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Zanmi Detroit

ABOUT THIS ISSUE...



Hello again dear Friends,

I am inviting you to take some time to read this latest issue of Zanmi Detroit, but if time does not permit you to savor its every word, at least peruse it. I guarantee you that something will catch your attention. It is slimmer than previous issues, but no less fascinating.

Always seeking to broaden the range and quality of the articles, we started a new tradition with a column that addresses psychological issues. The first one deals with self-esteem, and we hope you will find it informative and thought provoking.

Giving you another opportunity to relive the moments of "Bèl Bagay Lakay," we allow you to rekindle the memories through pictures and prose. In a reflective piece set against the backdrop of the Bèl Bagay Lakay festival, Bill McNeece gives us glimpses of segregated life in Detroit and the inspirational testimony that racism is not inevitable.

This is not all, however. Among the many other interesting articles, Regine offers us another poignant creative piece that is both touching and inspiring. It is a delightful read. Professor Jorge L. Chinae not only presents a concise review of Dr. Millery Polyné's conference on Haiti but also offers an incisive and perceptive commentary on the challenges confronting our forefathers in their fights to break the shackles of slavery and counteract the campaign of disinformation against Haiti. Reading it is the next best thing if you could not be present at the conference, and a refreshing summary if you were there. You will also find an article de-

scribing an organization whose mission is to provide services to the Caribbean community of Detroit.

As usual, we salute our graduates, connect with friends who have moved to the warmth of new suns and the soothing brightness of new moons and provide updates on community events. Many more articles and pictures, little gems, await your attention. Before leaving you, I would like to congratulate Ms. Margareth Corkery on her election as president of HNGD for the next two years and, on behalf of HNGD, offer a large thank you to Ms. Shirley Alcé Konaté, the former president.

Now, please, go ahead and move on to the next section.

Jean-Claude Dutès, Ph.D.

The Editor ■

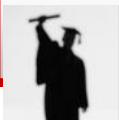
HNGD NEEDS YOU!

We are looking for individuals who would like to help increase the organization's visibility and strengthen the Haitian presence in Metro Detroit.

We welcome everyone regardless of age, race, gender or nationality. All that's required is a strong love for Haiti and the desire to help others discover and appreciate the richness and the uniqueness of the Haitian culture.

There are a number of ways to get involved:

Continued on page 7



MEET THE GRADUATES

Besides ensuring our physical and emotional survival, the second most important contribution parents make to the lives of their children is to provide them with best education their means allow. With an education we are always in a position to turn luck into an opportunity for durable achievement of any kind. In a tribute to both parents and their remarkable children, we are happy to recognize the graduates for their academic and /or professional achievements.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Ché Alcé Jean-Charles attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and recently received a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics. She plans to take the Dental Admission Test and complete her requirements in order to go to dental school in the very near future. ■

Jalesa Raquel Moise

My name is Ronald Moise and I am a Haitian-American married to Ana, a Puerto Rican. We would like to congratulate our lovely daughter Jalesa Raquel who received her bachelor's degree in Social Work last June and her master's degree last May, also in Social Work, from Wayne State University.

We couldn't be prouder of our daughter and believe she will proudly represent her Haitian and Puerto Rican heritage in our Metro Detroit communities for years to come. We also would like to say that Ms. Jalesa Raquel is engaged to Mr. Kristopher Hines and they are expecting a baby girl in August. ■



HNGD:

VISION AND REALIZATIONS

By Fritz Monplaisir



2019 will mark the 20th year of the Haitian Network Group of Detroit's existence.

Below is a reflection on the organization's raison d'être by one of the founding members and former President.

In order to remain viable, HNGD must remain true to the core value that sustained it from its inception.

***Service to the Haitian community of Metro Detroit**

This entailed anticipating the community's needs and fulfilling them. This also involved facing up to the challenges of providing an organized response to the many natural disasters that plagued our country during these past few years: Hurricane, earthquake, flood. Finally, it required supporting local families who are helping or hosting Haitians and organizations that fulfill a similar role.

***Keeping the Haitian culture alive and relevant in Metro Detroit**

This was achieved by organizing events that highlight our rich culture, history and tradition. We organized historical presentation, plays, folkloric dances, art festivals that educated the greater Detroit community and the younger generation. Those activities also reaffirmed our heritage and educated those of us who were lucky to be born and educated in Haiti. This was a fundamental and core value to the founding members of this organization which we fulfilled by organizing a steady pace of events that served this community well.

***Creating a forum for Haitian and friends to Network**

This was achieved via holding monthly meetings at different member's residence. We celebrated our membership's birthdays on monthly basis. These meetings were crucial to maintaining a sense of community, especially for those of us who did not have any family members who lived in Michigan. It also served as a welcoming venue for new Haitian members of the community. They could instantly connect with other Haitians. Although we organized many parties as a means to raise funds, the Christmas party had a different purpose. It was often offered at no charge, or for a minimal entrance fee to cover costs, as its primary purpose was to fulfill the community's desire to gather as a family prior to the holidays and to convey our gratitude to the community members for supporting us throughout the year. ■

WHERE ARE THEY NOW ?

Daphnée Pierre-Louis



My Haitian Family, it has been almost one and a half years since I have left Michigan, and I am still grateful to have known and been supported by such a wonderful community. My Detroit Haitian Family has stood by me through the good and the bad and, for that, I much appreciate you. I most certainly hope and know that with this small donation you will keep the Haitian pride alive.

I want to give you all a little bit of update as to what has been going on in my life. After the death of my mother, I moved to Minnesota in February of 2016 as a traveling Nurse Practitioner. Fortunate enough to work for Mayo Clinic Health System, I couldn't fathom living in a state colder than Michigan, so when they offered me a full time position I politely declined. It was a learning experience that I wouldn't trade for the world. I lived in a small town of approximately 50,000 people with little or very few activities to look forward to. I was the first person of color to work as a Clinician at that specific clinic, but my colleagues welcomed me. They put many of their stereotypes to the side, asking me direct questions instead of speculating. That made for many interesting conversations about my hair, lol. I keep in touch with many of the staff and hope to visit soon.

After my contract ended, I moved to North Carolina. I found a permanent position and love the community that I serve. It is in an uninsured underserved area. What's most amazing about this is that, never in a lifetime would have I thought that I would be the Primary Care Provider for my own people: I have many Haitian patients that I care for here in High Point, NC. So, needless to say, my creole skills are still intact, Lol. Although they tell me the Haitian community is large in High Point, they don't seem to have any networking or community groups here. Most are Jehovah Witnesses who live a quieter lifestyle than I'm used to. I've been to a non-denominational Haitian Church in Charlotte where the brother of Karl Leger from Lansing is a Pastor. In Charlotte there is a booming number of Haitians, but I am still trying to figure where they hang out. Unfortunately, I learned that one of their best restaurants is no longer in business. So, basically, I'm still on the hunt for my people.

Since I love my job here so much, I'll be here for another couple years or so, with plans to return home. Rural living is different, but I am embracing the good and bad of the southern culture. My favorite activity is hiking in the mountains and swimming close to my house.

