

AfroPanamanian Newsletter



English opens doors. Read the Newsletter

www.afropanameniannewsletter.mex.tl

We encourage our web readers to feel free to use our links to find scholarships, jobs, grants and others.

No.9 Vol. V

November 2014

ISSN 23088524



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

CREDITS

Editor : Sandra Patterson (R.I.P)

Assistant: Ines V. Sealy

MEMBERS

**President
Roberto L. Alleyne**

**Treasurer
Fernando A. Goldson**

**Others
Ines V. Sealy
Dilsia Alleyne
Roberto L. Alleyne
Cecil V. Reynolds**

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

*Sometimes
the greatest thing
to come out of
all your hard work
isn't what you get for it,
but what you become for it.*

— Steve Maraboli

Kindness is the language the blind can see and the deaf can hear.
If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please type REMOVE and reply to afropanamiannewsletter@gmail.com

October Feedback

We thank Cecilia Parker for supplying us with wonderful quotes.

Correction to October Newsletter's article on SAMAAP (the paragraph reads):

One of its members, Cedric Gittens, came up with a bright idea to celebrate the anniversaries of the Panama Canal (in which many West Indians had worked, died and were buried under those waters) each year with a pilgrimage on the Canal and a ceremony on its waters in remembrance of our forefathers, as is done by seamen when someone is put to sea.

It should read:

One year, after several years of celebration, Cedric Gittens, one of its members, came up with a bright idea to celebrate the anniversaries of the Panama Canal (in which many West Indians had worked, died and were buried under those waters) each year with a pilgrimage on the Canal and a ceremony on its waters in remembrance of our forefathers, as is done by seamen when someone is put to sea.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPcgM1MnDnI&feature=youtu.be> (watch Louis Armstrong do his thing)

Yu call mi Black

*by Luis Alberto Greenidge Barker
10/25/2014*

Yu call mi Black

And want mi to be offended fa that

No, mi no a offended fa that bullshit

Mi love mi self yu know

Mi love mi mada

Mi love mi fada

Mi love mi people

So yu see, yu can't offend mi color

Yu can't offend mi race

IN ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS.

More Than A Day

By Karl Fuchs

As Thanksgiving Day rolls around,
It brings up some facts, quite profound.

We may think that we're poor,

Feel like bums, insecure,

But in truth, our riches astound.

We have friends and family we love;
We have guidance from heaven above.

We have so much more

Than they sell in a store,

We're wealthy, when push comes to shove.

So add up your blessings, I say;
Make Thanksgiving last more than a day.

Enjoy what you've got;

Realize it's a lot,

And you'll make all your cares go away.



CELEBRATING PANAMA'S INDEPENDENCES

We say independences, because, in the month of November, Panama celebrates several separations and announcements of independence: from Spain (which had conquered the country in the XV century) and again from Colombia in 1903. The celebration is month-long and parades are the menu all the way.

Parades, Processions & Protests

Ines V. Sealy 11/4/2014

Apparently people like to march:
they walk in groups to protest
for any reason whatsoever
that they may resent

The Roman Catholic church
celebrates their saint days
with a large group who march
for favors to ask or demands to pay.

The schools march, the Red Cross too.
Shepherd's march on Christmas day
Etnia Negra in Colon and Rio Abajo do
In the States, they parade that same way

Behind the hearse or coffin
Martin band* was playing
Leslie Sealy on the clarinete
and Charles Mason on the Trombone

***(Martin Band:** Virgil Martin, Clarence Martin's
father)

INDEPENDENT BANDS

by Ines V. Sealy 11/3/2014

November is here
Independence celebrations too
the whole country will celebrate
one more anniversary

November is Independence month
A Marching band is a must
In city, borough or town
Everyone wants to parade or watch.

Students are required to march
practicing, for months on end
Now it's time to show your struts
and your extraordinary suit & boots.

Revolutionary government decided,
no marching in school bands
for those already graduated.

But ex-alumni wanted to march
and John Public wanted to see them,
thus, came the Independent bands.

Hogar was the name of a school
night classes was their fare
the school closed down
but the band (independent) remained;

Offshoots of school bands
became independent bands
anyone who wanted to march
young or old, a band was at hand.

Independent bands have gone abroad
You don't have to be in the same school
to march in an independent band.
Like this band, join up, and be just "cool".

These bands have extended
to parts of the United States
They've started their own parades
Down Franklin Avenue.

Now that school bands from Panama
have been invited to the Parade of the Roses
soon we might see in California
Independent bands from California & Panama.

