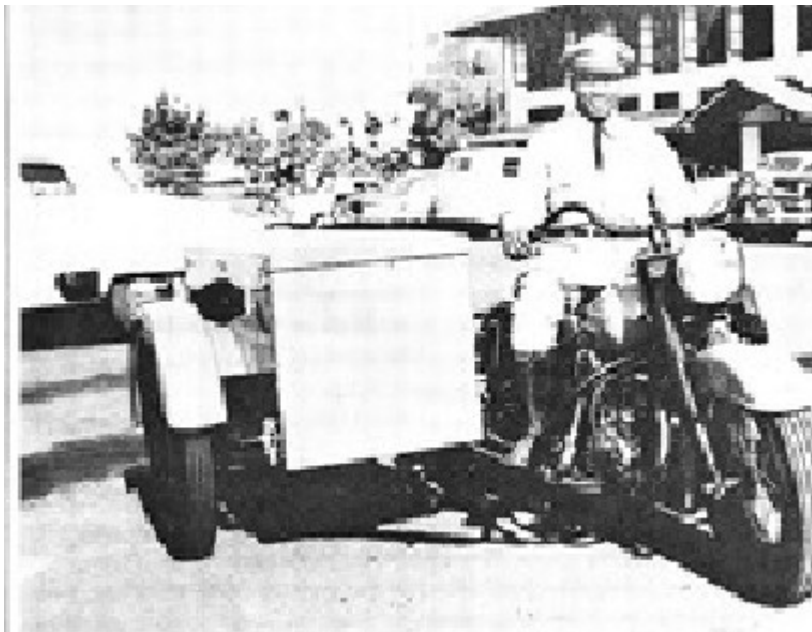
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No.5 Vol. II

June 2011

Donation

Canal Zone Police on Motorcycle



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

Editorial

Father's Day

In most countries Father's Day is celebrated on the third Sunday of June. The day was instituted to honor men that contributed with their essence in the creation of a new life.

To be a father should be one of the greatest pleasures for a man but unfortunately not all men feel that way and the deed becomes an economical, emotional and social burden, especially when the consequences of acts aren't measured beforehand.

A father is not only a figure but a model role to love, protect, support, et all to a new soul from conception to adulthood and even then to give advice and a helping hand when needed.

To all those good fathers we extend our best desire that God will continue to bless you.

Congratulations.



FEEDBACK (from our May issue)

<p>Ines: Very interesting as usual, but I'll like to know how true is that John Dykes story. We have many fabulous stories floating around our community for many years. R U sure this is not one of them? Am</p>	<p>TonyMac: As stated in the write up above the articles, this story was told to me by someone else. and the editorial is always written by the editor. If you have written facts about all you are commenting present them. Ines</p>
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Ines, the editorial “International Labor Day!” I’m not aware who wrote it but I must say it’s a very naïve leftist way of seeing the reality of things and may be moving your publication to the left.

At the time of the “eternal” battle on the streets of Chicago for a better working condition and a 8 hour day, the workers in the rest of the world was subjected to despotic, harsh and slavery like working conditions. But anarchist and fascist were continuously hitting hard at the only country of liberty and justice in the world, while the rest of the people all over the world were ruled under Monarchy, dictatorship and totalitarian rulers. Workers bore the brunt of animal like condition all over the world and even up to this day people are subjected to very harsh working conditions (the Chinese in the laundry) but they used everything to beat up on the US, the only country never ruled by dictatorship nor oppression with justice and liberty for all.

The public hanging was handed out to the men sentenced to be hanged by the court of justice for inciting the riots and instability. It was not a mob like hanging very popular in the south as one may presume.

I think that promoting that sort of thing on you page is just been naïve and someone is pushing a negative agenda that may destroy the historical value of your publication.

Anthony M

To Anthony Mclean

We appreciate the feedbacks from our readers because they make us try to be better yet when those become abusive, disrespectful and try to ridicule our staff or anyone, it is a must to put a stop to them from the start.

Remember, “when you say what you’re not to, you hear what you don’t want to”.

