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Class of 1968 Paraiso H.S. Reunion, August 12-19, 2006



Photos by Alonso Gobern

Sunday, August 13, 2006 at Summit Golf Club

Front row: Eddie Clark, Lois Bushell Motley, Marcia Smith Williams, Mathilde Padmore, Rafael Gordon, Vilma Nesfield Poyser and Carmela Lowe Gobern; Second row: Sheila Elliott Savory, Rafael Evering, Carmen Wade Walrond, Patricia Blades Cox, Xenia Spencer Fareaux, Ana Todd Catón, Lenka Semper Blue, Gloria Ramirez Smikle; Third row: Yolanda Stephens Taylor, Marco Hinds, Teresa Cherie, Gilbert Daniel, Gregor Alfred, Eustace Mathews, Marcos Aird, Ricardo Everett (hidden), Ronaldo Beckford, Yolanda Ogarra, Gwendolyn Salkey (hidden), Rudy Lord, Lorenzo Jones, Anida Hinds Daniel and Paul Stewart.



PARAISO HIGH SCHOOL

Photo courtesy of www.czbrats.com

Editor's Note: This CyberNews Special Edition features a report of the Class of 1968 Paraíso High School Reunion (of which I am a member). We celebrated an enjoyable week of activities from August 12-19, 2006. Organized **class reunions** trace their history to the early 1800s. High school class reunions are nostalgic events that provide a chance to reunite and network with old friends, classmates and alumni. If your class is planning a reunion, we encourage you to support the efforts of the organizing committee for the success of the scheduled activities. **Classmate Vilma Nesfield Poyser best describes our reunion with the following statement:** *"If one had to redefine Peace and Harmony, that was our reunion. Every step was well organized and in sync."* **Classmate Xenia Spencer**

Fareaux also describes the success of our reunion: *I loved the fact that the reunion did not revolve about what we have become, but it was all about friendship and showing our love and appreciation for one another.* These two statements sum up the success of our reunion. The following are our class members who participated in our reunion. Our reunion was open to all and included classmates who would, could or should have graduated with the Class of 1968. . . .



CLG (Carm)

PARTICIPATING CLASSMATES FROM OVERSEAS:

Horacio "Ray" Adams (New York)	Marco Hinds (North Carolina)	Sheila Elliott Savory (Guatemala)
Lenka Semper Blue (New York)	Lorenzo Hylton (Maryland)	Paul Stewart (New York)
Teresa Cherie (California)	Lorenzo Jones (New Jersey)	Yolanda Stevens Taylor (New York)
Norman "Eddie" Clark (Texas)	Lois Bushell Motley (California)	Carmen Wade Walrond (New Jersey)
Patricia Blades Cox (Oregon)	Yolanda Ogarra (New York)	Raymond West (New York)
Anida Hinds Daniel (Florida)	Mathilde Padmore (Florida)	Marcia Smith Williams (Georgia)
Rafael Evering (Texas)	Vilma Nesfield Poyser (New York)	
Xenia Spencer Fareaux (New York)	Gwendolyn Salkey (California)	

PARTICIPATING CLASSMATES FROM PANAMA:

Marcus Aird	Doris Delgado	Eustace Mathews
Gregor Alfred	Ricardo Everett	Dalys Montero
Roberto Bailey	Yolanda Cox George	Orlando Myrie
Ronaldo Beckford	Carmela Lowe Gubern	Gloria Ramirez Smikle
Ana Todd Catón	Rafael Gordon	Luis "Lucho" Smith
Gilbert Daniel	Sebastian "Rudy" Lord	

Friday, August 11, 2006

Arrival of classmates and their family members, and the distribution of welcome packets. **The welcome packets contained the following:** A name tag, an itinerary, Focus on Panama Tourism magazine, Hello Panama Tourism Magazine, El Visitante Newspaper, brochures on Panama from the IPAT, brochures on the Panama Canal from the Panama Canal Authority, a “Class of ‘68” personalized note pad, an pen, a “Class of ‘68 personalized Panama souvenir, El Faro Newspaper, Information on Decameron, a SAMAAP brochure and a mini bun.



