



ERS Engine Room Section

A Caribbean-American Cultural Not-For-profit Organization

“Together As One”

www.engineerroomsection.com

617-759-7134

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Inside this Issue

- 1 ERS Upcoming events
ERS Supplies
Get your Read on
Dedications
Cost of a band
Cost of a band cont'd
- 2 Cost of a band cont'd
- 3 Carnival 2008
Recipe Corner
Ads
Ah Miss it
- 4 ERS Events



Get your Read on.....

“The Autobiography of my Mother”

By *Jamaica Kincaid*

Check it out on Amazon.com.

ERS SUPPLIES

While supplies last

- ERS polo shirts...\$20.00
- ERS Hats/caps\$15.00
- Rags \$5.00
- Bottle sleeves.....\$10.00

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Check out ERS at Myspace/engineerroomsection.com/islandmix.com

ERS UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday August 16, 2008

Fund Raiser and

“Back to School Party”

@ Unity Sports Club,
10 Dunbar Avenue, Dorchester.
Music by: DJ Glenn, Digital
Seduction, Chosen One, Sounds Inc.
See page 4

Saturday August 23, 2008

Join the Carnival Band

“Muddgolia”. See page 3

DEDICATIONS

Passed but not forgotten:

Shirley (Raymond) Niles Avis
Mother of seven: Steve, Jenny, Marlene, Michele, Donna, Gillian, and Stacy; grandmother of many.

Marjorie Christine Innis
Mother of Mervyn, Daphne, Lindy and Roy. Mother-in Law of Andrew, Kenneth, and Judy; also mother in law to Cheryl Cummings; grand and great grand mother of many.

Martin Waithe 5/4/49 – 12/14/07
Founder of Sounds Inc. Survived by his wife Wendy Waithe, children Martin, Jr., Natasha and others and several grand children.

The cost of a Band

By Robert Saldenah

In the Trinidad and Tobago Express of January 27, 2008 Klenworth Jones a journalist student of COSTATT revealed some very interesting facts about the direction the big bands - such as “Tribe”, “Island People”, “Legends” to name a few, have taken regarding their business structure. While it may be viewed as a step forward to some, there is much cause for concern as he pointed out, that gone is the era of the big band leader such as Harold Saldenha, George Bailey, Irvin McWilliams, Peter Minshall and Stephen Leung. Those leaders are only found in the Medium and Small bands. Instead the big bands now have “Owners”, with the band leader being “the Manager or front man, a mere figure head, with the band Owner being the driving force.” The exception to the rule is Brian MacFarlane, the winner of Carnival 2007(C2K7) and Carnival 2008 (C2K8) “Band of the Year” title. MacFarlane has been able to maintain control of his band according to Klenworth Jones, because he is more interested in the artistry (creation of “real” costumes), rather than the mass production type mas of bikini and beads. However it has come at a cost to him, for earlier this year he was “crying” that he could not make ends meet even though he had won the Band of the Year title.

Continue on next page

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Cost of a band cont'd

In his article Klenworth Jones claimed that for some individuals, mas have become a multi-million dollar enterprise, with profit maximization being the main focus.

He goes on to show that one does not just purchase a costume; a mas player purchases a complete package, which includes:

- Fully stocked premium bar
- Breakfast, lunch, snacks
- Security
- Shuttle Service to the band the entire day
- Good bags
- Cool zones (air conditioned trailers)
- Mobile Restrooms
- On-site paramedics' teams and ambulance
- Roaming photographers
- DJs and Live bands
- And of course the costume.

Using "Island People" as a case study, he surmised that with 12 sections of 300 masqueraders per section and with an average price tag of \$3,200.00 per costume, the organization would gross in excess of \$10M. As he pointed out that it is the gross revenue, and the added amenities previously mentioned, bar, security, cool zone, restroom etc when factored in would have reduced the figure. Nevertheless, upon closer examination he notes that there are other revenue generating items for the owner. The band launching (sometimes more than one), the wings, jerseys and the boy shorts (Monday mas) for women are provided with an additional cost of \$499.00 depending on the section. So while the average cost of the package is \$3,200.00, some packages could cost as much as \$4,499.00. It is important to remember that this does not include the price of admission for the band launching and other parties.

