

Zanmi Detroit

June 2003

Volume 2, No. 1

Haitian Network Group of Detroit

From the President

Marie Soledad Nelson

Welcome to another edition of *Zanmi Detroit!* Due to budget constraints we have not been able to publish our newsletter as scheduled, but thanks to the supporting efforts



Fundraiser Luncheon

of the community, we are happy that we can print this edition. The Haitian Network Group of Detroit (HNGD) sends its thanks and gratitude

to those who attended our newsletter fundraising luncheon.

I also want to share with our readers that Fritz Momplaisir has stepped down as president of the HNGD. Fritz served as president of the group since it was formed over four years ago. Throughout his tenure as president, Fritz worked diligently with an arduous determination for the group. The Haitian Network group would like to thank Mr. Momplaisir for the tremendous service he has provided for our community these past few years. As the former vice-president of the group, I have moved up to Fritz's position as the new president of the HNGD. As co-founder of the group, I had no idea that when we started on this journey we would end up where we are today. For our many successes I thank our members who have always worked assiduously toward our goals and continue to enrich us with new ideas. Many thanks to the Haitian Community and friends whose support has allowed us to exist and grow.

We look forward to accomplishing much

more. The HNGD's executive board is currently working on a number of projects that will take place during this upcoming year. We are especially excited about the Bicentennial of Haiti's independence, which we will celebrate in 2004. ♦

Autobiography from Haiti

By Jean Woodyly Dormeus,
Seminary Student

I am Woodyly, a young man, 29, single and I come from the most materially impoverished country in the Western Hemisphere. The per capita income in Haiti equals less than one dollar per day in U.S. funds. For many decades, the nation of Haiti has labored with life expectancy, health care, employment, education, and economic development challenges that are among the worst the world has ever seen. One problem that does not exist however, is limited church attendance. The Haitian churches are growing, and people are hungry for the gospel. Two or three hours before the 7:00 a.m. Sunday services, you put on your best clothes and start walking and singing as you go. There are no parking lots since no one has use for them. If you hope to find a seat, you have to arrive at least one hour early.

Through tremendous sacrifice and hard work, my parents ensured that I receive the best education available in Limbe, which is located in northern Haiti. I became fluent



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Autobiography

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in French, Spanish, and English by the time I enrolled at the Christian University of Northern Haiti. I obtained a B.A. in Theology and then for two years I served as assistant pastor of the Haitian Missionary Baptist Church in La Romana, Dominican Republic. While in La Romana, I shared my dream of continuing my education in the United States with several American Baptist mission teams. I wanted to tailor my studies with special emphasis on pastoral counseling and then return to teach at my alma mater. A missionary group from the North Parkersburg



Baptist Church in West Virginia brought me to their town where I earned another B.A. at Ohio Valley College and graduated with a GPA of 3.8.

Afterwards, the Ashland Theological Seminary awarded me a two-year Presidential Scholarship that covered most of my tuition at their Detroit Center, which is located in Southfield, Michigan. Many folks helped with my expenses and I held a part-time job in a warehouse to cover the rest. I completed six months of internship with the South Oakland Shelter, which serves the homeless population and on May 31, 2003, I graduated with an M.A. in pastoral counseling.

I am now preparing for my return to Haiti and at this peculiar moment Haiti is torn apart with various political, economic and spiritual problems. My prayers and dreams are to use my education in counseling to help my Haitian brothers and sisters to know better days. I desire to be one of the first counselors in Haiti, to pastor churches, and to teach in my alma mater. To my despair, the recent news is scary...

Laurie Heneise Casseus is part of the university faculty and the daughter of its founder. The following is a quote from her March 1, 2003 e-mail: *The specter of hunger looms large as people are beginning to choose not to go to the hospital, not to send*

their children to school, and not to purchase anything that is not absolutely essential for survival. The cost of living has doubled and more, especially since late December.