A media is not a battlefield and I refuse to make a polemical issue out of your statement but since you fed us back in a very obnoxious way, this is the only response you’ll receive on this topic.

As a person and a citizen I have the prerogative to be a leftist, a rightist or whatever I choose to be, what I don’t have is the right to impose my opinion, criteria and tendencies onto others.

*I can’t change history, so I think you should brush up on your knowledge of it. According to your view, USA “is the only country of liberty and justice in the world”. Well, it surely is. That is why when the **gringos** came to build and administrate the canal here in Panama, they created a Gold roll, a kind of Garden of Eden for their **white** fellow citizens and a Silver roll, a pen for the others, where monkeys, donkeys and other inferior animals grazed. In which one were you?*

Sandra Patterson ced: 8-125-407

<p>Sandy, Another informative edition. Kudos to you and the staff for their efforts in producing this Newsletter. Continue the good work. Dr Nadya E.Parker</p>	<p>Ines: I enjoyed the reading of this month especially the article on the saving of the Sidney Young park. We must not let it go because it is the only one that I know of. Tony R.</p>
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THE UNTOLD STORY

Yesterday's Central Avenue

Sandra Patterson

Until the late 70's Central Avenue was our shopping center; it ran from Calidonia to Santa Ana with stores that boasted merchandise of different qualities, prices and specialties. The best way to shop or just window shop was to start on the shadowy side of the street in Calidonia (Rice'n'peas) straight down to Santa Ana then walk back on the other side. By the time you finished the first part of your walk, the sun would be on the other side of the street, got it?

Prices in Calidonia were a bit cheaper than what you had to pay from 5th of May Plaza to Santa Ana because here you had a more selective number of stores and most of all, it was the area where folks from "adentro" (within the murals) did their shopping.

But not only stores were found on Central Avenue, you could also find cafe's, restaurants, bakeries and sidewalk vendors selling fruits or anything to make a living.

*Almacen 5 y 10 was one of the most frequented stores for its variety of good and cheap merchandise also **Wong Chang**. **Bazar Francés** was so sophisticated and dark inside, I could swear that no one went in there (hahaha). **Antonio's Innovación** and **La Innovación** competed with one another in merchandise, quality and prices. **Chambonet** and **5ta Avenida** (same owners), **Motta's** between East 16 and 17 was another high priced store. **Madurito** and **Felix B. Maduro** were the upper class stores you could afford once in a blue moon. Then came others like **Garbo**, **Aldens**, **Bazar Imperial**, **Sears**, not in that specific order.*

*If you wanted tablecloth, or any type of linen all you had to do was stroll into an Indian store, for instance **Salomon's**. **Singer sewing Co.** was nearby for any emergency with your sewing machine. Beside it, you only had to stop and pay your light bill at **Fuerza y Luz**.*

***La Aurora de Bazán** was the largest, some claimed the best, shoe store you could find, it had a scanner that showed you if the shoe fitted. **Bata** was another shoe store where you got good stockings. Needed trimming for that dress? tread, lace, needles etc, etc, etc, well there were **Sedería El Dragón** and **Sedería Miramar**. And if father's day was near you purchased a pants cut at **El Corte Inglés**.*

*Think I'm over? No! I left this one for last but not the least. Do you imagine it's name? There was one in Calidonia and one on Central (they also had shoe stores). It was the most popular for many years, maybe with the most variety of merchandise for women. Yes it's that same one you are thinking of: **La Suerte**.*

*You could also stop at a furniture store like **Mueblería Europea**, to get something for your house.*

*Did you want coffee? Well... **Café Duran** had two coffee shops, one at the corner of 25th street and Central Avenue in Calidonia and the other on the corner of 15th and Central towards Santa Ana.*

*Surely tired after so much shopping you stopped at **La Tahona** or **Café Lupita** to get a bite of a sweet bread and a chicha or buy fruits from the fruit stand near **Cecilia Theater** or just to take in a movie.*

*The Cecilia Theater on your left on Central Avenue
if you were walking from Calidonia toward Santa Ana*