*One can have a feast of Independent bands on Youtube.
[https://www.youtube.com/results?
search_query=banda+independiente+2014](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=banda+independiente+2014) beginning in
Panama and Colon, besides spreading to the interior;
they have spread to other Central American countries.*



Even the new METRO participated offering its use free of charge on the 3rd & 4th. (Here is an article on the METRO, contributed by Cecilia Parker) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-chesnut/a-ride-on-the-new-panama-b_6093296.html

See the first gates for the new locks passing from Atlantic to Pacific (contributed by Carmela Gobern) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPKd_yM8D3c

50TH ANNIVERSARY
HISPANIC DAY CELEBRATION IN NEW YORK

by Dilsia Mariela Miller Collins-Alleyne

The 50th Anniversary of the Hispanic Day parade was held in New York, including the participation of marching bands from Saint Christopher's Episcopal School, Panama para Cristo Evangelical band and other independent bands from Panama.

Representation from the Republic of Panama

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgoyAKN_wzE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDqtCCKTajc>

Groups from different Latin-American countries marched down Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, one of the most expensive areas of New York.



All this began thanks to Christopher Columbus, a marine from Genoa who, in the mid XV century, made a plan to find a commercial route that would take Spaniards and Portuguese to China, Japan or the Indies faster, without having to go around Africa. Columbus believed that the earth was round: on one extreme were Spain and Portugal and on the other were China and Japan with which they had commercial trade.

On the 12 of October 1492 Rodrigo Triana sighted earth after 72 days of traveling at sea. This discovery caused the encounter of two cultures.

In 1913 this discovery was named “Columbus day” in English and “Día de la Raza” in Spanish; the name was created by the Spaniard Faustino San Pedro, President of the Latin American Union who thought of a celebration which would unite Spain with Latin America. It was decided that as of 1915, the celebration would be held each 12 of October.

In Spain, this celebration was converted into a national holiday or Hispanic Day on the 12 of October 1981 under the Spanish constitution of 1978, and the Royal Decree 3217 of 1981, published in the first edition of the State Official Bulletin of 1982. Other Hispanic descendant countries have adopted the celebration. However, in countries like Chile, Bolivia and Argentina, the diversity of cultures is celebrated as a consequence of the cross-mixture of Europeans, Americans and Africans in the new world.

THE UNTOLD STORY:

IN CELEBRATION OF MUSICIAN'S DAY (Sta. Cecilia's day) Nov. 22

The Martin Family: (Virgil, Clementina, Clarence, and, Clarence Jr.)

Starting with **Virgil Vernon Martin**, a musician, who, played several instruments, (clarinet, sax, flute) learned in his native, Barbados and, who had his own band. His band (Martin Band) played for social activities, and, funerals, marching from the churches in the City of Panama to Coco Grove cemetery in the Chorrillo area. Virgil was also a member of the Bombero Band for many years, where he played the piccolo.

Then came **Clementina Armatradin Martin**, concert pianist & music teacher. Born on September 24 in Panama of West Indian parents, she studied music at the National Conservatory of Panama. After some doing, she was able to perform at the National Theatre. She, as well as her husband, died in the City of Panama.



Their son, **Clarence Martin**, famous band leader, bass player, arranger, composer and educator, was born on January 29, 1921 in the Marañon area of the City of Panama. His first interest in music was the saxophone, but he felt that the sax was too much to carry around so he took up piano classes with Clementina, his mother. Of his own volition, he began composing tunes of his own inspiration which brought others to him for compositions and arrangements.

Clarence Martin Band

Foto: EPASA

Musical Masters began using his arrangements and compositions because they were so well made, modern and advanced for the time. By this time he was doing well as a bass player in several groups: Marcelino Alvarez band and Carlos Ochoa band during the II World War, both in Panama and Colon. When Clarence entered La Perfecta de Armando Boza orchestra, it was composed of mostly Cubans who all emigrated to the United States, taking with them, arrangements by Clarence Martin, presenting them before Masters like Machito, Mario Bauza and others making him famous in the US although he had never stepped on northern soil.

Although he was in demand, he wanted to learn more, so, he took correspondence courses in musical composition and arrangement from Berkeley Music College, California. He obtained outstanding grades which permitted him to be appointed professor of bass at the National Conservatory.

La Perfecta de Armando Boza was already considered the best orchestra in Panama, after it began to use Martin's compositions and arrangements it became *out-of-this-world* with the combination of professionalism of Martin on the bass and Peruchin (Pedro Justiz) on the piano. Martin, became the chief arranger for the orchestra after Peruchin emigrated to Cuba and inventor of the "Panamambo" rhythm with songs such as: CIRCULO CUATRO, GRISELDA LUZ, MADRE, SAL MANI. When Peruchin emigrated, Victor Boa (McRae) became the pianist, maintaining the supremacy of the orchestral performances.