Welcome Packet

Saturday, August 12, 2006

Morning free.

6 to 9 p.m. Informal Welcome, Meet-and-Greet Get-together in the social area of the Hotel Torres de Alba. This activity was hosted by local classmates. Our menu included chow mein, quiche lorraine, empanadas, cake and drinks. Our moments of sharing involved us introducing ourselves and our relatives and friends who accompanied us that night.

Sunday, August 13, 2006

8 a.m. We attended the worship service at the Rio Abajo Methodist Church, 13th Street, Río Abajo, where we received a special blessing by the preacher Deacon Enrique Marshall.



Worship service at the Rio Abajo Methodist Church. In the front pew (left to right) Lorenzo and Olivia Jones, Celia Maynard Pecou, Oscar Murrell, Norman "Eddie" Clark and Pablo Kirven.

Sunday, August 13, 2006 (continued)

CLASSMATES PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN THE WORSHIP SERVICE.



Classmate Norman "Eddie" Clark shared greetings on behalf of class members. Classmate Carmela Gobern gave the children's story with active participation by members of the congregation. The theme of the story time was encouraging the children to put the church first, especially where giving is concerned.



Photo on left: **The Blossoms**, our school-days singing group, sang "You'll Never Walk Alone.". Members are Lois Bushell Motley, Sheila Elliott Savory, Marcia Smith Williams, Carmela Lowe Gobern, Gwendolyn Salkey and Yolanda Ogarra. We received a standing ovation.

Photo on right: The preacher Deacon Enrique Marshall prayed for the members of the Class of 1968 Paraíso High School and their relatives who accompanied us to that service.

10:30 a.m. Following the worship service, we went on a bus tour of Amador Causeway, Pedro Miguel, Paraíso and Gamboa townsites. We had two 45-passenger buses.

1 to 4 p.m. We subsequently enjoyed a Buffet Luncheon at Summit Golf Club and Resort Restaurant.



Amador Causeway

Sunday, August 13, 2006 (continued)
BUFFET LUNCHEON AT SUMMIT GOLF CLUB AND RESORT:



Our program at the luncheon consisted of the following:

- We remembered each of our 19 departed classmates and offered a minute of silence for them (Eustace Mathews spoke about the late Arturo Drew and Carmela Gobern spoke about the late Cecilia Bonnick)
- Classmate Rafael Gordon read a poem he wrote in celebration of our reunion.
- Classmate Sheila Elliott Savory read a motivational poem “The Invitation” by Oriah Mountain Dreamer, which was very fitting and in keeping with the theme of our reunion.
- The following teachers were honored: Oscar Murrell, Elsie Hayot and Pablo Kirven.
- Reading of messages from absent classmates.

The program concluded with a presentation of two songs by The Blossoms. Number of persons attending the worship service and buffet luncheon:74



Prof. Oscar Murrell was recognized by Classmate Sebastian “Rudy” Lord. Prof. Elsie Hayot was recognized by Classmate Yolanda Stephens Taylor and Prof. Pablo Kirven was recognized by Classmate Lorenzo Jones. Professor Wilfredo Layne was also invited to participate; however, he was unable to attend.

4:15 p.m. Following lunch, a one-hour meeting of classmates was held in a private room at Summit Golf Club and Resort.

6:00 p.m. We returned to Hotel Torres de Alba.

Monday, August 14 through Wednesday, August 16, 2006

2:00 p.m. Two (45-passenger) buses departed from Hotel Torres de Alba for Decameron Beach Resort, where we spent three enjoyable days and two delightful nights enjoying the facilities. Number of persons who went to Decameron: 78



Decameron Beach Resort



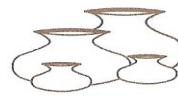
Carmela Gobern, Johanna Chambers, Carmen and Eduardo Martinez, at Decameron Beach Resort.

Thursday, August 17, 2006

Open during the day.

