

AfroPanamanian Newsletter



English opens doors. Read the Newsletter

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August 2011

Donation

INAUGURATION OF THE SIDNEY YOUNG PARK



AT SYDNEY A. YOUNG PARK

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

After being subdued for more than Four centuries, a long awaited desire made it's way to reality.

Forty-nine years ago the Caribbean islands made a big change in the American Continent and gave the world another view of Black people as nation leaders.



BARBADOS

Nothing is perfect and there will always be unfinished and new business to be taken care of and the only way to get them done is pushing and shoving non stop.



**TRINIDAD &
TOBAGO**

For the long relationship between the Caribbean islands and Panama we congratulate Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago on the anniversary of their independence.

FEEDBACK (from our July issue)

Websites contributed by Rodolfo Alvey:

<http://liveinvestpanama.com/panama-real-estate-news-blog/metro-bus-fares-paid-prior-boarding-3023>

Metro Bus Fares Will Now be Paid Prior to Boarding ... Ticket machine

<http://www.subways.net/panama/panama.htm>

Full metro in planning

<http://ansoncf.it.com/watson/panama-citys-metro/>

<http://www.thepanamablog.com/panama-metro-bus-service-to-add-new-routes/>

Panama Metro Bus service to add new routes

<http://www.metrobuspanama.com/>

http://www.google.com/search?sourceid=navclient&ie=UTF-8&rlz=1T4DMUS_enUS212US213&q=metro+bus+panama&safe=active

Hi Alvey:

These URLs just confirm what we wrote in the AfroPanamanian Newsletter. "They start before they ready". Anyway, they are going forward. We'll see the outcome. Ah! One of the heavy equipment digging the METRO stop on Justo Arosemena Ave. beside the Afro West Indian Museum had an accident. Whoops! A Metrobus almost caught fire in the Lechería area close to where the worst bus accident burned 21 people to death and scorched others.

If you saw the news the other night, the "saneamiento de la Bahía" diggings (sewage water treatment) are also 25 meters below the surface. Let's hope they don't cross each other.

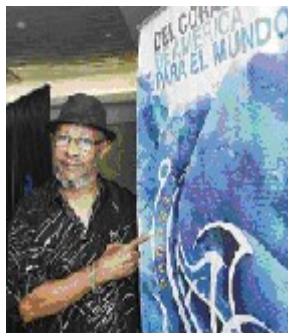
As we re-live our walk down *Avenida Central*, let's not forget *Teatro "Victoria"*, where the kids used to see a double "sneak" movie for \$0.05 and sometimes a "triple". Let's also remember how "safe" it was, that even *La Iglesia de Santa Ana* was left open all day into the night. We also looked forward to buying a "super raspado" con todo from 'mocho' at the corner of *Calle 25*, across from *La Suerte*, and those *bollos de maíz nuevo*, sold in front of *Edificio Standard*, across from *Muller's Building*. Thank you all for helping me relive such beautiful moments of my youth. I will pass it on...

CHA

Hi Ines, keep up the great work. As always, the newsletter is very informative. I will continue to share it with others. Don

I can remember my grandparents talking about Marcus Garvey. The man was a visionary. As always American "Law" did what it does best to black people it does not get along with. Lock them up.

Stan



At last our collaborator Carlos Garnett is going to receive recognition in his country. Not by the Government, but by an internationally renown Jazz Festival, which acquired its fame from the tremendous efforts of another Panamanian, Danilo Perez, to internationalize his love of music, besides giving wonderful educational and economic support to underprivileged young people of the Old Quarter producing an elaborate festival which has been attracting Jazz interpreters, experts, educators and enthusiasts to our country for the last 8 years.



The Jazz Festival will be held from January 16 to 21, 2012.

OLDEN DAYS SAYINGS:

DISCRIMINATION

This “**Bakra Johnny***” and two friends took a slice of watermelon from a vendor in the City of Panama. The melon only cost 5 cents, but, being a white man, he refused to pay for his purchase. This started a “**free for all**” fight that entered the train station.