Two of our college professors who have a long commute are spending half of their salaries just on fuel to come to teach. Practically speaking how can we function for another year? There does not seem to be any physical help remotely on the horizon, and the level of frustration, fear, and rage are increasing rapidly, essentially on the part of the youth. Truly only the Lord can help now.

We are losing students because there is not enough scholarship money to go around. This is so heartbreaking; many with great promise and talent having to drop out. We are seeing people die. This is literally an SOS.

Another e-mail from the university's president expressed similar concerns. Additionally, my parents and friends in Haiti strongly advise that I cancel my plans to return home. I have fervently sought God's will to help with my decision, especially over this past month. Finally, I reached the conclusion that I must go back. My last day in the USA will be June 24th, 2003. I am assured that the best way to live my life is by sharing it with others. I am not returning to be the next Haitian president, but to be a witness of God's works among the Haitian nation. I see what others call success, prosperity and happiness, and I realize that they are all lifeless.



The World, particularly the church of Jesus Christ, is created to live in community. One of my favorite authors, Gareth Weldon Icenogle says, "God exists in community. He created human beings to be unique, separate and very different from each other, but also to have a common life." Please pray for me, for my family and for the Nation of Haiti. Regardless of how things now develop, I know that God has a plan. For anyone willing to help us in any way, please contact me at jdormeus@hotmail.com ♦

Lea Kokoye In Review

By Joe Etienne

Yeah! We did it, after all. We wanted to do a play, but not just any play. We wanted to bring to the stage the work of Haiti's most prolific storyteller, Maurice Sixto. We had no idea how we were going to pull it off. No one had a clue, but we weren't going to let that stop us. Very few of us had any extensive theatrical experience, except for Raphaël Bolivar, who proved to be a phenomenal asset to our production. Although he joined us late in production, his expertise helped us a great deal.

On behalf of the Haitian Network Group of Detroit (HNGD), I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to all that attended our theatrical debut of Lea Kokoye at the Mayflower Congregational Church of Detroit on June 2, 2002. In the past few years since our existence, the HNGD has put together numerous social and cultural events, and because of the support of the Detroit



community, we have always attained success. This play was no exception. The performance and the big turnout from the Haitian community delighted the cast and audience alike. There were several factors that contributed to the success of Lea Kokoye, but I would like to comment on one that impressed me a great deal - the inexorable efforts of the cast.

When the idea for the play was first discussed, the time restraints that faced each of us at that time seemed to be the biggest obstacle for our plans. And there was no such thing as an audition. Once Maggy and I got the script together, the members of the group basically *chose* which parts they wanted to play. Casting was a serious problem, mainly

because it was hard to find people who could commit to the project. At the first few rehearsals, we had so much fun that we became a lot less reluctant to give up some of our individual social activities on the weekends. I must congratulate each member of the cast on a job well done. The players were Marie Soledad Nelson, Fritz Momplaisir, Rosario Danier, Maggy Corkery, Danielle Desroches, Adeline Auguste, Catherine Auguste, Reynold Charles, Jean Woodley Dorméus, Mylla Danjou, Yasmine Dubreuze, Becel Dubreuze, and Raphaël Bolivar. Our first production was produced and directed by Maggy Corkery and myself. We invite everyone to join us for our next play. ♦

Upcoming Events Mark Your Calendar!



C.C.C.O Carival Pageant

July 19, 2003

International Institute

Tickets \$20

Katheline Francois is representing Haiti in this year's pageant.

Caribbean International Festival

(Carival 2003)

August 8-10, 2003

Philip Hart Plaza

Carival Parade

August 9, 2003

21st Annual

African World Festival

August 15-17, 2003

Philip Hart Plaza

Ford International Jazz Festival

August 30-September 1, 2003

Philip Hart Plaza

A Vision of Haiti: Our Trip

By Patricia M. Abner

There was a big celebration in Haiti on Monday, April 7th. It was the 200th Anniversary of the death of Toussaint L'ouverture, the Father of the Revolution. There were celebrations everywhere and it was a good day to be in Haiti. We were visiting Haiti as members of the Haiti Committee that was formed at our church, Sacred Heart in Detroit.