7:30 p.m.

Supper with a Typical Panamanian Show at



RESTAURANTE
TINAJAS



Following supper at Tinajas Restaurant we were treated to a typical Panamanian show by the Folkloric Group Panamá, Ritmos y Tambores. Number of persons attending supper at Tinajas: 86



Folkloric dances by Panamá Ritmos y Tambores at Tinajas Restaurant.

Friday, August 18, 2006

Open during the day.

6:30 p.m. Meeting of classmates at the Elks Hall in which we presented the financial report of the reunion and discussed plans for our 40th reunion, scheduled for the year 2008. A donation of one hundred dollars (\$100) was made to the Elks Lodge, in appreciation for the use of their facilities for our local meetings.

Additionally, as part of a community project, we agreed to make a donation to the Santo Tomas Hospital Bed Sheet Drive that was currently taking place in Panama. Classmates Ana Todd Catón and Rafael Evering, accompanied by Elvia Evering, this donation was accomplished on Saturday, August 19.

OUR CLASS MADE A DONATION OF SEVERAL BED SHEETS TO SANTO TOMAS HOSPITAL



Hospital Santo Tomás - <http://www.hst.sld.pa/>

Report from Ana Todd Catón on the donation made by the Class of 1968:

“In representation of our class, on Saturday, August 19, 2006, classmate Rafael Evering, his wife Elvia and I went to the installations of MEDCOM, located on the 12 de Octubre Avenue, to make the donation of bed sheets for the Santo Tomás Hospital.. At first I thought of going to the store to buy the sheets, but there was ADEVOL Company at MEDCOM selling them. We approached ADEVOL and with our donation of one hundred dollars (\$100), we were able to purchase 13 sheets at \$7.50. each.”

Ana Todd Catón (Panamá)

Note: It was learned from our news reports that at Santo Tomas Hospital the lifetime of a bed sheet is two months, so there is constant need for replacements.

CLG (Carm)

Friday, August 18, 2006 (continued)



A partial view of attendees at our closing meeting.

7:30 p.m. Following our meeting, an informal get-together was held at the Elks Hall. Number of persons attending:75.

Saturday, August 19, 2006

Open during the day.

7:30 p.m. As the closing activity of our reunion, we attended the Buffet-Dinner and Dance at Hotel Veneto sponsored by the Society of Friends of the West Indian Museum of Panama (SAMAAP). This activity commemorated the 92nd Anniversary of the Panama Canal and the 25th Anniversary of SAMAAP. There were close to 500 persons in attendance. Class members, with friends and relatives totaled approximately 100. The Beachers from Bocas del Toro played and several members of the Panamanian West Indian community were honored.

Saturday, August 19, 2006 (continued)

HONOREES AT SAMAAP DINNER DANCE INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:



The following five citizens were honored by SAMAAP: **Edward Jordan Jr.** (Barbería Pío), **Harley James Mitchell** (Supreme Court Magistrate), **Emily Butcher** (retired music professor), **Lydia Gordon de Isaacs** (University of Panama) and **Antonio Michel** (Panama Canal Authority). **Classmate Carmela Gobern** (far left), who is also the Secretary of Admissions of SAMAAP, served as Mistress of Ceremonies for the SAMAAP Dinner Dance, which was held at the Veneto Hotel in Panama City.



Members of the Class of 1968 say “[Hasta pronto.](#)”

Our next reunion, to commemorate our 40th Anniversary, is tentatively scheduled for August 2008.

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGES WERE RECEIVED FROM CLASSMATES AND FRIENDS:

Carmela and Alonso: No one can treasure the great hospitality that you both have showed us (PHS Class of 1968). Many thanks for all that you have done to make our reunion such a success. I will cherish our partnership in getting it done and most of all, the love that you both put into making us all one big happy family.

Norman "Eddie" Clark (Texas)

Carmela y Eddie: Gracias de nuevo por haber realizado nuestro sueño de reconectar de nuevo con nuestros compañeros después de tantos años y ver a la Prof. Elsie de Hayot y al Prof. Kirven. Mi familia al igual que yo quedamos muy satisfechos de todos los hechos.