(cont.)

(Cont.)

In Martin's first experience as a director he organized a jazz group, playing the bistros on Sundays. This group was so good that the U.S. Dept. of Defense contracted Martin to be a part of a band which played at the Clubs on the US bases in the Canal Zone.

When Martin decided to form his own band, the Panamanian musicians of the day, all wanted to be a part. He called it *Sonido Nuevo*. They played for Hi school evening dances and when the Armando Boza contract was up with the *El Panama* Hotel, his band was contracted to be the house band of the hotel. At the end of the *El Panama* contract, they were contracted to be the accompanists for the international artists appearing in *El Sotano* of the Continental Hotel



(Image from Critica's files: foto EPASA)

While still under contract to *El Panama*, he was contracted to travel to Lima Peru to play at the Bolivar Hotel and to Curacao to play at their Continental.

In NY his name was ringing. Panamanian composer Delia Arias organized a dance, the attraction of which was to be Clarence Martin (bass), Victor Boa (Piano) and singer Tito Contreras. It was a boom, because all the Latin musicians in NY wanted to meet this musical genius. Lots of offers came for employment, but our Three Panamanians, faithfully returned to Panama.

All the artists who came to Panama wanted to leave with an arrangement by Martin. Among them: Angelica Maria, Miguelito Valdes, Olga Guillot, Marco Antonio Muniz, Daniel Santos, Armando Manzanero etc.

He was a member of the Police Band, the Republican Band and the Symphonic Orchestra.

Clarence died of Cardiac Arrest on July 11, 1980 at the Social Security Hospital of Panama after what was considered a successful simple operation.

Among his compositions we must mention his association with Alonso Wilson Bryan to produce the "MATAMBO club songs" *Los Tres Barberos*, *Rivoli* and *Los Romanticos*.



"Clarence Jr." Organist, singer.

Virgilio, Clarence Martin's son, (better known as Clarence Martin Jr.) is a born artist. Although, like his father (at first) he has no formal training, he sings and plays the electronic keyboard in performances which delight audiences in night clubs and restaurants.

Clarence Sr. also has 2 daughters who sing.

Celebrating Musician's day in Panama.

According to Wikipedia (the free encyclopedia on the internet):

Musician's day is celebrated internationally on November 22 to honor musicians. The date is to commemorate the death of St. Cecilia (semi-legendary figure, Christian Martyr and patroness of musicians). Some sources mention that because the painters of the XV century depicted St. Cecilia playing the harp and other instruments, that's why she is considered their patroness.

This celebration began the 22nd of November, 1570 with a festivity held in the French town of Evreux (Normandy), with a tournament of composers. From 1695 it began to be celebrated in Edinburg (Scotland) on a regular basis. Later, other countries such as: Germany, Spain and France took it up. In Latin America, this tradition of celebrating the date began in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) between 1919 and 1920 and has extended to the rest of the Americas.

In Panama, upon instigation of the then afro-West-Indian descendant Deputy of the Republic, Alfredo Cragwell, Law No. 24 of February 11, 1955 was declared (*this was mentioned in the September 2011 Newsletter article "Talking About Lodges"*), and the law states that it should be a day of rest for musicians all over the country.

Quoting: All musical institutions of the country, schools, chorales and similar societies should develop, on that day, programs or cultural activities with the intention of increasing the interest of the community in favor of music.

The President of the Assembly at that time was Ernesto E. Estenoz and the President of the Republic who signed it into law was Ricardo M. (Dicky) Arias E. This is registered in Gaceta Oficial No. 12.702 of Wednesday, June 29, 1955.

Upon the death of the singer-author, composer, arranger **Alonso Wilson** De Briano on January 8, 2013, (*AfroPanamanian Newsletter January 2013 presented his biography "Son Winsor is gone" upon his demise*) his family donated a collection of photos and paraphernalia related to his musical career to the Society of Friends of the West Indian Museum. In compliance with the above law, the Museum and SAMAAP grasped the opportunity, to inaugurate an exhibition of these photographs, in celebration of Musician's Day.

This exhibit will be on display until the month of February. Museum hours are 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday.



(Foto Veronica Forte)

**Lilia Wilson,
Alonso's eldest sister alive,
cut's the ribbon
to open the exhibit
to the public.**