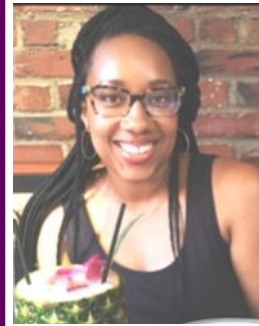
Missing you all dearly!

Addendum:

Daphnée is now known as Mrs. Joubert Exsatel. The happy couple's union was celebrated on September 1, 2018, by Father Don Archambault. Congratulations to Daphnée and Joubert ! We wish you many years of happiness together ■



Catherine Auguste Dauphin



Being born and raised in Detroit and very active within the Haitian community and HNGD, leaving home was not an easy choice to make. However, in December 2011, I took a leap of faith and decided that moving to New York would be a great move for my career and social life. Upon arriving in New York, I was fortunate enough to start working right away.

Having a great family support system already living in New York also made my move easy. In addition to many new career opportunities, the most life changing event that has taken place here was meeting my husband. We will celebrate our 5th year wedding anniversary and look forward to one day starting our own family.

I currently reside in Queens, New York. So far, I have worked for two different Advertising companies in NYC. Currently, I am a Senior Manager overseeing a team at Tremor Video DSP, which is a software and online video company that works with top brands and their advertising agencies. When I am not at work, I can be found roaming the streets of NYC shopping and eating! I've also become quite accustomed to attending Haitian "bals" and fortunate to have more than enough chances to enjoy live Konpa music, which I am passionate about.

Leaving my family, friends and the Haitian community was not easy. I feel so fortunate to have grown up with so many wonderful people that are like family. The most difficult part is not being able to see my nephew, sister, and mom every day but thank GOD for FaceTime! As I am just a short plane ride away I come home as often as I can. I see Detroit going through many positive changes, who knows...maybe I'll be back one day. :)

I hope you are all well. Keep the activities and pictures coming. Hope to be able to come to town for the next big event. I'm thinking a party, since we all know how much I like to dance. So send me ample notice. ■



IN MEMORIAM



In August 2018, The Haitian community mourned the passing of a revered and beloved member, **Mr. Jean Antoine Marc Leonard**. He is survived by his children: Jean-Claude, Joceline (Charles), Margaret (Dorval), Marilyne and Reginald. Our heartfelt condolences go to the grieving families.



Jean Marc Leonard

We have decided to share with you excerpts from two different articles that were written about Pè Marco in previous editions of Zanmi Detroit.

◇ My grandfather Jean Marc Leonard also known as Père Marco is an exceptional man, because he truly cares for his family and friends. He shows he cares by the little things that he does, such as handmade art and crafts and his known signature item, the boat with a Haitian flag on it, enclosed inside of a glass bottle. He spends time and energy for every piece and makes sure he gives it to everyone he meets. Still to this day, I have no idea how he gets the boat inside the glass. He is a remarkable man because of his strength, after losing his wife of 62 years, he manages to keep living. I am sure losing her has affected him, but he still manages to enjoy life, whereas he could easily remain sad or depressed.

Lastly, Père Marco, has influenced our family by teaching us the value of integrity, he has taught us this with his numerous talks, lectures and examples that a man or woman with integrity is one with great character. He consistently instills this in all of us by pointing out our flaws and by correcting them in a loving manner. He is caring, strong and a teacher of life. That alone is an example of how my grand-father is a pillar to our family. [Medjie Pascal-Harris, Grand-daughter](#).

◇ When addressing him, you may use any of the endearing terms that are so commonly used by his friends within the Haitian community: Pè Marco, Père Léonard or even Papi; however, under no circumstances should you call him "Monsieur". This vibrant 92 year old will quickly remind you in a gentle but firm voice that he is not fond of this "stuffy" designation.

Jean Léonard was born in the coastal town of St. Marc (Haiti) where he first learned the trade of cabinet making. Over the years, he managed to move between Port-au-Prince and his home town and worked in various capacities. For 62 years he was married to the love of his life, Carmelle Inès, until they were tragically separated in 2014. Pè Marco and his wife moved to Michigan 16 years earlier to be closer to their daughters Maggy Dorval and Jocelyne Charles. In spite

of having suffered the loss of his companion, he has retained his zest for life. Not one to sit around and remain idle, Père Léonard fervently immerses himself in his hobby: building tiny ships in a bottle. Many of us in the community have benefited from the talent of this nonagenarian.

To commemorate the advent of Bèl Bagay Lakay, the first Hai-tian Art and Crafts festival in Metro Detroit, Père Léonard made a very limited number of these artifacts available at the festival; the public was thrilled to see those unique items made in Michigan by a "natif natal" of Haïti Chérie.. [Maggy Corkery, friend and admirer](#) ■



Pat Smith (Abner) passed away on Thursday February 8, 2018. Pat had a deep love for Haiti and its people.



Claire Danjou, Adeline Auguste, Pat Abner

For many years she went on mission trips to Haiti and organized different fundraisers to support programs that provided much needed assistance. Pat was also a great friend and supporter of HNGD. She will be missed by all of us who knew her.

The following article was written by Adeline Auguste.

◇ In 1992, Pat was thinking of going to Haiti to start a mission in the village of Ennery. She was introduced to some members of the Metro Detroit Haitian community and organized an event about Haitian culture and history at the Sacred Heart activity center. We shared Haitian food and displayed Haitian arts and crafts. That activity built a bridge between the metro Haitian community and Sacred heart parish. She had a great passion for the people of Haiti and loved to help Haiti and Haitians. For over 15 years, she devoted her time and energy through countless fundraisers and mission trips. The Valentine and Mardi Gras fundraisers were events that many of us looked forward to throughout the years. Pat even learned to speak and write Haitian Kreyol, publishing a newsletter called Ti Koze Sou Ayiti.

Pat and her team brought much needed supplies and aid that helped to change many people's lives.

On behalf of the people of Haiti, and the Haitian community here in Detroit, we want to express our sincere gratitude for all Pat has done for the Haitian community. The Good Lord has a special place for her in heaven. She will be missed. ■



FROM THE PSYCHOLOGIST CORNER

SOME REFLECTIONS ON SELF-ESTEEM AND PERSONAL GROWTH

by Dr. Jean-Claude Dutès

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is uniquely human, according to Drs. McKay and Manning. It emerges out of the interaction between a person and his community, and according to them, it is what separates humans from other animals. In this article, I will first review what self-esteem is and then present and describe three types of self-esteem based on their origins.

WHAT IS SELF-ESTEEM?

Self-esteem is an inner feeling of worth that you have about yourself. It is the subjective value that you place on your being. It can be experienced as a sense of satisfaction, contentment and pride in yourself and your life situation. It determines what you do, how you do it and under what circumstances you will do it. It reflects the set of values that define and direct your behaviors and allows you to love and to be loved. It sets the floor and the ceiling for what you would and would not do, how high you aim and how low you fall. It is elastic, however, reacting to situations that can contribute to periods of highs and lows. Whether it bounces back depends on its basic orientational structure, a person's ability to take stock of his life and having the confidence to initiate new steps to move it in a different direction.