“**Whosoever will may come**”, was the motto. This left 16 US citizens dead and 15 injured, 13 Panamanians hurt and 2 dead. The fracas, in 1856, lasted 3 days and was called the ***Battle of the Watermelon***.

Panama ended up paying the United States the sum of 421,394 dollars for damages. He must have been a “**straw boss**” with the Panama Railroad Company.

* It is thought this was originally "Backrow Johnny" as in where poor whites had to sit in church on Sunday (in the old time days.) The upper classes sat to the front and the poor whites had to sit in the back. Over time it was shortened to "Bakra Johnny"...-Wikipedia-

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She thought she was a “**big woman**” so she packed her “**Georgie bundle**” and left home. She couldn’t cook, expecting the man to eat at the “**cookshop**”, couldn’t iron nor wash, calling the man a “**slave driver**”, telling him he could “**take it or leave it**”. She wanted to be in the street all day “**with bells on**”. She could **not** “**make blood out of stone**”, she said, with the “**pittance**” he “**put down**”.

“**Put this in your pipe and smoke it**”. You going “**pack me back to my mother**”, but remember, “**more than once monkey want wife**”, there are “**more dogs than bones**” on the market. When you want to come back “**dog goin’ eat yuh supper**”.

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“**Tek yuh hand off yuh head chile, yuh mother don’t dead. Move yuh hand from yuh chin, chile, why you propping sorrows? And put on that shoe, one foot shoe, yuh mother going dead**”.

Look! The baby looking for another one! (the baby is on all fours looking backward through his/her spread legs). The mother would shoo the baby away if she wasn’t eager to have another baby so soon. There was no birth control and no TV.

THE UNTOLD STORY:

Theatres (movies- shows)

by Sandra Patterson

Once upon a time it was a great pleasure, especially on a Sunday evening to go to a theatre (show) to see a movie (picture) not only for the story told but for the role played by actors, male and female.

If you could not make it to a release in an upgrade theatre, you could always track down the movie of your preference to a theatre you could afford.

Panama city had as many theatres as any metropolis. Almost in every community there was one, two or three of them. Entrance fee went according to the categories of the theatres from 0.10- 0.15- 0.35- 0.60 to B/1.00. Some theatres opened at 2pm others at 3pm until 11pm.

Now that doesn't mean that those that had lower admission fees weren't up to par. Aside from having flat screen some featured a stage wide enough for live performances; others had an upstairs balcony for which some charged a different price to go up.

In the 20's and part of the 30's movies were in black and white, on top of that silent. Technology brought changes in the 40's almost at the end of WWII, continued through the 50's, 60's and onward. Our technological vocabulary in movieland went as far as: Technicolor, Cinemascope, Cinerama, then up the ladder to Surround and Sensurround, in the 70's. Now it's 3D and HD.

Remember some of the features:

---2 pictures, international news, advance of next movies and comics. For 0.15 or 0.35

--- The same as above plus Noche de Banco or WAHOO (what that meant I don't know but if you won, there were some extra dollars in your pocket).

--- 1 picture plus an episode for 0.10

--- 1 movie in Technicolor and a floor show

At Central theatre Jorge Carrasco, a radio announcer and commentator had a program called "CANTELA SI PUEDE". Maestro Papito Baker played a tune on his piano, you identified it, and sang it, if you could. Ramon Pereira and his Monarcas del Aire had a show going on at Encanto theatre. RIO Theatre, the largest

seating theatre in town, was famous for its floor shows.