Carmen (Carmelita) Wade Walrond (New Jersey)

Dear Carmela: You did a fantastic job in organizing the activities for the Class of '68 of which you are a part. I never been on the Causeway; I never been to the Summit Golf Club; and I never been to the Gran Salon of the Hotel Veneto. Thank you for my new experiences. Congratulations to you and the wind under your wings (Alonso).

Pablo Kirven (Panama)

Greetings and salutations to all: First of all, let me thank all of the planners, and doers of our recently held pre-40th class reunion. Those of you that attended any of the events should join me in a well-deserved salute to everyone who had anything to do with putting this thoroughly organized reunion together. It went so smoothly. Oscar and I had a wonderful, wonderful time. As a matter of fact, I have not heard of any incidents to put a damper on anything. Well, we had some rain sometimes...Even the rain was wonderful. All in all, we all agreed that we want to meet again in 2008 and we truly hope that more of you (those who did not attend) will join us for the next milestone. Second, let us stay in touch, let us keep these re-kindled fires burning and lets get some ideas from everyone for the 40th. A meeting was held to get some ideas and someone will let us know soon what was agreed on by those present. Third, all of you that took photos, don't forget to share them first opportunity. I had a wonderful, wonderful time and truly look forward to 2008 and seeing all of you.

Marcia Smith Williams (Georgia)

My Dear Classmates: I greet you all in that precious and wonderful name of our Lord, Jesus Christ! Hoping all of you are well and trying to get back to normal after that wonderful week in that wonderful country we call home. It was so good to see each and every one of you and your families. Everyone looks great. Arnulfo and I had a great time. You guys in Panama need to give yourself a pat on the back, you all did such a great job. I appreciate all that you did to make our reunion the success that it was. I can't say thanks enough. I said it before, but I think it should be repeated. I loved the fact that the reunion did not revolved about what we have become, but it was all about friendship and showing our love and appreciation for one another. This reunion celebration was great and I look forward to our 40th in 2008. I hope that all those who came this year will return and hopefully all those that were unable to make it this year will consider attending in 2008. It was great, it was fun, all of that plus more. Decameron was great, but I am now paying for all the food I ate. (smile). I must commend the Blossoms for their extraordinary come-back. You guys were great! I applaud you. Last but not least, I give thanks to God, who has given us health and strength and he enabled us to come together for a time such as this. I pray that God's presence would continually guide you and that His blessings would overtake you as you seek Him daily.

Xenia Spencer Fareaux (New York)

Hi Carmela: .I heard your class reunion was a great success. I will have to touch bases with you prior to our next reunion to get your input regarding event planning. Both Rafael Evering and Eddie Clark were very complimentary regarding your work. Congratulations!!

Pat Mayers (Texas)



Dear classmates: Words cannot express what I experienced with all of you. I give God praise for the experience. Carmela and Eddie thank you for your commitment to seeing this wonderful experience to fruition. May God restore to you one hundred fold for your labor of love. To all of you in Panama who worked with Carmela God's richest blessings be upon you. I'm soooo looking forward to 2008.

Yolanda Ogarra (New York)

Carmela and Eddie: I really wanted to make the trip to the reunion this coming August, but, other things got in the way. Please accept my deepest apology. It has been a long time since I have been home. From the information that this writer is receiving, it appears that you guys took on a monumental task and succeeded above and beyond the call of duty. Given the geographical locations of some of our classmates, and, the demands placed on some of us because of life conditions, it is amazing that you were able to pull this off. Let us hope that we use this event as a stepping-stone to reach out to others who grew-up in the Panama Canal Zone, whether they intend to return to Panama to live or not, to establish some type of monument to other ancestors who worked on the Panama Railroad construction circa 1850, those who dug that big ditch, without who's contribution, Panama would not be the place its today. As our communities disappear, if nothing is done to say hell, we were here, the history of Rainbow City, Silver City, Camp Baird, Camp Coiners, the Heights, Gamboa a k a Santa Cruz, Paraíso and Pedro Miguel, will go the way of Gorgona, Monte Lirio, Barbacoas, Bas and Haut Obispo, Bohio, Caimito, La Boca, Red Tank, Rio Grande, and Empire just to name a few, will be forgotten. It would be as if we never existed. Again, Carmela and Eddie thank you for a job well done.