Self-esteem encapsulates your dignity. In it are the seeds of aspiration and the abyss of humiliation. A woman whose self-esteem is tied into her beauty becomes emotionally devastated after a divorce in midlife, at a time in her life when she believes that her physical beauty no longer has the power to attract the type of men whom she thinks she deserves. A man used to flattery and deferential consideration based on his social position becomes deeply unsettled and profoundly distressed emotionally when he no longer enjoys the special consideration he is used to in a foreign land. A young man persists in his college studies despite initial setbacks, spurred mainly by the belief that he can succeed because adversity has been a part of his life and, mastering it, the outcome of his travails.

TYPE I

"I am special"

By accident of nature, some of you are born with a special resource. That can be the way you look, your family name or the neighborhood where you live. Without having to exercise any effort, people initially put you on a pedestal, behaving

towards you in ways that convey the message that you are special. They defer to you, find ways to rationalize your actions and to give you the benefit of the doubt. In short, they are predisposed to like you, prejudice you in a positive as opposed to a negative manner, because you have something that they would like to have, something that is prized by the group, the society or culture in which you live. Growing up experiencing that sort of adulation, and often hearing mostly positive things about you, you internalize, that is you incorporate those views and attitudes into your sense of self. You develop a code of conduct that is consistent with the way you are seen and have been treated. Your expectations rise to meet the social value that the group has placed on you. In the context of certain society and culture, being of a certain shade, having a certain hair texture or being a member of certain families are usually assets that contribute to that type of self-esteem. Without becoming too clinical here, this type of self-esteem, because it is based mostly on the incorporation of unearned attributes into the sense of self, is very fragile and tends to tie the individual to the group. When outside of that group, the person becomes another plain and regular individual. Being used to being recognized and singled out for deferential treatment, individuals whose self-esteem developed from this process tend to complain of having become invisible, that is, no one in their new surrounding knows their true value or worth. Many, unable to alter their beliefs and sense of entitlement, return to their country of origin or become chronically unhappy and distressed, living life in the shadow of their old selves. With their self-esteem anchored outside of themselves, they lack the ability to redirect their psychic energy and to repair the injury to their sense of dignity. This contributes to feelings of frustration, anger and shame that not only maintain their misery but also inflict a burden on those related to or associated with them.

TYPE II

"You are not better than me."

Many people seem to specialize in tearing down others. Of the self-esteem types, this is the unhealthiest. Not only does it keep the locus of control outside of the individual, it is often accompanied by tremendous hostility and secret internalized shame usually associated with some personal shortcomings. What is done by someone other than themselves is automatically second best, they can do better, except that they seldom do anything at all, or what they produce is of far lower quality than the work they criticize. For people in this group: to rec-

Continued on next page

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ognize or validate another's work is to invalidate their own worth. They seldom have anything good to say about anyone. Instead of recognizing a peer's work, progress or positive personal attributes, they rather avoid the person entirely or ignore talking about their achievements or attributes. When unable to avoid the topic, for to do so would betray their secret hostility, some would offer flattery, using its superficiality as a socially acceptable mask for their true feelings and, also, as a mean of trivializing the importance of the peer's work or laudable attributes. Many would "steal" a good idea from a peer expecting or hoping to use it to their own advantage at some later time while being harshly critical of it initially.

People in this group seem to take great pleasure in talking about the ills that befall others. Gossiping is one of their major pastimes or consume a major part of their life. Using gossip, they cunningly disparage peers, intentionally misrepresenting information about them. When unable to attack others' realizations, they focus on the person, drawing attention to some irrelevant flaws, past indiscretions of a family member or on the race and social origin of their family to demean the value of their target's achievements. For instance, many Caucasians when threatened by a person of color, appears to have a predisposition to pull out the "N" word, a way of inflicting psychological pain that they think would put the non-white individual in his place and take the winds out of his sails. Many of us from immigrant communities have had the experience of having a peer or a person in authority try to devalue our work, because it came from us, "a minority," or a person from a "banana republic," with that same work, when reviewed blindly and constructively, receiving a much higher rating.

TYPE III

"I can"

In this group you find the persons whose self-esteem is based on their blood and sweat. These are the individuals who have been able through their talent, hard work and perseverance to achieve a status, a position that is recognized by their community. In this group, you find all kind of persons. Individuals born into wealth or humble origins, others endowed with above average talents or physical attributes and those who are just plain regular folks. Of importance here is that the individual through his work and character has met the standards of his community and is contented with his situation. In modern, post feudal societies, where achievements are prized more than social origins, many individuals from affluent families experienced the desire to stake out on their own to make their mark or to add to the family's fortune.

Whether from affluent or humble origins, the self-esteem of people in this group results initially from their hard work, tenacity and perseverance. Their self-confidence, which is the cornerstone for their self-esteem is steeped in mastery, that is, their ability to solve problems and to be productive. They can

marshal whatever resources they have into the ability to see, envision and realize their dreams, sometimes against tremendous odds.

To understand the power of well-founded self-esteem, or self-esteem based on mastery, imagine our ancestors, a Toussaint Louverture, who went from house slave to "dokte fey," successful business man, wealthy plantation owner, slave liberator and Governor General; a Jean-Jacques Dessalines, born a slave, who became a sought after slave-carpenter, a master military strategist and then emperor; a Henry Christophe who went from being an errand boy, a butler, a hotel clerk to the builder king who has left us the only monuments portentous of how great Haiti could have been. While I can only make inferences about their self-esteem, history does tell us that all three were hard working, recognized and respected by their peers for their skills, dedication, and beliefs in themselves. The point of bringing them up here is to underscore that even under oppressive conditions, human beings have the ability to build strong healthy self-esteem.

Where do we go from here?

As human beings, we all learned things, ways of being without ever being aware of the process. That we are being molded and fashioned in certain ways escapes most of us. I am sure that many of you have had feelings and uncharitable thoughts that embarrassed you because you did not think of yourself that way. "I am better than that." Many of you, I am sure have said or done things that you wish you had not.

While reading this article you could find yourself remembering an instance when you may have attacked or attempted to demean a controversial politician, colleague, acquaintance or even a friend or family member by attempting to inflict an emotional injury by criticizing them because of their looks, social origins and or race because you were struggling with something that they had achieved. "Who does she think she is," "Ah, he is nothing, his mother was so and so." These types of statements usually betray envy associated with a lowering of one's self-esteem in response to a psychological threat. This does not mean that you have chronic low or unhealthy self-esteem. We all are at risk for transient loss of self-esteem that we repair by relying on culturally sanctioned mechanisms of defense. Classism and occupation-based stereotyping are culturally sanctioned psychological defense mechanism in societies like Haitian society, just as racism is in American society. But not everyone is affected by the same degree or unable to change.

Most readers would probably identify more with one type than another. Whichever resonates more with you, you have the choice: to continue to be that way or to change by starting to imagine yourself differently, the way you want to be. Recent research in psychology has demonstrated that what we imagine has the power to influence what we perceive, and as a result what we do and how we conduct ourselves with others.

