

AfroPanamanian Newsletter



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No.10 Vol. III

November 2012

Donation



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_uqPbUH6I0

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

***SAD
NOTE***

***our Editor
Sandra Patterson***

***died
today
Nov. 26, 2012***

***May her soul
rest in peace***

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

FEEDBACK (from the October Newsletter)

Thanks for sharing. Good job! Pat	Ines, thanks I learned from the reading Jaime
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PANAMANIAN MARCHING BAND WILL DEBUT IN 2014 ROSE PARADE: (Contributed by Ida Ramsey)

We are extremely proud to announce that Panama will be represented at the January 1, 2014 Rose Parade in Pasadena California by *La Banda Herberto Lopez del Colegio Jose Daniel Crespo (JDC)* from the city of *Chitre* in Panama. We would like to CONGRATULATE the Band Director Irving Rodriguez, the School Director *Rosemarie Munoz De Donoso* and all the band members on this historical achievement!

This is a major undertaking by the school and we are very excited for them. PanCanal Alumni Association has agreed to collaborate with other local organizations such as Viva Panama Organization to assist the school with fund-raising and other initiatives leading up to the event.

A fund-raising drive on behalf of the school will be launched soon and details on how to donate/support will be forthcoming. Click here http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_uqPbUH6IO to watch their performance. Much Kudos to JDC!

Good Poem

<p>I was shocked, confused, bewildered As I entered Heaven's door, Not by the beauty of it all, Nor the lights or its decor.</p> <p>But it was the folks in Heaven Who made me sputter and gasp-- The thieves, the liars, the sinners, The alcoholics and the trash.</p> <p>There stood the kid from seventh grade Who swiped my lunch money twice. Next to him was my old neighbour Who never said anything nice.</p> <p>Herb, who I always thought Was rotting away in hell, Was sitting pretty on cloud nine, Looking incredibly well.</p>	<p>I nudged Jesus, 'What's the deal? I would love to hear Your take. How'd all these sinners get up here? God must've made a mistake.</p> <p>'And why's everyone so quiet, So sombre - give me a clue.' 'Hush, child,' He said, 'they're all in shock. No one thought they'd be seeing you.'</p> <p>JUDGE NOT.</p> <p>Remember...Just going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in your garage makes you a car .</p> <p>Every saint has a PAST.... Every sinner has a FUTURE!</p>
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Games West Indians Played

by Ines V. Sealy

As social people, West Indians, both men and women played table games. Lacking television, since it hadn't been introduced to Panama up to the late 1940's or 50's, draughts, dominoes, chinese checkers, cards, parchesi, india, bingo, lotto, etc. were the entertainment at gatherings: nine nights, parties, and what was called “**get together**”. When other games like: scrabble, pokeno, Monopoly were invented both adults and children joined the ranks. Our ladies are still playing in bingo and pokeno clubs weekly or monthly and that gives them the opportunity to include their “**sussu**”.

Along that line, and, remembering olden days social events, for the past 9 years since the game was invented for Panama's 100th year celebration, in the month of November, “*mes de la Patria*” Alonso and Carmela Gobern have been hosting a meeting to play the *Museo del Centenario* game invented and produced by the winner of the Centennial logo contest of 2003, Mr. Luis A. Huerta M. and his partner, Guillermo (Billy) Maduro.



Luis, a retired pilot from Panama's National Air Force, did extensive historical research into our history, before, during and after the construction of the Panama Canal and is always on hand to clear up any difference of opinions or to add other explanation with regards to the subject at hand and to keep the game going smoothly. The game tests ones knowledge of Panama's history, geography and odds and ends. The whole country is included in the questions. And the answers are there for all to see and learn if one did not know them before.

“If you are a Panamanian you would know”, is one of the sections of the game, and, the name of the new game Huerta & Maduro are going to launch soon. According to Luis, this new game will include most of the information from the old game and added information which will upgrade it to the present.