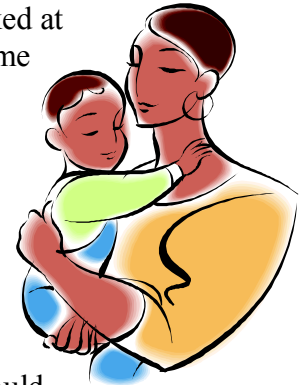
We outlined several objectives for our trip. The first was to see the newly completed well and to inquire about the "life of the well." We plan to have a large water tank installed whereas the people can get water from outside the rector walls. Additionally, work on a new technical center has begun. It will consist of four small rooms, one larger room and bathrooms. We also want to continue making improvements in our sponsoring program. Presently, there are approximately 40 children who are being sponsored. We visited several sponsored children and their families in their homes.



Among them was my sponsored son, Gracia, who is now 13 years old but looks 10. He is now in the 4th grade. Another

objective is to help the small chapel Savongary with a water project. We can also help by supplying them with seeds for lettuce and other green vegetables. Another project is to make much needed improvements in the marketplace sheds in Ennery. We found out that before any work could begin on the marketplace, we needed to speak to the Mayor, as the government in Ennery owns the marketplace. We were able to meet with a spokesperson from the mayor's office and it was agreed that we would work together with town representatives in planning for the

marketplace upgrades. Many people in the area pay for a spot in the market, but don't have a table on which to place their wares. Consequently, they end up selling their food and wares on a sheet or blanket on the ground where they are subject to hundreds of people walking through and kicking up dust. While in Haiti, we also worked at Mother Theresa's Home for Sick and Malnourished Children. We fed, bathed and changed the diapers of many children. I marveled that sometimes when just sitting and holding a child, he would hold on to you so tightly. I reacquainted myself with a little girl, Nadja that I had met many years ago. I am not sure she really remembered me but she smiled and hugged me just as she had done the very first time I saw her. This is a place that is in need of diapers, t-shirts and shorts for small children. My own personal objective was also met. I'm happy to say that I have developed a better understanding of the Creole language this year. Mesi anpil Adeline Auguste, Catherine Auguste and Danielle Desroches.



Despite some of the wonderful things we see underway in Haiti, some things have not changed at all. We are still saddened by the state of affairs at the State Hospital in Ennery. It is housed in such a beautiful building that is not be used to its fullest capacity. According to the sisters, the people have no confidence in the hospital and do not want to be taken there. There are some Cuban doctors working there but there is a tremendous



communication problem. The Cuban doctors make no effort to learn to speak Creole to the people. Because of the distrust bred by this language/cultural barrier, if a person needs to go to a hospital, they prefer to go to the more

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Haiti Trip (continued from page 4)

distant hospital in Gonaives.

In traveling back and forth from Port-au-Prince, Ennery, Cap Haitien and Labadie, I began to notice more and more dust – dust everywhere! This is especially true on the road from Listere to Gonaives—this is the worst stretch. Watching the people in Ennery, especially the children, you know that nothing has really changed. The people are still having difficulties providing for their families. The government is still in turmoil. There have been no agreements between the Lavalas Party and The Convergence. And so all over Haiti the people continue with the struggle to earn a living and care for their families as best they can. ♦

Culture Quickie

What is a Tap-Tap?

Tap-Tap is a brightly decorated privately owned truck/bus that is used for public transportation. It is very common in the nation's capital, Port-au-Prince. Often passengers pack tightly inside to sit on wooden benches. In Creole, "tap-tap" means fast, so you should catch a Tap-Tap if you want to get somewhere in a hurry. Despite the name, the trip to your destination can be tedious and slow as you travel the narrow busy roads.



Typical Tap-Tap

Often the driver will play loud booming music, which attracts even more passengers.