Patience

The change will not occur overnight, but you will gradually begin to catch certain types of thinking or actions in yourself and others. With that awareness you will gradually become able to interrupt the thought or stop the action. If not successful initially, keep at it, keep imagining the kind of thoughts you want to entertain and the actions that you want to initiate. Imagination is a type of rehearsal that allows our brain to become familiar with a novel idea or approach. Before our ancestors rid themselves of slavery, most imagine being free. Over time they imagined how to make it happen, with their thinking focusing on the means. Once the mind begins to think of means, imagination transforms into intentions or goals, which then creates the impetus for actions. In other words, as our brain becomes more familiar with our imagined desires, it generates the ways to bring them to fruition. While the brain requires intentional practice to change its ways, it does respond to both our inner and external reality, in other words, our brain reacts to what we think and what we do. The choice is yours: if you want change, assiduously and fervently imagine the change you wish. As Dr. Branden has indicated, a healthy self-esteem requires continuous cultivation. ■

HNGD NEEDS YOU! — Continued

- Help us generate income for the 2019 Bèl Bagay Lakay by **making a donation on the HNGD website** at www.haitiannetworkdetroit.org. Encourage your friends and family members to do the same. No amount will be deemed too small!
- If you are a business owner, **become a sponsor for the festival**. Families can also put their resources together to sponsor the Festival.
- **Pay the annual membership fee** on the HNGD website.
- **Join the 2019 Bèl Bagay Lakay Festival Committee** and get involved in the planning process. The Festival's dates are **July 27 and 28, 2019** and we have already started meeting to plan it.
- **Attend the following upcoming fundraisers** and invite your friends too!
 - **October 19, 2018** join HNGD for a delicious Haitian-inspired dinner by Chef Christian Noël at 5:30pm and 8pm view the Play "*Pipeline*" by Dominique Morisseau - Details will follow .
 - **November 16, 2018** Haitian Fusion Party at Kola Lounge 9pm to 2am- \$10 cover charge- Details will follow. ■

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS OF THE HAITIAN NETWORK GROUP OF DETROIT !

In December 2017, HNGD's due paying members elected the new board comprised of:

Margareth Corkery — President

Shirley Alc -Konat  — Vice President

Alain Desvallons-Mentor — Secretary

Janny Magloire Milton — Treasurer



They will serve a two-year term, effective as of January 1, 2018. We remain grateful to the Bylaw Committee, Dr. Soledad Nelson and Mr. Fritz Momplaisir, who oversaw the nomination and election process. The Board will continue to provide leadership for carrying out the organization's mission of promoting Haitian culture across the local community and beyond. Their combined experience and expertise will no doubt strengthen HNGD's presence and increase its impact in Southeast Michigan.

The existence of this community-based and community-driven organization is more necessary than ever and the contributions of all members, particularly the due paying members, continue to be greatly valued. ■



HAITIAN HISTORY



HAITI: OVERCOMING THE SMEAR CAMPAIGN

Haitian History and Culture Came Alive during Black History Month Presentation at Wayne State University. This past February 27th over 125 attendees—many of them students, faculty members, staff and community leaders—filled the Spencer M. Partrich Auditorium at the Wayne State University School of Law to celebrate Black History Month. The capacity crowd was treated to an engaging lecture by Haitian historian Dr. Millery Polyné, a Morehouse College alumnus who earned advanced degrees from the University of Michigan. His presentation, “A Flame Superior to Lightning, A Sound Superior to Thunder: Haiti’s Revolutionary Legacy and ‘Monstrous’ Poetics,” highlighted the inter-related themes of Haitian revolutionary politics, African American and Afro-Caribbean intellectual thought, European colonialism, and the perennial difficulties posed by the economic challenges faced by the Caribbean nation.

The event was organized by the Haitian Network Group of Detroit in partnership with several Wayne State University’s programs, including the Department of African American Studies, the Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies, the Department of Anthropology, the Damon Keith Center for Civil Rights, the Department of History, the Humanities Center and the Political Science Department.

Dr. Polyné’s lecture sought to place the history of Haiti — known formerly as the French Caribbean colony of St. Domingue — in the larger Atlantic context. He reminded the audience that the independence of the Antillean territory was the result of a protracted revolutionary process in which some 400,000 enslaved Africans and their captive descendants revolted against the plantation owners who held them in bondage. During the subsequent violent struggle the Black Jacobins, as the Trinidadian writer C.L.R. James called the revolutionaries, soundly defeated the better-trained and equipped military forces from France, England and Spain that repeatedly tried to subdue them.

The Haitian Revolution and the ensuing establishment of the Republic of Haiti shook white-dominated slavocratic regimes across the Americas, and for good reason. The concerted actions of the freedom fighters threatened to bring down the very foundation—that is, slavery—upon which much of the economic exploitation of the Americas had been built. Because St. Domingue was then the world’s leading producer of sugar, which was grown, processed and packaged by enslaved Black laborers, imperial France and its plantocracy placed their economic interests above humanitarian concerns in attempting to quell the insurgency. Hence, as Dr.

Polyné emphasized, from the outbreak of the hostilities Europeans and their allies tried desperately to put out the insurrectionary fires that engulfed the cities and agricultural estates, resulting in unprecedented human casualties on both warring factions.

When the military campaign to put down the revolt failed, they went to pains to dehumanize the Black rebels and to demonize their attempts to assert their humanity. In their official dispatches, military reports, eyewitness accounts, newspaper coverage and other narratives European and white writers stressed the “bestiality” of the Black fighters, the “horrors” of the rebellion, and the “savagery” and “carnage” of the combat to which Europeans had been subjected. That language seemed to have been borrowed from the European conquest of the Americas, when the native inhabitants were equally portrayed as idolatrous, blood-thirsty cannibals bent on massacring innocent Europeans intent on bringing the blessings of civilization to the indigenous “barbarians.” In like fashion, the “monstrosity” that Europeans saw in the Haitian Revolution sought to elide their role in the forceful transportation and exploitation of the African captives-turned rebels, while attempting to paint Black slavery as a well-intended but failed effort to civilize its nonwhite victims.

Echoing Dr. Polyné’s point, fellow historian Raphael Hoermann noted that Eurocentric depictions of the Haitian Revolution and the creation of an independent Haiti were framed around a Gothic rhetoric. In the face of such machinations Haitian leaders fought back not only in the battlefield but in the cultural arena by calling world attention to the atrocities and horrors of slavery and the wanton slaughter, rape, pillage and destruction of Haitians. They turned the false notion of Europeans as victims of black savagery on its head by emphasizing how the colonizing “assassins” refused to grant Haitians their freedom. Hoermann notes how in 1817 the Jamaican-born abolitionist Robert Wedderburn debunked “the sentimental pro-slavery Gothic rhetoric of the innocent planters and their savage assailants” and envisioned “a truly Transatlantic Gothic poetics of social revolution...that will eventually end race and class oppression” (p.198).

The “monstrous” poetics became, as Esther Lezra suggested in her book *The Colonial Art of Demonizing Others* (2014), a convenient literary trope through which pro-colonial and pro-slavery supporters tried to avoid taking responsibility

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for their role in the events leading to the Haitian Revolution and its aftermath: “Through countless representations of the colonized as monstrous, subhuman, and innately violent, Europeans attempted to blame bloodshed in the colonies on the character of the colonized rather than on the cruelty of the conquerors...Evidence of anti-colonial resistance came to be seen as evidence of the monstrous alterity of Afro-diasporic people, discursively transcoding European aggression into self-defense.” (p. 1). As Dr. Polyné reminded the audience, such negative depictions have continued to inform affairs involving Haiti to this day, especially those connected to efforts to develop its economy. The “monstrous” discursive device allows European elites and members of other economically better-off countries to put the blame of economic stagnation and poverty solely on the shoulders of Haitians, while expediently ignoring previous systematic efforts to suppress, isolate and control the Caribbean nation and its people.