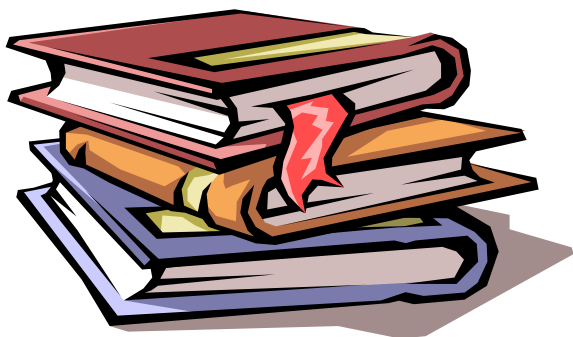
Banco Nacional, Fuerza y Luz and Singer Co. on Central Ave.

MORE ON CANAL ZONE LIFE

Ed Gaskin as a Teacher

When the Normal School was formally inaugurated on January 21, 1935, Gaskin took his place among his fellow students under the tutelage of Alfred E. Osborne, Ph. D., an honor graduate of Chicago University (subsequently M.A., Columbia University), and **thus began a career that was to see him rise from virtual obscurity to a position of enviable prominence in the Isthmian community.** Gaskin attributes his success in later life largely to the tremendous influence wielded upon his thinking by Professor Osborne, for whom he expressed the greatest respect and admiration. While studying at Normal, he **attended summer sessions in Education sponsored by the Panamanian Ministry of Education** at the Liceo de Señoritas and took courses with such distinguished educators as Dr. Ryder, an outstanding graduate of Chicago University, then Assistant Director of Personnel of the Panama Canal, and Dr. Stoddard, Superintendent of Schools of Philadelphia,

Graduating after three and one half years of intensive study at Normal, Mr. Gaskin received his initial appointment in 1938 as a teacher at the Gamboa School. Later in 1938, he was transferred to La Boca where he taught in the third grade until 1941 when he was reassigned to teach in the newly established ninth grade. From 1940 to 1945 he attended the newly organized University of Panama as a special student in the field of English.



Mr. Gaskin's progress as a teacher was phenomenal. In 1944 he was transferred to Red Tank School (the little town, now defunct, in which he was born on February 3, 1918) to serve under Mr. Robert T. Ellis, as assistant principal. Demonstrating remarkable flexibility and strength of character, Mr. Gaskin received the recognition and high approbation of his superiors and was quickly rewarded with promotion to the principalship of the La Boca Elementary School during the reorganization period concurrent with the establishment of the Occupational High School.

Between 1939 and 1949, Ed Gaskin played a significant role in most civic, educational, **recreational and labor activities and/or community undertakings within the Canal Zone.** Canal Zone Colored Teacher's Association; Isthmian Negro Youth Congress; Canal Zone **Volunteer Committee; Canal Zone Parent-Teachers' Association, an organization** compiled of U. S. Rate and Local Rate parents and teachers and affiliated with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers with headquarters in Chicago; Canal Zone Workers Union (1945); as Vice-President and Financial Secretary-Treasurer, Local 713, UPW-CIO 1946-49; Organized Canal Zone Teacher's Scholarship Loan Fund; **Expansion and Upgrading of Education Offerings in Local Rate Zone Communities and also as a member** of the Westerman Committee which organized and established the first library at the La Boca School-the nucleus of the present enlarged library (Technical Resources Center).

(Gaskin continued)

From 1942-1948, Mr. Gaskin served as president of the revived Teacher's Association, of which A. M. Parchment served as organizer and first president. Significant gains made at this time included the fight for higher educational opportunities for Local Rate employees, and the establishing of an extension branch of the University of Nebraska for the **benefit of all, regardless of color, creed or national origin.**

In 1944, after serving as librarian and Property Clerk at La Boca School, he was promoted to Assistant Principal at the Red Tank Elementary and Junior High School; and subsequently returned to La Boca in 1946 as Supervisory Principal of the La Boca Elementary School. He served as lecturer (the teaching of Arithmetic, Reading and Social Studies in Canal Zone Elementary School) at the La Boca branch of the Canal Zone Junior College.