Literary Corner

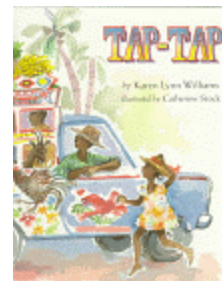


Tap-Tap

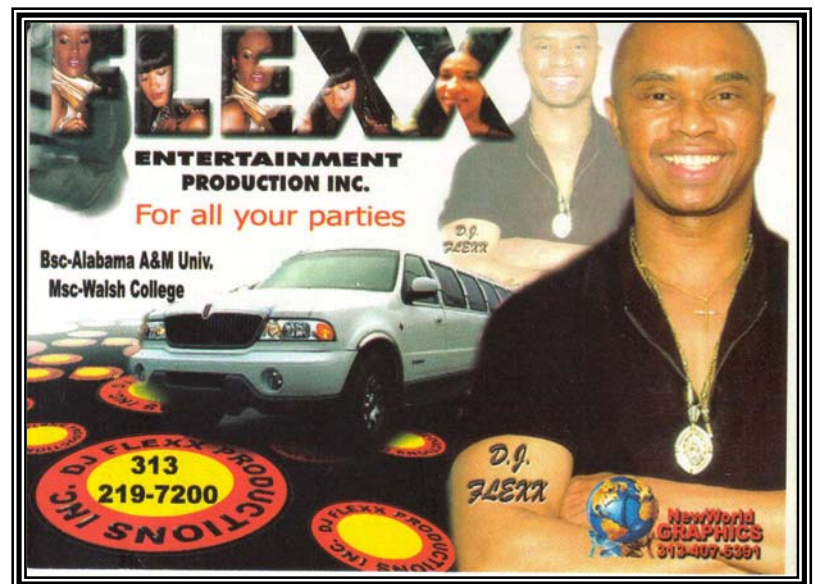
Written by Karen Lynn Williams

Illustrated by Catherine Stock

A cultural tradition is brought to life for young readers. Haiti, depicted in dazzling watercolors, is the setting of this tale. The young heroine, Sasifi, accompanies her mother to the marketplace for the first time. They are traveling by foot and as Sasifi is tired by the long hot journey, she is struck by a determination to ride the brightly decorated tap-tap. Her mother tells her that they don't have enough money to purchase a ride. Read this delightful story to find out if Sasifi ever gets a chance to ride the tap-tap. Ages 4-8.



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In The News



Haiti's Police Chief Chooses Self-Exile

June 24, 2003: Jean-Robert Faveur resigned and went into self-imposed exile just two weeks after becoming Haiti's acting police chief. He complained of government



Jean-Robert Faveur

interference and threats to his life and his family's well being. "Today I have chosen the path of exile rather than to allow myself to become corrupt and subservient," he said in a

letter. The previous chief of police in Haiti, Jean-Claude Jean-Baptiste, resigned after only 2 ½ months of service. Haiti's police force has been accused of various high crimes and human rights abuses. Aristide has been under both local and international pressure to reform the 4,000-member police force.

U.S. Questions Haiti's Commitment to Climate of Security

June 26 2003: The appointment of the new Haitian National Police Chief was satisfying to the U.S. in that Haiti had begun to create a climate of security necessary to resolve the country's perpetual political crisis. But in his statement before the Organization of American States (OAS) Permanent Council, Roger Noriega said, "The United States was...deeply disappointed to learn that...Jean Robert Faveur, resigned on June 22, a mere two weeks after his appointment. The



charges of political interference made in his letter of resignation are very serious and troubling...Efforts by the Haitian government were intended to undermine the autonomy of his office, specifically by removing his authority over the police budget and ordering him to appoint and promote officers

unqualified in his judgment... One must ask, in all seriousness, if the government of Haiti cannot create a secure climate for the Chief of its National Police, how can it be said to be making strides toward security for anyone else in the country?"