Anthony (Rocco) Foster (New York)

Hi everyone: It was good to see all of you. I agree with Marcia, thanks to all the planners and the doers who made it possible for this reunion to be the great success that it was. At first when the plans for the reunion came out I personally was hesitant because I know how over inflated egos can get in the way and I didn't feel like I wanted to be bothered; but as the months pressed on I made a decision to attend and I don't regret it. It was such a beautiful experience. What was most touching to me is the fact that there were no egos displayed (easing God out) and our basic teaching and upbringing was most prevalent. There was so much love that if there was any intention of anything other than love, it did not succeed because love prevailed. I have not laughed so much in a long time. When I watched my granddaughter laugh, from her heart, and played with her grandfather it just did something to me. I was most pleased to see that the next generation got along so well and I especially want to thank Eddie for the interest he took in assuring the safety and well-being of the younger ones. It seems like a simple task planning a reunion, but it takes a lot of work and a whole lot of commitment to see it through and make it a success like it was. I have heard stories of other reunions having bickering, but thank God we didn't have that. Let us continue to pray for the ones who may be afflicted whether in sickness or just life's curve balls. Let us remember to love one another, regardless of our religious or other beliefs that we will meet again in 2008 in a bigger and grander way. My family is most appreciative and enjoyed every moment that they spent with you guys. It was not just Mommy's thing but they felt very much a part of what was happening and I thank you for making them feel welcomed.

Yolanda Stephens Taylor (New York)

Hola Carm: Congratulations on our class reunion. I heard only great things about it so far. .Sorry I missed all the fun.

Sandra "Kiki" Holder Lockwood (Florida)

It was certainly a blast from the past!!!! Short and sweet. '08 should be great!!!! To the planners and organizers, I give my great thanks and appreciation for your hard work.

Horacio "Ray" Adams (New York)



Greetings: There isn't much more that can be said that hasn't already been said by others. We had a wonderful time and looking forward to 2008. Congratulations to Eddie, Carmela and the local committee for working so hard and making the reunion a memorable event. Like Marco said, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it". I am willing to do whatever I can to help in the preparations for 2008.

Lois Bushell Motley (California)

Hello Carmela: I would like to thank you, Eddie, and the classmates for the wonderful time and experience we all shared. My wife and I had a wonderful time. I would like to suggest that the classmates in the USA begin paying monthly dues of \$10 - 20 dollars toward the 2008-reunion. Please discuss this with the group to find out if this is acceptable. Please keep in touch. Thanks again for everything.

Rafael Evering (Texas)

Your Highness Carmela and Your Lordship Eddie: don't think any of us would disagree that we, your subjects, were quite pleased, happy and excited throughout the whole event. If one had to redefine Peace and Harmony that was our reunion. Every step was well organized and in sync. To encourage you all to keep up the greatness and to make the upcoming reunion a even greater event. I remain your humble servant.

Vilma Nesfield Poyser (New York)

Hi all: I had a wonderful, wonderful time. It was indeed a pleasure to see each and everyone of you. I am looking forward to doing it again in '08. Hopefully, we will get some more classmates on board. Love you all.

Marco Hinds (North Carolina)

Dear Carmela: I am back in the states since Monday. Just want to say that the Ocú trip and the Class of 1968 reunion were outstanding. I made some new friends.

John Clark (California)

Congratulations, I understand that your "mini-reunion" was a complete success! Now you're ready for the grand event in 2008!!