Many will recall the pathetic dearth or absence of Spanish textbooks, educational **supplies, courses of study, other necessary teaching aids, and even Spanish. qualified personnel to initiate the hastily fashioned new official school system in 1954.**

In 1955, Ed Gaskin resigned his principalship of the La Boca Elementary School after **Governor Seybold denied his repeated requests for a year's leave of absence to devote more time to union activities.**



Emily E. Butcher

In her time

THE LA BOCA ALUMNI GLEE CLUB

(Excerpted from the booklet of the Program presented at the National Theater in October 1979 by the Rio Abajo Methodist Church.)

The famous LA BOCA ALUMNI GLEE CLUB was formed in the Canal Zone townsite of La Boca by Professor Emily Butcher in 1950. It consisted of Panamanian graduates of Canal Zone High Schools, the *La Boca* Normal Training School, the Canal Zone College and other residents of the Panama Canal Zone.

It became famous for its excellent presentations both on the Canal Zone and in the Republic of Panama to include: Hospitals, Mental Health Centers, the University of Panama, USIS Cultural Center, and the *Penonomé* fair.

In 1955, when there was a fire in *Chorrillo* it made a special presentation to benefit those who were left homeless.

Among its members, as soloists have been: Constancia Bell, Mary Callender, Norma Berkley, Maiziee Lennan, Ruth Mae Russell, Cecil Carter, Delroy Burke, Stanley Hall.

And its other members were: Joycelyn Gooden, Doris Fawcett, Silvia Hinds, Inez Howell, Inez Hurley, Nora Johnson, Norma Lee, Thelma McLean, Eleonora Novell, Miriam Riney, Blandina Waterman; Edna Beckles, Olga Griffith, Emelina Hurley, Hyacinth Kirven, Lorna Miller, Amelia Reid; Winston Faulkner, Fred Howell, Lancelott Morrison, Frank Russell, Cleophas Williams; Carlos Austin, Reginald Callender, Jr., Roberto King, George Menzies, Franklin Spencer.

Congratulations!

To Our Colleague (The Guberns)

http://mensual.prensa.com/mensual/contenido/2011/05/23/hoy/vivir/2606301.asp?sms_ss=email&at_xt=4dda4f9aa7cb6b7f%2C0

In the International year of the Afro descendants learn about our Afro descendant Panamanian Princess.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6oxp7uM_HA&feature=player_embedded#at=141

Father's Day in Panama

Sandra Patterson

Here in Panama we had a great deal of influence from USA citizens residing on the (ex) canal zone, who brought over certain festivities that have become part of the local celebrations, father's day is one of those celebrations incorporated into Panama's life.

In 1946 a campaign was started towards the celebration. On the 16 of June of that year the first telegram congratulating fathers on their day was sent by Ignacio (Nacho) de J. Valdés.

Once more, this time in 1948 newspapers emphasized the fathers day issue but no authority responded. In 1949, for the first time the day was widely celebrated and since then until now.

Black Ethnic Day Festivities

Sandra Patterson

This years Black ethnic celebrations made a positive impact on many and the community in general, impact that should be taken as an achievement in the long journey of struggle to be recognized as an important link that keeps the country moving.

The law states that May 30th is Black Ethnic Day in Panama, as a recognition of this group that since colonial days has given blood, sweat and tears for the development of the country. With due right, the month of May has been taken over with activities in communities that bear a high Black population of West Indian and colonial descendants, to enhance the heritage handed down from ancestors. In a day, a month, or a year it is impossible to share all that inherited background.

Organized by Fundación Bayano, opening the month, a parade full of men and women dressed in various African garments, proudly paraded Avenida José Agustín Arango from La Garantía to the Sidney Young Park. The event had representatives from Colón, Penonomé, in the Province of Coclé and from District of Barú in the Province of Chiriquí. Fundación Bayano surely made a milestone involving the Minister of Education, Lucy Molinar, as flag-bearer and that she accepted to precede the parade.

The Red de Mujeres Afropanameñas had a well attended African Fashion Night at Hotel Panamá, the various forums, panels, religious services and others enlightened the educational part of the festivities.

***Happy Birthday
Corregimiento de Rio Abajo
On your 74th Anniversary***