Ashcroft orders deportation of Haitian Woman

June 26 2003: Attorney General John Ashcroft ordered the deportation of Melanie Beaucejour Jean, who pleaded guilty to fatally beating a relative's 19-month-old son while baby-sitting in 1995. She was convicted on second-degree manslaughter and served her prison term. Ashcroft's decision reverses a 1999 ruling by the Board Immigration Appeals that allowed Jean to remain in the United States because her removal would cause hardships for her husband and five children.



Attorney General John Ashcroft

Ashcroft wrote, "Aliens arriving at our shores must understand residency in the United States is a privilege, not a right...For those aliens ... who engage in violent criminal acts during their stay here, this country will not offer its embrace."

Health & Fitness

By Rosario Danier

All my life I struggled with a weight problem. I was so skinny that I was given the nickname "zobogi" which means skeleton. I never had enough strength, energy, or will power to keep up with any type of consistent training regimen. I was always too busy, too tired or unmotivated all together. During a routine check up a few years ago, my lab tests revealed that my total cholesterol was at 254, which is way above the 200 limit. My doctor's prescription was to exercise and limit my cholesterol and saturated fat intake. At that point exercise became a necessity rather than a hobby. Fearing that I might fall back

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Health

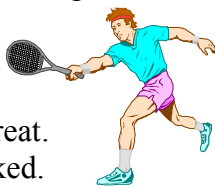
(Continued from page 6)

into my same old pattern, I found a health club located between home and work and I became a member. Additionally, I enlisted the help of a professional trainer to teach me proper techniques, picked a time of day that was convenient for working out, and subscribed to Men's Fitness Magazine to help build my knowledge base. While in the gym I figured I could kill two birds with one stone. I would gain some weight and reduce my cholesterol at the same time.

With the help of my trainer I set up a weight-training schedule which involved absolutely no cardiovascular and three days of strength training. During a normal training day I would choose to work two muscle groups i.e. shoulder and back, and I would do two types of exercises for each muscle group. I would generally pick a weight that was light enough so I could lift it 15 times, rest for 30 seconds and repeat the process three times. Once I realized I could lift the weight more than 15 times, I would increase the weight for more resistance. Four months later, I was lifting three times the amount of weight I started with, I had gained a solid ten pounds. I could feel my chest muscles and for once in my life I was feeling great.

Needless to say that I was hooked. I continued with this regimen for another three months. On the sixth month I was twenty pounds heavier, lifting 170 lbs. and felt as though I was turning heads wherever I went.

I went back to see my doctor for a follow-up visit and was astonished to find that my cholesterol level had not budged. Little did I know that *cardiovascular* exercise and diet were the key for cholesterol reduction. I was forced back to the drawing board with less enthusiasm than before. I figured that I could first walk and then run on the treadmill. It took me three weeks to be able to walk a mile and two months to run one. I dreaded the moment when I had to get on the treadmill



and could not wait to get off of it. Seeing that I was bumping against a brick wall that was not going to give way, I decided to reevaluate my approach to running. I initially thought that I should just work harder and hope that I would get used to it. Or maybe I should just do something else for a cardiovascular work out. I looked at my options and chose basketball. On the basketball court, donning my new pair of sneakers, I quickly realized that at thirty-five I could not compete with the twenty-five years I found there. They had been playing basketball all their lives and I'm sure were born with basketballs tethered to their wrists.



Unwilling to spend another cent on an activity I might not enjoy, I examined my other choices. Instead of buying, I borrowed a racquet from the health club and started playing racquetball. After two weeks of playing almost daily, I found myself unable to stop. Still wary of my previous impulsive behavior, I went to sports authority and bought the cheapest racquet I could find. I have now been playing for one straight year! For someone who could not find the motivation and energy to exercise, I must say that I have done quite well. I exercise 3-5 days a week for three hours. My workout consists of lifting weights for two hours and playing racquetball for one hour. Now that my cholesterol level is down less than 200, I am delighted to celebrate my one-year anniversary of hard work. I have found that the key to success in health and fitness is not in the short-term gains but in the consistency of a long term training regimen that is fuelled with passion and enjoyment. ♦

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