Jorge L. Chinaea, Ph.D. *Associate Professor of History & Director of the Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies*

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Front row Dr. Polyné, Second row from the left: Ms. Janny Magloire Milton, Dr. Melba Boyd, Dr. Guérin Montilus; Third row from the left: Mr. Alain Mentor, Ms. Margareth Corkery, Ms. Shirley Alcé-Konaté, Dr. Jorge L. Chinaea

BÈL BAGAY LAKAY FESTIVAL



SOME THOUGHTS REGARDING THE FESTIVAL

By Bill McNeece

The second Bel Bagay Lakay; Beautiful Things from Home Arts and Crafts Festival in downtown Farmington Michigan was Saturday, July 29 and Sunday, July 30, 2017. The Haitian Network Group of Detroit was the sponsor of the event. Soledad, Maggy, Janny, Shirley, Fritz, and many others including Valerie and I organized it. We helped to bring the experience and uniqueness of Haitian culture through art, food, music, and dance to the Walter Sundquist Pavilion and Riley Park. The weekend event featured many fine artists and crafts persons of Haitian descent who traveled from Haiti, the United States, and Canada.

This was great for Valerie and I since we live a short walk from downtown Farmington. The festival was happening in our town! The city council and city officials were supportive and some even seemed very eager to have us downtown. We have gotten to know some small business owners and they were very excited that the city was hosting the festival. They volunteered to have advertising materials available in their shops and contributed food and coupons. (The cheese tray donated by The Cheese Lady for the get together at Gilda and Roy's for artists, sponsors, and organizers was outstanding).

Valerie and I invited neighbors, friends, and relatives. Most stayed at least a few hours. They especially enjoyed Soledad's fashion show hosted by channel four's Tati Amare and the live music performed by Riva Nyri Precil and her band. Certainly one of the best parts of the festival was how it functioned as a kind of Haitian Community reunion. Great fun. Also fun was the look of surprise and the reaction of Claude Jacobs when one of the tickets he bought was drawn and he won the Royal Caribbean Cruise!

Considering everything, Bel Bagay Lakay was truly a remarkable event. Yes, because of organizational skills. Yes, because of the wonderful art, music, and food. Yes, because the Haitian community and friends showed up. Yes, because the weather was great. Yes, given recent history and how far we have come.

I grew up in Detroit, a part of a traditional Irish Catholic working class community. Hot summer evenings caused relatives

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and neighbors to gather on porches. Talk turned to topics that I could not understand at the time. I heard ominous comments like, “they’re coming,” or a street would be defined as a barrier that had been breached. Buying a home and moving as far away from the old neighborhood as possible soon became the goal not only of my family but that of many others. When I was nine years old my family moved to Livonia. Yes - I grew up in a typical Detroit, white catholic, ethnic, racist household.

Perhaps it was music that transformed me. Despite my parents being typically prejudiced (they also feared Jews), my father had a passion for jazz. My household was filled with the music of Duke Ellington and Count Basie. The racially integrated Benny Goodman quartet was his favorite. Even as a child, this contradiction between attitude and action did not escape me. At seventeen years old I got my first factory job (to pay for college) as a parts expeditor (making sure the assembly lines had enough parts). The two best trained me; Lonnie and Gene. They were black. Typical of the times, they had difficulty rising beyond their positions. Since I knew them the best I sat with them in the cafeteria to eat lunch, violating the norm of segregation. That world has not completely gone away, but when I was seventeen, a Haitian Festival in downtown Farmington would not have been possible. And of course the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, also known as the Hart (Senator from Michigan) (Hart Plaza in Downtown Detroit is named for him) - Celler Act also has made this wonderful arts and crafts festival possible.

And then I think about what we might miss in the future - if immigration as we know it now - ends. ■



From the left, Bill McNeece, Father Don from Corpus Christi and a friend



Festival Opening Day MC: Tati Amare on the right. She is the hostess of WDIV “Live in the D”



Gina Samson - Artist



Samuel Augustin (Samo) - Artist

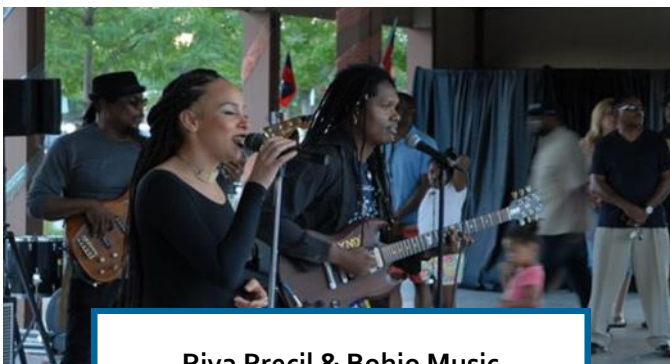
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Drumming lesson with Geraud Dimanche & Marwan Amen-Ra



Ms. Nadine Compere takes the walk in the modeling show



Riva Precil & Bohio Music

COMMUNITY NEWS



Support ♦ Empower ♦ Advocate



Sophia Loraine Chue,
Executive Director

The Caribbean Community Service Center (CCSC) will support, empower and advocate for a beneficial, welcoming, and inclusive environment to Caribbean Nationals as they adapt to life in the United States. This will be performed by fostering strategic alliances with likeminded organizations. CCSC

will offer a variety of service areas such as Community Services, Professional Development, Sports, Arts, & Culture, Education Development and Community Advocacy to a diverse population.

It is our responsibly as members of the global community to ensure that each person that enters the shores of the United States from the Caribbean Region is provided with the basic living necessities to settle, strive and grow. The sense of belonging is crucial to the individuals and their family as they learn the nuances and become acclimated to the cultural, social, educational and professional norms of the USA. It is our duty to provide them with the tools necessary to integrate without assimilating in the US society. This allows for a welcoming, culturally diverse and inclusive environment.

Community Service — CCSC will work with Federal, State, and Local governments as well as community organizations to inform them of the Caribbean nationals need for available community services. This will take the form of awareness raising events which include the following: highlighting health and welfare needs through participation in charity races; working with potential voters and municipal voting offices to assist citizens in voting; sponsoring a youth bike-a-thon that donates safety gear to participant; working with the local health departments to set up an immunization day or clinic to immunize children against childhood diseases; providing workshops with various healthcare and social services organizations to promote healthy living for both adults and children; teaching a home-alone safety class for children; creating a TV or radio public service announcement against drug and alcohol use; offering bereavement assistance in the areas of financial and emotional support to individuals or family identified by the community; buying a building for a Caribbean Community Center to create a recreation center; creating a recreation cen-

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ter that will accommodate a Big Brother/ Big Sister and after school programs; developing activities that help the home countries; working with other organization to provide food, clothing, shelter & transportation to needy and underrepresented Caribbean Nationals; starting an oral history project for Caribbean expatriates; story telling; creating and distributing quarterly Newsletters that communicate the work of the organization; creating a platform for Caribbean Nationals that provides recognition for exceptional community service.

