

AfroPanamanian Newsletter



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Kenneth Bancroft Clark



Psychologist, Born in Panama

Anecdotes

Controversy

Poetry

LOS AMIGOS :

**Por la superación de la Etnia Negra
(Incorporated to SEAPAT EVENTOS, S.A.)**

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 ADVICE FOR LIFE

Live simply.

Love generously.

Care deeply.

Speak kindly.

Being

kind

is more

important

than

being right.

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

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June feedback:
 Cecil:
 Very very nice....congrats on this report.
 Outstanding!
 You surely resemble your dad.
 Blessings,
 Carm

(Contributed by Lewis Eccleston)

A controversial Lima tradition where pallbearers are always Black -
 'Beyond the question of racism or prejudice, I think it is simply a question of employment'

Excerpts from page 6 of the New York Post. Last Updated: 3:54 PM, July 19, 2013



Ivan Rivas shaves as he prepares for his work as a pallbearer at a funeral in Lima, Peru. Blacks routinely bear the caskets of ex-presidents, mining magnates and bankers to their tombs in Lima. The peculiar tradition exists neither in provincial Peruvian cities nor in other Latin American countries with significant black populations such as Brazil, Panama and Colombia.

"He planned his funeral and wanted it to be elegant," said Reyna's widow, Clarisa Velarde.



It is not a profession chosen by Lima's blacks but is rather thrust upon them by a lack of opportunity, say Afro-Peruvian scholars. And racism remains so deeply ingrained in Peru that many don't consider the practice discriminatory.

The pallbearers are in the job precisely because of the color of their skin, a phenomenon unique to this South American capital that was the regional seat of Spain's colonial empire for more than three centuries. In fact, prominent citizens such as Reyna, a widely respected, charitable man of indigenous origin who died at age 82, request black pallbearers for their funerals.

On this day

by Haydee Beckles (translated by Melvin Brown)

On this day I was sad and disturbed
 I cried and cried, but you, were in all places
 where my soul spilled,
 I have come to realize that in my sadness
 you were there, listening to my cry and saying:
 Haydeé, don't look at the small things that are
 happening to you
 I am with you at all times
 In sadness, joy, in your walking
 you are my daughter, and I will fill you with
 happiness and love,
 because I'm your celestial father.

The rock


by Haydee Beckles (translated by Melvin Brown)

On the rock I have stood
 I have seen beautiful things
 that I had not seen before
 because you are a faithful friend
 that has guided me
 through dessert paths
 and when I am not close to you
 I don't know what to do
 without your help.
 I could never pass through the streets
 and roads of life without you
 You Lord! are my friend.

HELPING TO FIX PANAMA

This will be a series of complaint/suggestions on everyday living in the City or Country.

For over a year we have been saying: "We put the cart before the horse". All the improvised Public Works in the City of Panama is affecting the traffic.

<p style="text-align: center;">Panamanian Traffic System In The City</p> <p>From a Bus passenger's point of view: The traffic situation in Panama has reached a point in which traffic laws cannot be obeyed.</p> <p>There is no courtesy: Yield on a right turn is ignored, keep your distance is impossible, right of way is blocked at entrances, especially where there is a traffic light, lanes are a "free-for-all". Park however and wherever you can, especially on the sidewalk.</p> <p>From a driver's point of view: <i>by Dilsia M. Alleyne</i> Do you believe that living in society is about values, respect and responsibility? Have you taught your children and grandchildren those values: how to be respectful and responsible? Do you obey the law giving them a good example? Have you taught your loved ones to obey the law?</p> <p>I am asking these questions because of the way we all as Panamanians are driving these days. Have you noticed that pedestrians are crossing the streets with their head phones on listening to music, or talking on the telephone without the slightest idea as to what is going on around them.</p> <p>Do not even talk about the way we drive our vehicles, considering all the unplanned work that is going on in the streets, our government calls it progress, I call it a race to the 2014 elections without considering who it is affecting.</p> <p>Most of our main streets are closed, others have large potholes, traffic policy does not permit alternate routes, there are no alternate routes, they are also blocked. Neither the traffic police nor the drivers know what to do.</p> <p>When we get into our vehicles we need to plan our route. If you know that you are going to make a turn to your right then you should maintain your right no matter if there is a long line of cars, what you should not do, is cross from the left and center lanes to the far side creating a traffic jam by blocking the lanes.</p>	<p>You need to think about the next driver, the motorcycles, taxis, bus drivers and street venders You will create less stress, both on yourself and others, if you yield the way, look out for motorcycles they will come from nowhere when you least expect it. Look out for the pedestrians, large potholes, and improvised lanes that look like one and are really for two vehicles.</p> <p>We are experiencing a crazy, crazy highway system, we have no control over it, our government only cares about the votes the major projects are going to give them in 2014, and they are not interested in a long term state plan in which subsequent administrations will do the work, in a timely manner, without affecting their taxpayers.</p> <p>These crazy projects could be the cause of heart conditions, high blood pressure, stress, depression, lack of sleep all of this as a product of the unplanned work in the streets of our little city.</p> <p>From an automobile owner's point of view:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">According to the ATT&T License plates are a must, you pay until you bust, but, is your plate ready?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">New cars are only permitted "demonstration" license plates for awhile new plates must replace them but are the new plates available?</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
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August 18, 2013 - Happy 95th Birthday Mandela