There are multiple sources of further income available to the bands. The band itself does not produce all the costumes, sections are sold out to "independent contractors" who pay a fee as much as \$80,000.00 to produce a section using the Island People brand. The general design is done by the band and the cost of inputs is borne by the franchisee, but the arrangement is negotiable. Corporate sponsors

contribute heavily to the major bands in cash or kind. Companies are solicited for "drinks [bar], meals, music or cash in exchange for displaying their product or name or both at band events, or for exclusive association with the mas' band". Major contributors listed on Island People website are, Moneygram International Money Transfer, Carib Brewery, Angostura, Fernandes Distillers, Cable and Wireless, Digicel, A S Bryden, Blue Water, Coca Cola Ltd., and S M Jaleel and company limited.

Jimmy Aboud and Queensway (fabric merchants) pay huge sums to the band owner for their names to be associated with the band not only on Carnival days, but at all associated events. The heavy input from sponsors and patrons have made the events connected with the band, beginning with the early band launching in July, "...have made these events significant money spinners". With the latest technology, scalpers (stormers), and counterfeit tickets are eliminated, ensuring that "the producers of the events enjoy almost if not all of the profits." Tickets for these events ranged from \$300.00 to \$700.00. "All the bands that are registered as business entities are required to pay corporate taxes. For those which gross in excess of \$200,000.00 yearly, VAT registration is mandatory. However he noted, the Ministry of Culture gives a tax rebate of 150 percent of the investment, up to a maximum of \$1M, providing that the owners registers the band with the Inland Revenue Department.

What many people have been clamoring for over the years has finally become a reality, and that is making the masquerade band a profitable business venture. But from the article it appears that the Owner is the one who is laughing all the way to Scotia bank. While the franchisees may reap some profits (although the author did not really disclose this), the Owner is the one maximizing profit, all thanks to the bandleaders, his trusted lieutenants, masqueraders and others who contribute to bringing the band on the road. How much of this profit is trickling down to the masqueraders is another story, for each year marks an increase in the price they pay, and he the Owner always find a way to justify the increase. If it's not one thing then it is another.

Over the years the Steelbands have been criticized for not being organized as business organizations, but is the masquerade band model one to which Steelbands should aspire. Criticisms (rightly or wrongly) over the years has been cast on the Executive of PanTrinbago about not looking after the welfare of their membership. In reading this article it dawned on me that perhaps this was a ploy to make the masquerade band model more attractive and as a consequence gain control of the PanTrinbago's Executive Committee. My personal opinion is that this present executive committee has been able to create shows throughout the year, keeping the Steelband alive and at the same time making money. Moreover, they have convinced the government to pay each player a stipend, previously \$400.00, and increased this year to \$1,000.00. Before anyone begins to howl that this is wasted money, please remember that pan players got to pay for transportation to and from rehearsal six (6) nights of the week. In preparing a band for the Carnival season, the season begins in November of the previous year, and this year with Panorama Preliminaries occurring at mid January, meant that preparations begun in October if not earlier.

During rehearsals players would require some sort of refreshment to sustain them during the night at their own expense. Many girlfriends and wives of pan players forego many parties because their companions are just too tired on Saturdays' nights to attend a party. This is what has been to as a social cost, for it could be the demise of many relationships and marriages. However, back to the main point that Steelbands could be more business oriented, one will or could agree that the Panorama show could yield a larger profit, but that would mean raising the already steep price for the tickets of the various pans show, eventually putting it out of the reach of the ordinary man, who is in fact the panist and the bands true supporters. Could you imagine paying \$500.00 for an all Exclusive Panorama Show? Think about it seriously as it could come to that. Presently there are a few petit-semi-demigods in charge of their bands, and their players are underpaid and under appreciated. If they should go

Continue on next page

Cost of a band cont'd

the route of the masquerade bands, it would be a step in the wrong directions, for they will now be owned, and members will have little or no say in financial matters. Steelbands and the PanTrinbago are the only organizations that are controlled by the true grassroots membership, one that is community based, and draw their membership from within their community, unlike masquerade bands which draw their membership from throughout the country. Which masquerade band someone will play with this year depends on the music, the costume or which band has the "action", whereas with steelband, the base of the support comes from the people living in close proximity to the steelband, and some outside of the Community who are generally loyal to their steelband of choice.