Professional Development — CCSC will work with various City Unemployment Offices, Community Colleges and Organizations to enhance and create Workforce Development Training that will provide skilled workers. The Center will host quarterly Networking Opportunities for Caribbean owned and operated business, Professionals and industry leaders; promote business opportunities available in the Caribbean; start a “Caribbean Village”; provide a Mentor-mentee program; and work with businesses to create and facilitate Apprenticeship programs.

Sports, Arts & Culture — CCSC will create partnerships with current sports, arts and culture programs that enhance and educate all about the Caribbean; start a book and film club that focuses on authors and writers from the Caribbean; create a program to host authors and playwrights that can entertain and educate both children and adults; host annual sports tournaments and musical competitions that celebrate the cultural diversity of the Caribbean region, such as with Rouge Raiders Soccer Club; start a Caribbean-American Museum in Metro-Detroit; and work with Caribbean creatives to support, encourage and showcase their work.

Educational Development — CCSC will conduct a Needs Assessment Survey for the Community to identify the needs of the community and work with the local colleges to identify the correct programs and admission requirements; provide IT training for Caribbean youth in their home countries via internet; have Caribbean students develop historical and cultural programs that teach American students about the history of the Caribbean; develop a scholarship program for Caribbean students; sponsor an essay/art competition for Caribbean-American students; work with organizations such as the International Institute of Metro Detroit, Global Detroit, Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation and ACCESS in order to facilitate ESL, GED, and tutoring for youth and adults; sponsor a series of panel discussions on Caribbean-related topics; create and maintain a healthy living program; educate parent(s) about children’s education options and studies; host workshops for parents to support children and educators on topics designed to encourage community involvement in educational development; and build activities with community members and members of first responders.

Community Advocacy

The Center will advance the interests of the business

community into the local market; streamline services and partnerships that secure and build upon the open market access opportunities that depend upon substantive inputs into the negotiations for trade agreements; where needed, serve as a liaison between community members and elected officials on the local, state, and federal levels through a proactive process of education and advocacy; organize to protect immigration rights; create distribution and promotion networks for products from Caribbean countries; start a Caribbean-focused drug/alcohol treatment/ counseling program; and honor the accomplishments of Caribbean Nationals. ■



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CHOOSING TO SERVE: A LAY DOMINICAN EDUCATES ABOUT THE ORDER

By Adeline August



My name is Adeline Auguste and I have lived in the Detroit area for 34 years. Born in Haiti, I have two daughters, Danielle Desroches and Catherine Dauphin, and one grandson, Christopher Sanon.

On August 9th, 2015, I became a member of the fraternities of St. Dominic. The lay Dominican are men and women who are members of the order of preachers and live out their Dominican vocation. In the past it was called the third order of Dominican tertiaries and have existed almost as long as the Dominican order itself.

With a long history, the lay fraternities of St. Dominic was founded in 1285 and officially recognized by the church on the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas in 1286. St. Thomas Aquinas was an early member of the Dominican order. Lay Dominicans are distinguished both by their spirituality and by their service to God, neighbor and church. As members of the order, they participate in its apostolic mission through prayer, study and preaching. So, we are called to praise, bless and preach. Lay Dominicans have a direct role in the preaching mission and many pursue degrees in theology or liturgy while engaged in the service of the church. ■



AND THE WINNER IS....

Congratulations to Claude Jacobs, the lucky winner of the HNGD 2017 Raffle: a Caribbean Cruise for two with Royal Caribbean International.



The drawing was held on July 28, in Downtown Farmington during the

Bèl Bagay Haitian Art Festival. Claude is surrounded by Marianne Hessler, National Account Manager for Royal Caribbean International, 9 year old Sarah Awan who picked the lucky ticket and Janny Magloire Milton HNGD Treasurer.

Merci! Mèsi! Thank you! To all those who supported this effort and thereby contributed to the success of the festival. ■

CONGRATULATIONS VALERIE McNEECE!

Congratulations to Valerie McNeece, the **recipient of the Mercy High School 2018 Distinguished Alumna Award which was presented to her on April 22.** Valerie was recognized for her philanthropy and because she “has made a difference in the lives of countless people, while exemplifying the Mercy values of Human Dignity, Mercy, Justice, Service, and Option for the Poor and abroad with her mission work in Haiti”.

Valerie has been very supportive of Haitian Network Group; we are particularly grateful to her because of her selfless dedication and commitment that has showed to the people of Mirebalais over the past 20 years. As she carried on with her work with Haiti Outreach Mission, through the lens of her ever present camera she has introduced us to the city of Mirebalais, and taken us to remote areas that otherwise we would have never heard of.



Valerie sharing her love of photography with the children of Mirebalais (Haiti)

Valerie was not born in Haiti, but she has shown through her action that she is 100% Haitian. We love her for it!

Bravo Valerie! ■

UPDATE FROM THE GLOBAL HEALTH INITIATIVE



In January 2018, the Global Health Initiative (GHI) at Henry Ford Health System hosted Dr. Mentor Lucien, a microbiologist immunologist at the Laboratoire National de Santé Publique in Port-au-Prince, for an intensive training on antimicrobial resistance and infection control. Throughout the week, Dr. Lucien worked with Dr. Marcus Zervos (Division Head of Infectious Diseases at Henry Ford) to revise Haiti's National Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance. While he was in Detroit, the HNGD community made Dr. Lucien feel right at home with a delightful party and delicious Haitian food at Maggy's home! To learn more about GHI's capacity building efforts in Haiti, please contact HNGD member, Ms. Dana Parke at dparkel@hfhs.org. ■



Ellene Zervos, Dr. Marcus Zervos, Dr. Mentor Lucien, Tyler Prentiss and Dana Park



Welcome reception for Dr. Mentor Lucien



MISS CARIVAL PAGEANT 2018

The 2018 Miss Carival Pageant organized by the Caribbean Cultural and Carnival Organization (CCCO) took place on August 10, 2018 at the Arab American Museum in Dearborn.



Alexandra Brutus represented Haiti in this competition that has been around for more than three decades. Alexandra is 17 years old and a junior at Avondale High School in Auburn Hills. She is a member of the Queens of Melanin and Diversity Club at her school. She is very active in her community through her volunteer efforts with the Delta Gems and the

Boys and Girls Club. She also serves as a middle school youth leader and preschool volunteer at Woodside Bible Church. Alexandra enjoys singing and serves on her church's praise and worship team. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, listening to music, and practicing nail art. She aspires to become a nurse.

Alexandra vied for the Miss Carival title along with seven other contestants: Casyana Siméon (Dominica), Ryhanne Neal (Belize), Camille Colley (Grenada), Sha'Day Cade (Guyana), Raina Martin (Jamaica), DeErika Paramore (Panama) and Sidea Rowell (Trinidad).



The Miss Carival Pageant is not a beauty pageant, but rather a cultural celebration and a unique opportunity for the contestants to get involved in the Metro Detroit Caribbean community. The Bird of Paradise was this year's theme. With its bold colors, this regal flower symbolizes magnificence

and joyfulness. The participants were talented, dynamic and intelligent young women and together, like the Bird of Paradise, they offered a vivid display of Caribbean charm. These contestants also embodied the essence of the cultural pride that we, as immigrants, always hope to instill in our children. Many members of the Haitian community came to support Alexandra and were delighted to see how she proudly displayed the *Rouge et Bleu* of the Haitian flag.