SCOUTING series (*snippets from here and there*)

The Fleur de Lis is the recognized insignia of the Scout movement, and, all over the world Scouts are recognized by the Fleur de Lis. In the olden days, explorers used the Fleur de Lis instead of the N to represent the North. Since they believed the Fleur de Lis represented the purity of the Virgin Mary, they expected it to help to prevent the Devil from deflecting the needle on the compass, keeping them on course, where they wanted to go. It is the sign of rectitude, always pointing straight ahead, without detour, toward purity of the body, thoughts, words and deeds.



It all began with a seven-day camp on the island of Brown-sea with 20 boys, this was in 1907. The man was Robert Cecil Stephenson Smith Baden-Powell of Gilwell, England and those boys were the pioneers of the Boys Scouts.

According to Baden-Powell the object of the Scout movement is to educate the future generations to make them useful citizens so that they may have an ample point of view which they had never had and through them develop goodwill and peace in the world, through camaraderie and cooperation instead of the rivalry present in social classes, religions and countries and which cause so many wars and resentments.

It is strictly social, since we consider all men as brothers, children of the same Father, between whom there should only be happiness and goodwill, all in all, mutual love.

The scout movement offers a boy a program which keeps him busy and entertained. This does not mean that the movement is an entertainment entity, rather, it is educational, an informal activity which helps through open air activities permitting the boy or youngster to develop his personality.

The youngsters learn to share with their comrades. In these live activities, they learn to be good children, inspiring them to be good, honorable, of service, untiring, spiritual, moral, patriotic, respectful, economical, loyal, upright, unaffected, persevering and obedient citizens.

The West Indians that came to work on the construction of the Canal brought over the British idea of scouting and it started in the Canal Zone under the name of British Boys Brigade, later it was known as the International Boy Scouts where we recall names as Manuel Roy, Clifford Bolt, Raymond George, C. McAlister, Alfredo Sinclair, M.A. Maxwell, J.R. Blaizes, Ellis Fawcett and others, some of these passed over to Panama and formed “Cuerpo de Exploradores Panameños” and then formally the Association of Boy Scouts of Panama.

Role Models

By Ines V. Sealy



Dr. Marco Mason, son of Vernon Mason and Erlean Lord Mason, was born Sept. 23, 1943 in Panama, grew up in Rio Abajo and migrated to the U.S. in 1961 where he studied to become a Medical Sociologist because he cared what happened to his fellowman.

As a passionate Public Health and Immigration Policy Advocate, Dr. Mason was a technical expert in U.S. Immigration Policy and duly accredited to practice Immigration Law before the Immigration and Naturalization Court and the Board of Immigration Appeals. He was cited by the US Department of Justice for his "Outstanding services in assisting immigrants with status adjustments".

Among the boards on that matter on which he served we can mention: the New York State Governor's Advisory Committee for Black Affairs' Caribbean Immigrants Panel, and the National Resource Person Network of the Office of Minority Health at the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Dr. Mason served on the faculty of a number of colleges and universities, including the State University of New York at Stony Brook, in the: School of Social Work, School of Medicine, and School of Health Management and Technology. Also in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Medgar Evers College and City University of New York.

Consejo Nacional de la Etnia Negra de Panama (CONEN) granted him the special Patriot Award in recognition of his dedicated services on behalf of the Afro-Panamanian community both at home and abroad.

As Chairman/CEO of the Panamanian Council of New York Inc. Marco honored 6 Black Community Activists in commemoration of Black Heritage Day in Panama on June 1, 2010.

Marco died at the Brooklyn Hospital on March 7, 2011

Doing some ancestry work, I've been able to trace our roots back to the XIX century to a common Barbadian greatgrandfather: Marco's grandfather, Clement T. Mason 1874- and my grandfather Charles R. Mason 1863-1941 were children of the same father: Joseph Richard Mason 1831-1879.



Basilio, my neighbor

Born in Panama of West Indian descent, Basilio Antonio Fergus Alexander and his sister, Julieta (Simms) were active members of the Episcopal Church. In their teens, they had the unfortunate disaster of losing their parents, with whom they had been living in San Francisco de la Caleta. They came to live with their uncle Cirilo Alexander in Parque Lefevre until Basilio left for France to study medicine and Julieta married and emigrated to the US. Both had studied the piano.

As a person, Basilio was a quiet, serene person demonstrated during his stay at the Instituto Nacional here in Panama and his membership in organizations at St. Paul's Church.

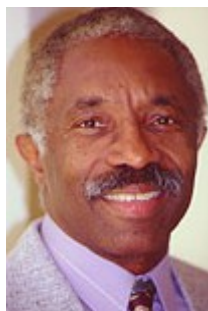
While studying abroad, in 1972, Basilio participated in an international musical contest (*Festival de OTI*) in Spain representing Panama, and won 2nd place with *Oh Señor*. With his melodious voice he had sung at activities in Panama, but, this prize definitely began his singing career which brought him to perform his many top compositions in many countries.