Our laws and other things in Panama are changing day by day. We need to keep abreast of these changes to be up to date on our history. For instance, up to last week, the 1st of November was National Anthem day and November 4th was Flag day. November 4th has now been declared National emblems day, to include: National Anthem, Flag and Coat of Arms. Ironically, the schools celebrated National Anthem day on November 1 and by November 4, it was included in the November 4th celebration. Flag day was usually celebrated regally, with the best uniforms and a display of the flags of many countries, we will have to “**wait and see**” how Emblems day will be celebrated next year. In fact, there has been a controversy over the coat of arms; some of the quadrants, the eagle, the flags have been changed and are being replaced or reaffirmed. We hope the differences will be solved by then.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGrWQdmOpWo&feature=related>

St. Cecilia Day (Nov. 22) **CALYPSONIANS**

Coming from Trinidad (before it became Trinidad & Tobago) to the Atlantic coast of Panama, Calypso jokes about everyday, political and economical events. Some West Indian descendants dedicated themselves to this type of music. Parents sang the double entendre songs, which the children did not understand, even if they sang them, until they were old enough to “go out into the world”. In the '40's and 50's calypso was sounding a lot in Panama, artists were imported from the West Indies, inspiring young boys and girls to participate in this genre of music. Here in Panama some were outstanding: from Bocas: Lord Cobra, The Beachers, from Colon: Lord Panama, Lady Trixie and Panama City: Lord Kontiki, Black Majesty, etc.

SIR VALENTINO

The son of a Costarican mother, Leticia Reid (R.I.P.) and Jamaican father, Joseph Reid, also known as Sir Valentino and Val Reid is the Calypsonian author of interesting pieces which honor important people, such as: Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy. His mother sang calypso in the '40s and '50s with Ruby Genius and others in the Washboard Combo and the Chic Combo.

At 15 years of age and still in High School, Val was being presented in night clubs in Colon, by the famous comedian George Bryan. Club Tropical, Stranger's Club, Washington Hotel, in Colon, then at Club 21 in Panama City, alternating with orchestras such as: Armando Boza, Victor Boa, Kile Perez, etc he also sang with the Orquesta Aragon from Cuba one Carnival. We've heard him in calypsos such as: Come and leh we dance the Boogaloo, Masters are Gone (honoring King / Kennedy). He loved to sing Spanish songs: *Granada* was one of his favorites.

+0+

LORD DELICIOUS

Delius Burke, was born in *Bocas del Toro* to Penina Burke. He grew up hearing calypsos and began his career singing background in the Pana Trinidadian Band here in Panama City in the 1950's. This band was presented on Sundays, after the lottery on *Radio Panamericana* upstairs the *Encanto* Theatre.

Sometimes he was given a chance to solo, and, in 1957 he became professional singing in various groups throughout the years.

Although he traveled to all the Central American countries, the US and Canada, he did not have his own band until he joined *Los Dedos* in 1970, where he said he felt comfortable.

He was very good at improvisation. He could rhyme on anyone in the crowd, or about any subject.

He died on July 13, 1995.



Walter Ferguson is **Doctor Bombodee**, the village doctor, the one who heals any ailment with music. He 's the “one pant man” who wanders around with his guitar recording absurd situations that happen to his neighbors. He's also the student who thinks he's made it because he learned how to spell G-O-O-D. In Rhyme, spelling is very important, and Calypso is based on rhyme. Even if the calypsonian has not had formal higher education, reading and paying attention to spelling can make a good calypsonian out of him or her. Voice is secondary.

The disasters this popular musician causes are nothing more than innocent jokes. Healthy humor that good doctors may recommend their patients to relieve stress.

There is no definition for the word Bombodee, but, Walter Ferguson explains, it is a word he used to hear a lot as a child in *Cahuitta*, a small village in Costa Rica that was isolated from the outside world until the 1980s, where he resided for many years, although he was born in *Guabito, Bocas del Toro*, Panama. An old man used to say “Don't do that, yuh going roll in bombodee”.

He considered Papa Houdini, an old Panamanian calypsonian his mentor, so, he dusted off several songs he had almost forgotten like “Caroline”, “One Pant Man” and “Bugaloo” and paid special homage to Jamaican traditional songs including the piece “72 Weeds” capable of curing any illness, in his recordings.

Lord Panama

One of the Six children of George (Barbadian) and Ana (Grenadian), George Allen, better known as Lord Panama is the popular author of many catchy calypsos with interesting titles such as: *Papacito*, *Fire Down Below*, *Pana Reggae*, *Hot Dog*, *Laguna Campeon*, *15 cents*, *Revolution Generation*.

From the age of 10 he was attracted to the jump-up groups practicing in the alley for the carnivals and then going out into the streets to compete for the prizes. Besides, at home, his mother was always singing calypsos, which exposed him to the nuances of the double entendre used in the lyrics of olden days calypsos, different to the outspoken lyrics of our modern day reggae. That did not stop him from making a song which includes reggae.

