



FEB 1970

EXPRESS

Ellie brought pan out of dark ages

SOMEBODY STOLE Fish Eye's "Mary-had-a-little-lamb" iron triangle from Hell Yard and he went to get it back from behind the bridge, it is said.

He went with a side, prepared to fight for it. They fought for it.

For a long time after that bands fought with other bands and the worst thing a young lady could do was to have a boyfriend who beat pan.

There was no steelband association, no sponsor and steelbandmen didn't know about electing a president, a public relations officer and chairman and making releases with letterheads.

They fought their fights and improved their pans and their music.

They beat a biscuit drum without notes then they beat a paint drum from the inside so that it looked like someone had tried to blow it up like a balloon and they got notes on the hump and called it a ping pong.

Winston "Spree" Simon has been credited with inventing the first melodic pan.

Repeat this in a crowd and you'll get an argument.

You will also get an argument for saying that Fred Corbin of Gonzales made the first ping pong or that it came from Alexander's Ragtime Band.

But it is a fact that Spree Simon did play a primitive Ave Maria and won some measure of respect for pan as a musical instrument.

Then along came Ellie Mannette of the sweet pan who produced the basic layout for seventy percent of the pans used today.

Ellie put more notes on the ping pong and rubber on the beating end of the sticks.

He tuned the oil drums and formed Invaders and gave the steelband movement new stimulus.

And he brought the panmen and pan music out of the dark ages.

SUNDAY, Feb. 1 1970

Hell Yard = Tokyo

Steelband - history