Locations

*The first theatre in Rio/Parque: **Ideal** theatre was on the scene before Teatro Rio. Going into town the next one you could find was **Bella Vista** marking the beginning of Avenida Peru. Keeping up the stroll on that same avenue was **Lux** and further down at the end stood **Presidente**, all three of very high category. Near Presidente was **Iris**, and in between them was Teatro **Victoria**. One block up, on Central was **Encanto** theatre. Don't forget the **Savoy** in Bethania and **Roosevelt** in San Francisco.*

*Walking down Calidonia toward Cathedral you could pick, choose and refuse the one of your preference. At the corner of "P" street and Central Avenue was **Capitolio** and on "P" itself was **Apolo** (downstairs Sojourner's building). Back on Central Ave. on the corner of "N" was **Tivoli**.*

*If you thought those were all, you've made a big mistake. After 5th of May Plaza, **Central** theatre awaited you either on it's entrance from Central Avenue or from Calle Estudiante (Rochet Yard). Then on the opposite sidewalk you passed **Cecilia Theatre** built also for performances, maybe it had the most elaborate entrance. Down on the same hand, opposite Santa Ana church is **El Dorado** that was not the only one across from that historical church. On "C" is **Variedades**. Back on Central, before you got to La Merced church you had **Panama** and **Amador** theatres.*

*These were very popular in their days **Edison** on West 16 street; **Teatro Hispano** on a "A" Avenue and West 19 and **Cinelandia** on West 27 street. **Teatro Ancon** on Ancon Avenue only featured Spanish movies. **Tropical** theatre at the end of Monteserin street diagonally across from the St. Paul's church right outside the National Institute still stands there.*

CENTRAL THEATER



COLON ALSO HAD ITS THEATER



NEW ON-LINE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM MANDATORY FOR PASSPORT AND NOTARY SERVICES STARTING AUGUST 15, 2011

As of August 15, 2011, the following services will be provided by appointment only:

ROUTINE PASSPORT SERVICES (please access the following link for information):

<http://panama.usembassy.gov/passports.html>

NOTARY SERVICES (please access the following link for information):

<http://panama.usembassy.gov/public-services.html>

CHILD'S CONSULAR REPORT OF BIRTH ABROAD AND FIRST PASSPORT (please access the following link for information):

http://panama.usembassy.gov/consular_report_of_birth_abroad_and_first_passport.html

Appointments will be available as of July 29, 2011.

Services for emergencies, generally defined as having life or death implications, will still be handled on a walk-in basis during normal service hours.

It is important to note that Kwanzaa is a cultural holiday, not a religious one, thus available to and practiced by Africans of all religious faiths who come together based on the rich, ancient and varied common ground of their Africanness.



Sidney Young
And The Panama Tribune

By Sandra Patterson

There is no way you can separate Sidney Young's name from The Panama Tribune and journalism in Panama.

A native of Jamaica, as a journalist he came to the isthmus to be the editor of a page inserted in a tabloid named Panama American that catered mostly to the USA citizens residing on the Canal Zone.



The page was first published in January 1926 as the West Indian Section of the newspaper and reported to be widely accepted.

One year later, for it's first anniversary, the isthmus was visited by the Duke and Duchess of York, later king and Queen of England, parents of the actual queen. To commemorate the event, a supplement was successfully published. This event is considered to be the origins of The Panama Tribune.

Another year went by and on the 11 of November 1928 The Panama Tribune was founded. A weekly English publication that became the most read weekly newspaper published in Central America and Panama.

Panama became Mr. Young's new homeland; he not only was involved in journalism but in many social, civic work and other activities. He also had a flower shop and a garden, where, on Sunday evenings you could find him taking care of his flowers.

Twenty five years after it's first publication, November 1953, The Panama Tribune was present to receive Queen Elizabeth II from England and her consort the Duke of Edinburgh.

Sidney Young was editor of the Panama Tribune for little over fifty years until he was stricken down by death on December 22, 1959.

THE NEW PANAMA TRIBUNE

By Ines V. Sealy

1988, the year before the invasion of Panama by the United States of America saw a group of afrodescendants, longing for English news, starting an English newspaper.