The competition was tight, but Miss Haiti prevailed and brought home the coveted Miss Carival title. Haiti has had a great track record in the Miss Carival pageant. In 2013 we accomplished an unprecedented feat! Haiti came out as a double winner when Ché Alcé Jean-Charles was crowned Jr. Miss Carival and Michelle Narcisse received the Miss Carival title. On August 10, they both joined Alexandra on stage to present her the crown and sash during the coronation ceremony. It was a treat to see these three queens celebrating their success along with their Haitian roots.



Congratulations to Alexandra! ■

UPDATES ON OUR PAST CARIVAL QUEENS

It has been 5 years since we last heard from our 2013 Carival Queens. Rest assured that they have not remained idle since they won their title. These two accomplished young women have remained focused on their educational goals and are steadily working to make their mark in this world. Let's get reacquainted with them...

Michele Narcisse

Michele is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Detroit Country Day School. During her undergraduate studies she was a Barger Leadership Institute Scholar, a four-year recipient of the Kessler Presidential Scholarship, and Secretary for the P.R.I.D.E. Diversity council. Michele was also a four-year member of Appreciate + Reciprocate, a club that raises money for its own endowed scholarship, holding the executive board positions of Social Media Coordinator in her sophomore and junior year and Treasurer in her senior year. She enjoys reading, listening to all types of music, sewing clothes, and learning new things. She really likes to savor the simple things in life because she rarely gets spare time; but

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when she does, she makes the most of it.

Michele was the 2013 Miss Carival Queen and decided to compete in the Miss Carival pageant because she wanted to be a role model for younger women of Caribbean descent. Growing up she always felt the presence of her Haitian roots. When she visited Haiti she was delighted to be fully immersed in her culture and felt connected to her heritage.

Michele currently attends Wayne State Law School. Her dream is to become an immigration lawyer like her father to help everyone have access to the American dream. Michele is dedicated to her education and furthering her studies, as she wants to show other young women that the same is possible.



Ché & Michele, 2018



2013 Carival Pageant double winners

Ché Alcé Jean-Charles

Ché is a recent graduate of The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. As she prepares for her future, Che is finishing her requirements and studying for the DAT in order to get into dental school. In spite of a busy school schedule she managed to make time for extracurricular activities. One of her biggest passions is community service. For the past 4 years, she was involved in Health Awareness Peer Educators otherwise known as HAPE. She has served in multiple positions in the organization such as Secretary and in her senior year Vice President. She is also a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated where she served as the chapter president her senior year. She also served as a delegate in this year's Regional Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She chose this sorority because of its commitment to the betterment of not only women but all mankind. She was also involved in math club and Pi Mu Epsilon, an honorary math society. Additionally, she was involved in the STEM Academy, which promotes internships and school after undergrad.

Being Jr. Miss. Carival is an experience that she will always cherish and hold close to her heart. Her ultimate goal is still to be a role model for young women of every nationality. She wants to help them realize that their goals are attainable as long as they work hard to make them come true. ■

2017 FARMINGTON FOUNDERS PARADE

On Saturday July 22, 2017 HNGD participated in the Downtown Farmington Founders Parade. A total of 40 community members and supporters walked in the parade behind the banner advertising the Bèl Bagay Lakay Festival scheduled to take place the following weekend. It was a great opportunity to let the citizens of Farmington know that there is a strong Haitian presence in Metro Detroit. It was also a fun way to get the whole family together!

The theme for the festival was Hot Fun in the Summer time! Straw hats and Bèl Bagay Lakay t-shirts were part of the group's uniform and everyone carried their Haitian flag with pride. We really came out shining and the applause that we received as we were walking on the route confirmed it. Kudos to Jinette Dumont Chapman for being the lead dancer and for helping the group maintain a high level of energy during the whole event. A Big "Thank You" to all the brave souls, young and not so young, who decided to join us. ■





In this section, the public is invited to showcase their literary talent by submitting short stories, plays, poems and essays on topics dealing with Haiti or Haitian experiences.



My name is Helen-Widma Rose Berkemeier. I was born in Leogane, Haiti in October, 2008. My first name is a combination of my adoptive mom's Grandmother's name (Helen) and my given Haitian name

(Widma). My mom adopted me from an orphanage in Haiti in 2012.

A few years ago, my mom and I were driving to church on a Sunday morning. I started telling her a story I made up about what I would

do if I ever met a shark. I told her I would not be afraid, that I would give the shark a cookie, and that the shark would be my best ever friend. My mom was laughing a little and I just kept on talking! My mom thought it was so funny that she wrote it down so she'd always remember it. A little later, she decided to make the shark story into a book for kids.

My mom and I worked on the book together. She wrote down everything as I said it, and then we worked on the drawings. I drew my best shark, car and little girl. My mom recreated that in a drawing program on the computer. We spent a lot of time making the drawings better and making the story as much like the real thing as possible. When the words and the story were done, we put it into book form. My mom emailed the book to work, and her friend at work helped her finish it off so it was perfect. We named the book Widma and the Shark.

When we were finished, we thought it would be a good idea to try to sell the book to raise money for my orphanage in Haiti. My mom sent the book to a publisher, and a few weeks later we had 150 books delivered to us. My mom worked with the board of the orphanage and put the word out on Facebook that we had a children's book to sell. We raised almost \$2500 that we sent to the orphanage to use for food, supplies and general childcare needs.

After the book was finished, I took it into my classroom for my teacher to read. She read it to the class, and some of the kids wanted my mom to write a book for them! The teacher loved it, too. My cousins still talk about it; my mom thinks someday she may write a story for them.

Sincerely,

Helen-Widma Berkemeier ■

AMERICAN STREET

By Jan Ulrich

Did you know that there is a corner on the west side of Detroit where American Street meets Joy Rd? What a perfect address for someone coming from another country in the pursuit of happiness, right? That's what Fabiola Toussaint thought when she came with her mother from Haiti to join family in Detroit. Little did she know that her mother's sister, Aunt Jo, and her three cousins had become acculturated into the American urban black experience, keeping few of the Haitian traditions that were central to her life. The young adult novel, American Street, follows Fabiola as she tries to navigate issues of loss, culture, relationships and family.

The book's author, Ibi Zoboi, joined HNGD on November 4th to share her personal story of struggling with identity after coming from Haiti to the United States as a child. Although the neighborhood she moved into was in 1980's Brooklyn, she chose modern day Detroit for the setting of her novel. Like Fabiola, she had to confront the challenges of fitting in with her peers, living up to parents' expectations and nurturing her own soul and sense of purpose.

Continued on next page



After her talk, a panel made up of Jean-Luc Duval, Sophia Chue, Anne Caroline Michel and Shirley Alce Konate shared some of their experiences claiming their Haitian and Caribbean identity and living a bi-cultural life. Many others in attendance shared their thoughts and perspectives in a lively discussion. Everyone agreed on the importance of helping the coming generation develop a respect and love for their heritage.



L-R: Jean-C Luc Duval, Anne Caroline Michel, Ibi Zoboi, Sophia L. Chue, and Shirley Alc -Konat .



L-R: Jean Ulrick, Shirley Shirley Alc -Konat , Ibi Zoboi, Janny Magloire Milton, and Alain Mentor.