Will Steelbands allow outsiders to come in and take over what they have sacrificed to build over the year? I do not think so.

However, while the debate rages on, we will be keeping a close eye on the development of the masquerade and Steelband.

TnT Carnival 2008

Ah miss it.

Written in "Trini speak"

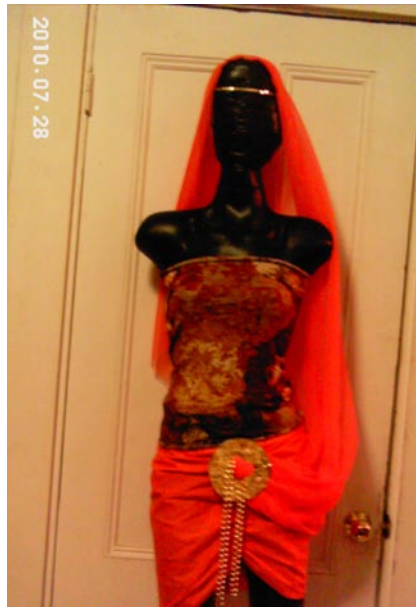
Well I wasn't there but I hear and I see. Meh girl friend Pam called around 11:30 in the morning. "Girl, yuh miss the fete of the year". I guess she was talking about Soca Monarch. At 11:30 am I am at work in the cold in Boston and I really doh want to hear from my friends in TnT, enjoying the carnival. But yuh know how we do, ah Trini ha to rub it in. Pam tell mah bout all who she see and wuh they were doing and to whom. I get all the gossip. Even though I was jealous I still had one fuh she. I was watching the bacanal from the internet. Ah wasn't up close and personal but I was able to check out we ting while relaxing in bed with a carib and meh man. But next year ah go be there.

New England Property Management & Rentals

Contact Mr. Jeff Hinds 617-459-4990

ERS 2008-Boston Carnival Presentation

"Muddgolia"



Register for the band call 617-522-8066

or email ydepeiza@aol.com

or visit the Mass Camp at 19 Atherton Street, Roxbury

Price: Male or Female \$75.00. Children under 12 years old \$40.00

Music: DJ Glenn, DJ Stephen, Digital Seduction and Underground Sound System

Enioy an All inclusive experience with refreshments and security

Recipe Corner -Coconut Bake

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups of flour
- 2/3 cup of water
- 3/4 teaspoon of salt
- 2 tablespoons of sugar
- 3/4 cup of coconut (grated)
- 2 teaspoons of baking powder
- 1 oz of butter or margarine

METHOD:

In a bowl sift together the flour, salt and baking powder. Rub in the margarine or butter, then stir in the sugar and grated coconut.

Add water, and mix into a firm dough. Next turn the dough out onto a floured board, knead lightly, shape into a ball and leave covered for 15 to 20 minutes. Press in the center and using a rolling pin, roll into a circular shape about -3/4" thick.

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Use a fork or knife marks to decorate the dough. Put on a flat, greased baking sheet and bake for 20 to 30 minutes until brown. Remove from the oven and cut into desired shape 2 to 3 inches wide. Serve hot, then arranged on a flat dish.

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Boston Carnival Village

Magazine coming soon.....

To pick up your copy

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ERS Back to School Party

Saturday August 16th, 2008



@ Unity Sports Club, 10 Dunbar Avenue, Dorchester

Band Fund Raiser

Music by: DJ Glenn, Digital Seduction, Chosen One, Sounds Inc.

Party with a purpose

Admission: \$20.00,

("School children" in uniform \$15.00)

Come out, enjoy and support ERS 2008 band

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½ page	\$100.00	7 1/2" W x 4 3/4" H
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1/8 page (business card)	\$25.00	3 1/4" W x 2 1/4" H

If typesetting and layout is desired ads will be billed at an additional \$25.00 per hour. Special placement of ads e.g. front or back page will cost more. ERS reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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