Ronaldo Bonnick (Panama)

Hi Carmela: I am sure much effort was put into putting this reunion together but everyone seem to cooperate so well to make it come together smoothly. Please give my regards to my fellow classmates. I am sure you will all have a good time. Thanks for all the updates. It made me feel included. Hopefully next time I will be able to participate.

Xenia Ellis (Virginia)

Queridos Compañeros de Clase: I am so disappointed that I could not be there with you. I was so looking forward to seeing everyone. Unfortunately I could not make it work in my work schedule at this time. However it is my prayer to visit my patria tan **pequeña** before the year is over or in the early part of the coming year. Carmela, allow me to acknowledge the wonderful work you are doing and commitment to keeping us all connected. I send you all my deepest appreciation and friendship for each one of you. God bless you always.

Marilyn Gill (California)

Carmela and all: I am missing being home for the reunion so much...but Jah knows best. I'm really so sorry that I couldn't come to the reunion. I hope that we have one in 2008, Jah spare life. We need so much at this time to stay connected and create a safe place for each other and continue our legacy in Panama. It is quickly becoming the retirement haven of the baby boomers. Everyday there's a new article on the net. My interest is our legacy, our support of each other and a creation of a legacy of love, afrocentrism and humanity elevation. Keep up the work that you are doing.

Makeda Kamara (Massachusetts)

I cannot express the love and peace I felt during our class reunion; I would not trade it for a thing. It was so good seeing everyone. I repeat Ray's words "it was a blast from the past." Overall, my daughter was highly impressed and is looking forward for the 2008 event. I would like to thank Carmela, Eddie and our classmates in Panama for all their hard work in organizing the events and making it a memorable one. I am looking forward for the 2008 reunion and I am making myself available for whatever is needed to be done with the preparations.

Gwendolyn Salkey (California)

Carmela: Wow! You don't know how sorry I am for not being able to be there. I'm not going to be jealous...however. I'll be very happy for all of you. Thanks for keeping me posted... I don't even want to "think" about the amount of fun I'll be missing out on. I have been hospitalized...I had acute bronchitis a couple of weeks ago and I honestly thought I was "out of the woods" but, not so! I relapsed and the doctor was afraid it would turn into pneumonia so I was hospitalized. Was just released this afternoon and the doctor wants to see me once a week for the next 2 weeks to begin with. You know what that means, don't you? No way am I allowed to leave the city, let alone the country! Soooooo disappointed...Have fun...

Rubiela "Ruby" Blair (Texas)

Hola Carmela: It looks like I'm not going to be able to join the class. Please express my love and friendship to all of our classmates. When people ask me about my upbringing, I always tell them that I lived in a community in which folks had an enjoyable and unique social life experience, in which we were able to learn, love and experience a lot about both the world in which we live and about the different types of people that share this earth with us. I believe that this has been a blessed experience that has prepared us all to live and enjoy life. I also believe that we were a great bunch of kids that have a lifelong bond. I have not been in contact with many of our classmates, but when I get together with Eddie, Rafael, Wesso, and others it has been like we have not missed a beat. I have also had the experience of getting together with Greg on couple short occasions, and had a quick visit with Rudy, and have seen others, and have had opportunities to speak to Roberto Bailey and Ricky Hilton on some occasions, and it is always a treasured moment. Whenever spend time with anyone from Panama, but especially folks from Paraíso High, it is a special moment to me. I had the opportunity to speak to Ed, Toast and Shela this week, and it really made me feel like I was missing a great opportunity. Toast, Eddie, and I have been speaking about having fun together in this reunion, and I was looking forward to having my wife meet all my classmates from Paraíso, but I will have to wait for another occasion.

Harold Williams (Connecticut)

Dear classmates: Thanks so much for your cooperation during our recent reunion. Eddie and I were very pleased that all the plans went according to scheduled. **In my humble opinion, the private meeting of classmates held at Summit Golf Club (following the luncheon) was the most significant of all our activities.** We could feel the love, unity and peacefulness during the entire reunion and most of all we could feel God's presence in the midst of all our activities. May God continue to bless you and the members of your family.

Carmela Gobern (Panama)

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