Some of his famous compositions are: *Cisne, cuello negro; Vivir lo nuestro; Te llevaré una rosa, Tu ni te imaginas, Ve con él, Vivir lo nuestro, Demasiado amor, Costumbres, Tanto tanto amor y Me estoy muriendo por dentro.*

In a proposed presentation in Cali, Colombia in May 2008, he suffered an aneurysm. He contracted bronco-pneumonia in October 2009 and died on the 11th.

Enjoy: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUzVh2nS4dM>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9PAzeFyTyk>

CUBENA's recommendation to young people is something he learned from "Papa James" (his stepgrandfather) "Education is the clue to get ahead, work hard and the compensation will come later".



Carlos Guillermo Wilson, proficient novelist-poet, pen named CUBENA (Tuesday in the Ashanti culture) was born in Panama on Tuesday, April 1st, 1941. He was raised by James Douglin (Papa James) Barbadian and Lina McZena (Nenén) Jamaican.

He studied several years to become a Roman Catholic priest, where he learned latin, greek, french, German & Italian. He left and obtained several scholarships for superior study. CUBENA graduated from UCLA in 1975 with this doctoral thesis: *Los Aspectos De La Prosa Narrativa Panameña Contemporánea* (Aspects of Contemporary Panamanian Narrative Prose) which included parts of works by Joaquin Beleño, Rogelio Sinan and other Panamanian authors.

From 1971 he held the post of Professor of Hispanic-American Languages & Literature of the Department of Modern Languages of the University of Loyola Marymount, in Los Angeles, California.

His interest in writing stems from his Spanish American Literature teacher, John Crew, who told him "each person has a story to tell, but the greatest story has yet to be told".

What is most important, we must unite (sodinu, a mixture of syllables of "unidos" in Spanish).

Among his writings: "PENSAMIENTOS DEL NEGRO CUBENA", which includes 51 poems he deals with slavery, love racial conscience and socio-political protests; in "CUENTOS DEL NEGRO CUBENA" he deals with life, discriminatory practices and privation of Blacks in Panama; CHOMBO, a fictional examination of West Indians and their descendants' lives during and after the construction of the Panama Canal (1904-1914); then "LOS NIETOS DE FELICIDAD DOLORES" shows the slavery experience of persons of African origin in the Americas up to 1990. Part of the novel deals with how West Indian Blacks (Blacks who arrived with the construction of the Panama Railroad and Canal) were pitted against Colonial Blacks (Africans and their descendants who came to Panama with the Spaniards) showing that both came from the same roots, therefore, being equal.



He has contributed analytic educational articles to magazines, and founded the *Afro-Hispanic Review* besides being the contributing editor of the *Afro-Latin/America Research Association (ALARA)*.

Before being paralyzed on the left side from a cerebral operation, CUBENA, travelled to México, Jamaica, Colombia, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, England, Austria, Belgium, Holand, Sweden and the Ivory Coast in Africa.

In 1991 he was invited to speak before the University of San Diego in California, which resulted in a request to become a professor at that institution beginning in January 1992, a post he held until his retirement in 2006.

Kenneth Bancroft Clark:

He would have reached 100 years of age next year (like the Canal)

This psychologist, who was born in Panama on July 24, 1914 (a little before the opening of the Panama Canal) to Afrodescendants, Arthur Bancroft Clark and Miriam Hanson Clark, and transferred to Harlem, New York at age Five, became concerned with discrimination and segregation in U.S. Schools and determined to do something about it.

He changed his career from medicine to psychology and convinced his girlfriend, at the time, to do so also.



***"Together we stand, divided we fall"
"Behind every good man there is a good woman".***

Based on his wife Mamie's thesis in developmental psychology in which black and white dolls were used in an experiment on the children of an all Black nursery school in Harlem, they published articles on their findings and continued the experiments in schools all over the US. The contributions of this research showed that racism was not only having a negative effect on the self image and racial identification of children, but also on educational equality.

They were finally given the opportunity to present these findings before the Supreme Court in the historic case of Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas in 1954, which led to desegregation of schools in the U.S.

Check out: A Class Divided (contributed by Marcia Henry) <http://bit.ly/3rdGradeTeacher>

The Clarks wanted to offer programs of social work, psychological evaluation and after-school remedial tutoring for youth in Harlem. Established Social Services organizations in New York refused to help, so they opened their own Northside Testing and Consultation Center (later known as Northside Center for Child Development) in 1946.

Books by Dr. Clark include: "Dark Ghetto" (1965); "A Relevant War Against Poverty" (1969); "A Possible Reality," (1972); and "Pathos of Power" (1974).

The Clarks had Two children: Kate C. Harris, and Hilton B. Clark

Kenneth died, at the age of 90, on May 1, 2005 in NY. His wife preceded him in 1983.

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