This was the year right after I retired from the Panama Canal Commission in October. Coming fresh from being in charge of the Periodicals section of the Technical Resources Center, where I controlled the contracting, receipt and dispatch of magazines and newspapers required by officials to keep abreast of the latest news and innovations, besides, preparing the weekly Bulletin.

I had just bought a computer and was rearing to go. I called Leslie "Chino" Williams (R.I.P.) who used to write for The Star and Herald, which had eliminated its English section, suggesting that he could be the editor of the English newspaper. He was sick at the time, and referred me to Mr. William R. Hoyte (R.I.P). I then contacted Carmela Gobern and Hugo Wood. Meeting at the Executive Hotel, we agreed to extend the invitation to others. We met with lots of others at the St. Christopher's Gym and agreed upon the name of the newspaper suggested by Joyce Breadwood (R.I.P), The New Panama Tribune.

Mr. Hoyte got the permit from the Ministry of Government and The New Panama Tribune began circulation at the end of February (27), 1988, at 0.25 per copy, with Hugo as Associate Editor, Heskith Minott (R.I.P) as Circulation Manager, Hilda Arnheiter as Editorial Assistant and myself as Advertising Manager. We Printed at *Impresora Taylor in Chorrillo*. With my experience at the library, I contracted all the newspaper distributors to retrieve the newspapers at the printers, on concession, make the sales and return the extras and the money. The newspaper was set up by a Spanish speaking designer, which required proof reading and correction.

Things were going along good until Mr. Hoyte began to get senile, and the others could not see it. I tried to get someone else to take the editorship, I brought in Arnheiter who had her title and Sandra Patterson who was finishing hers. After they came in, the older staff banked up against me and voted me out of my newspaper.

The Paper only lasted 6 months. Mr. Hoyte guided the paper into politics and changed the circulation system, lost circulation and the newspaper died.

HOW DID THE BUSES IN PANAMA GET THE NAME “CHIVA”?

Written by Bill Caddle translated by Ines V. Sealy

According to what I was told, in the beginnings of the Republic, when this type of public transportation began in Panama, the chauffeurs, who were from India, decided to use a small image of the God “Shiva” on the front of their busses. When asked what the image meant they would reply “Shiva”. Naturally, the Panamanians latinized the name to “*Chiva*”.

Their main route ran from La Boca to the Santo Tomas hospital through *Chorrillo*. The only means of public transportation at the moment, it had a wooden body built by local hands on the chassis of second hand pickup trucks, so that, when they overturned, they were totaled and caused loss of lives. Putting the hand outside to shout someone could cause the loss of such a limb.

These were the ancestors of our new Metrobus transport system. The fare cost 5 cents or Two niaps. There were no standing passengers, since between the floor and the roof there was not enough space. One had to be humble and bow to get in. The seats were benches against the walls of the bus, facing each other, with the spare tire on the floor in the back. Passengers sat side by side, sliding forward unto the chauffeur when there was a sharp brake. Boys were then able to squeeze against their girlfriends, sitting beside them. If someone jumped up without caution, after hollering for BUSSTOP, they would get a good bump on the head.



THE NEXT GENERATION



Let's not talk about when it rained: the windows were glass framed by wood which dropped down in a slot behind the seats. They were raised by a finger-hook to sit on a ledge and latched into place (once more our carpenters and cabinetmakers). What a heat! The back of the seat was upholstered in bright leather or vinyl and the seats were cushions like the ones used at the communion rail in the Episcopal churches. Beautifully adorned gear shift, with a glass doorknob and colored streamers. No radios on the *CHIVAS*, but they were adorable. **Days gone bye, that will never return.**

Video about Panama being promoted in Argentine: (contributed by Lloyd Gallimore)

<http://youtu.be/gR7GKqd7gC8>

Wonderful. We are going to miss the **art work on the red devils**. A part of our culture and the source of livelihood for many families is being lost.