Beginning in Colon playing the *Circulo 4* and Tropical clubs he then transferred to Panama City where he performed at the *OK Amigo*, *Salon Estadio*, *El Sombrero* and *Salon Bahia*. He was also contracted to perform in *Honduras*, *Costa Rica*, the Bahamas, and France, But, without performing in the US, he was the winner of the Sunshine Awards (a tribute to the great innovators and contributors to Caribbean artforms) presented in New York in 2007.

Reggae in Panama

Some people may not consider Reggae as music, but we must remember our days when Rock 'n Roll was the thing, and our parents did not like what was being done, both with lyrics, dance steps and volume.

English Reggae began in Jamaica. Since Panama is the center of the world and a melting pot of nationalities, traffic hub, it had to pass through Panama on its way to other countries.

It arrived at a time when rap came in from the US and salsa sensual from Latin America, and our young people being bilingual, Renato (Leonardo Aulder), Nando Boom (Fernando Brown) and others began



Renato

translating from English and creating in Spanish.



Sam



El General



Nando



Ness



Kafu



Match & Daddy

Noteworthy of mention are: Sam (the Reggae man) now known as Reggae Sam (Samgar Biscombe), El General (Edgardo Franco) who were made popular in the US at the end of the last century.

Apache Ness (Ernesto Brown), Kafu Banton (Zico Alberto Garibaldi Roberts), Match (Pedro Machore) & Daddy (Martín Machore) doing their thing here in Panama.

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ALL

(unknown)

**Twas the night of Thanksgiving,
but I just couldn't sleep.
I tried counting backwards,
I tried counting sheep.*

**The leftovers beckoned -
the dark meat and white,
but I fought the temptation
with all of my might.*

**Tossing and turning with anticipation,
the thought of a snack became infatuation.
So, I raced to the kitchen, flung open the door,
and gazed at the fridge, full of goodies galore.
Gobbled up turkey and buttered potatoes,
pickles and carrots, beans and tomatoes.*

**I felt myself swelling so plump and so round,
'til all of a sudden, I rose off the ground.
I crashed through the ceiling, floating into the sky,
with a mouthful of pudding and a handful of pie.
But, I managed to yell as I soared past the trees....
Happy eating to all - pass the cranberries, please.*



**May your stuffing be tasty,
may your turkey be plump.
May your potatoes 'n gravy have nary a lump.
May your yams be delicious.
May your pies take the prize,
may your thanksgiving dinner stay off of your thighs!!*

Happy Thanksgiving to all

November 2012

The Need for More Electricity.

by Ines V. Sealy

Everyday there are electric brownouts and fluctuations which to us signify that the electricity production is insufficient to supply the demands of the moment.

Yet, the construction industry is going **“full speed ahead ”** which will consequently demand more use of electricity.



“Take for instance”: a few days ago, President Martinelli visited the new sewage processing plant, construction of which is 95% finished and will soon be in operation requiring electricity to operate the machines which will be effecting the transformation of human wastes so they will not contaminate our rivers and the ocean. That plant will be pulling **“juice”** for its operation which will reduce the amount available for consumption of the private sector or small and medium sized businesses.

Should we be expecting more brownouts or are we going to have periodic blackouts, as we did at one time long ago?

No consideration is being given to the wind power or solar power production of this needed energy. Our Government is bent on producing electricity from the rivers, or, continuing to use petroleum, which Panama does not produce.

The sun in Panama shines most of the day. It is being enjoyed by all those who, having the wherewithal, can travel to this country to **“soak it up”**. Producing solar energy and finding ways to store it for continued use, could be a solution to the problem. That plant could be producing its own electricity, either from solar energy or even from the methane gas that can be produced from those wastes.

Also, there is the wind, some areas are high enough to have a constant supply of wind to produce energy. In this construction boom, electricity storage structures should be included in the Government's immediate and long-term plans.

Using wind and solar energy we conserve the environment, since they are clean energy producers. They do not require petroleum nor do they contaminate the air with emissions. Seems to me, that would be an investment rather than an expense.

How will the energy to run the Metro trains affect local energy consumption? They will also be hauling **“juice”** to operate. Why aren't we looking into cleaner and cheaper ways to produce electricity without endangering the communities surrounding the rivers? These are questions for our Government.

We will be going into First World status in construction, but back to fourth world status regarding illumination and water supply, since the rivers will be damned to produce electricity.