American Street will be the featured book at the next HNGD book discussion group in April. Get your copy to read now. Watch for announcements about the date and location so you can join us to share your thoughts about the book and how it relates to your own experiences. ■

JOURNEY TO GRATITUDE

January 25, 2015

Montreal

7:38PM

Never say never. This I have learned in the last few weeks. I am back in Montreal looking forward to be stationed in the city for a few years after vowing that I would not return and as I was getting ready to settle permanently in my new home back in the States. I had been relishing the idea of working outdoors this summer, planting my flowers and growing my own vegetables. I had been anticipating with great pleasure my weekly trips to Eastern Market, my forays into the new restaurants and bars in the midtown section of the city and my future evenings of foreign movies and exhibits at the Institute of Arts. What a twist of life and destiny: to pick up and go when I was just getting comfortable settling in. Strangely enough, I am not feeling sad, cheated, or frustrated nor am I feeling that something has been taken away from me. Strangely enough, I am feeling a tranquil serenity and an inner peace similar to the quiet and calm water of an inland lake surrounded by green and lush vegetation. I am not asking myself any question, nor wondering about tomorrow. I am experiencing a sort of serenity that comes from knowing that today is taken care of and so will be the tomorrows to come. I have put my faith unto God. He is leading me and He is in charge. After all, he has provided for this amazing opportunity. And I have this indescribable feeling that I only have to follow the path. This is where He meant for me to be.

When I landed in Montreal last week, I could not help a feeling of excitement, trepidation and wonder. I told myself: this is where it all started. This is where the second part of my life started: The rediscovery of who I am as a spiritual human, instead of being a function (wife and mother) started in earnest when I came to Montreal in my mid-forties. I spent positive and productive time with myself and realized that it was a much better life than to be in a marriage partnership where my soul felt imprisoned and left thirsty and longing for something that constantly eluded.

Why then, would I be so surprised that He would bring me back to close the loop and finish the work. I am feeling so exhausted from the drama of the personal and professional experiences of the past three years that I relish the quasi anonymity that the city offers me. I will use that time to rest, to gain strength and to learn to stop

Continued on next page



and smell the roses. To just be. To feel free. To allow myself to be love, unconditional love that starts with loving me unequivocally. I have earned this privilege and now need to concentrate on enjoying and embracing this new way of life. This is the wish that my grandmother has for me as she is watching over my shoulder and comforting me from all the pain and agitation. She knows the abundance of joy is coming, and she is smiling sitting with me on the banks of my lush and green lake contemplating what is to come. For even though I feel exhausted, I do feel at peace and content. I am loving life, loving others and ready to catch with both hands and with a heady feeling of greediness the joy that is thumping at me. And for this, I am grateful.

Régine Beauboeuf ■

MERCI CUBA!

By: Nina Thomas



In the last two weeks of June 2018, The Haitian Network Group of Detroit held a fundraiser through a Royal Caribbean cruise vacation. For every cabin rented through the cruise line, Royal Caribbean contributed twenty-five dollars back to HNGD. Months of preparation went into planning the exciting vacation that would take us to Havana Cuba, with a stop in Key West Florida along the way. The cruise was six days and five nights, with two days in Havana. The anticipation of gathering with friends and members of HNGD united everyone even before the real party began when boat departed the Miami dock!

Although the biggest attraction for the cruise was spending two days in Havana, Royal Caribbean had lots to offer onboard.. The party began before the boat left, with music and dancing ; the festivity was live and rich in the air — everyone felt it. The cruise line had ac-

tivities for everyone children and adults. I was able to connect with other kids around my age through these activities, as well as bond with adults over dinner and evening shows. Zumba, on deck, movies at night, and spa treatments were just some of the activities I took advantage of while on the boat. We stopped in Key West Florida. Key West although still part of the U.S, felt very tropical; The small island was filled with a rich history we were able to learn about through a trolley ride. A group of us went to a small beach for the rest of the afternoon for a fun relaxing time.

The next day, we arrived in Cuba; the temperature was awfully high, although not quite as high as the excitement all of us shared to finally step onto Cuban soil. The differences between America and Cuba were apparent immediately: convertible cars from the 1950's, beautifully structured but aged buildings, and the blend of Spanish and English spoken by locals just going on with their day. The HNGD group was split into two groups to go on a walking tour of Havana — during which for about two hours we explored with awe as much as we could. Some highlights included the Havana Cathedral, the Capitol building (which resembles the U.S. Capital, but much bigger), and the statue of Jesus — named Cristo de La Habana — holding a cigar in one hand and a mojito in the other. As night approached many of the adults went for a night out on the town for salsa dancing and music. The second day in Cuba everyone was off doing their own thing; my family and I, along with a friend went on a convertible tour of Havana. The weather was beautiful as we cruised down the roads with our personal tour guides giving us more history on the country.

The most important part of the trip was the bonding with members of HNGD. Though I knew only a few people before the trip, I left with new friendships and knowledge from listening to others' stories. This trip was something I will never forget. Hoping next time we can all travel to Haiti! Thank you HNGD for a wonderful vacation! ■



Nina Thomas

UPCOMING...

ANOTHER BÈL BAGAY LAKAY FESTIVAL IS COMING YOUR WAY!

Mark your calendar, the next Bèl Bagay Haitian Art & Craft Festival will take place on **July 27 and 28, 2019!** HNGD will be celebrating its 20th year of existence and we promise that it will be a big party!



If you would like to be a sponsor, get involved in the planning process, or volunteer the day of the festival, do not hesitate to send us an email at info@haitiannetworkdetroit.org.

The success of the 2017 Bèl Bagay Lakay was the result of many individuals and entities coming together with the common goal of enriching Michigan's multicultural tapestry. Haitian Network Group of Detroit is particularly grateful to the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and to Culture Source for the generous grant that helped make the 2017 Bèl Bagay Lakay Festival possible. Without the support of organizations such as these, Michigan's artistic and cultural scene would be impoverished, as it would be close to impossible to facilitate the quality programs that are currently being produced in our area.

We also want to acknowledge our event partner, Royal Caribbean International and its representative Ms. Marianne Hessler, for helping us bring the Festival to the next level. A special "Thank You" goes to Madonna University, the City of Farmington and the Consul General of Haiti, Lesly Condé and his staff for their continued support.

To St. John Providence Ascension, Pierre Paul Art Gallery and the rest of our sponsors (logos listed on the last page), words cannot express the gratitude that you deserve for believing that we could deliver a quality product that would meet your standards of excellence.

We would be remiss in our gratitude if we did not say "Mèsi anpil" to the artists, the volunteers from New Jersey and Indiana, the Chrysler Motor City Volunteers, the Haitian Community and the general public for supporting our effort and for contributing to the success of the event.

Kudos to the 2017 Committee members: Maggy Corkery (CoChair), Soledad Nelson (Co-Chair), Shirley Alcé Konaté, Régine Beauboeuf, Jennifer Berkemeier, Janny Magloire Milton, Bill McNeece, Valerie McNeece, Fritz Momplaisir, Dana Parke, Jan Ulrich

Submitted by Maggy Corkery ■

Thank You! Merci! Mèsi!



Corkery Appraisal Services LLC

State Representative
CHRISTINE GREIG



THANK YOU!!!