

Zanmi Detroit

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Haitian Network Group of Detroit
www.hngd.com

From the President

Dr. Marie Soledad Nelson

The State of Michigan's Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA) has granted \$4,000 to the Haitian Network Group of

1804 - Celebrating a Legacy - 2004



HNGD



Detroit for fiscal year 2004. We were selected to receive the grant, in the Arts Project Category, from a pool of hundreds of applicants. MCACA can be contacted for a

complete list of their sponsored programs throughout the state of Michigan.

The grant supports our commemoration of the Bicentennial of Haiti's independence. The event, "1804-2004 Celebrating a Legacy", will take place the weekend of November 5-7, 2004. It is a family program that is free of charge and open to residents of the Metropolitan Detroit area. The program consists of lectures, children's workshops, art exhibits and film. The purpose of this project is to advocate cultural diversity by educating, promoting and celebrating Haitian culture. The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History will host the cultural and educational portions of the program. The members of the Haitian Network Group of Detroit hope to see you all there. ♦

The Pichon Project

Julie A. Fleming

The Pichon project operates under its umbrella organization, the Peace Education Center, and is a non-profit organization based in East Lansing, Michigan. With members from around the world, we have been working with the poverty-stricken village of Pichon in the southern part of Haiti by providing a milieu conducive to education and self-empowerment. In the last four years, we have started an elementary school, which currently teaches kindergarten through fourth grade.

Each year a grade is added and we are fundraising to continue our efforts. Our goals include erecting a new building for classrooms and overnight accommodations for visitors, setting up a micro-credit program for the women to start their own businesses, and providing electricity for the school using power from the ocean. We would also like to bring solar cooking technology to the area to eliminate the charcoal scarcity problem and purchase a corn grinder.



Once the project in Pichon is well established we would like to expand our project to serve other neighboring villages. The Pichon Project is not affiliated with any religious organization. Our President, Pierre Balthazar, is originally from the Pichon area and through his personal connections, we are able to work out the logistics of running the school. ♦

A Lesson Learned

Bill Mcneece

Two years ago, during my second trip to Haiti, Roger Mathews and I were on our way to Mirebalais for a high school dedication ceremony. The Detroit Area Haiti Outreach Program had helped to build the school. Our friend Maxime was driving us in his Nissan mini van on the infamous highway One, over Mt. Morne Kabrit. Here, a dirt road might suddenly become one-way after rounding a switchback. Dust covered boys sometimes appeared at curves to warn of oncoming traffic. The road resembled river rapids strewn with rocks and boulders with no water flowing in the dry season. As we traveled up



the mountain we were passed by a tap-tap. It was a small, well used, pick-up truck transformed into a taxi and

was overloaded with several people hanging off the back. We came to a steep part of the road, covered with a thick layer of very fine dust. The tap-tap's tires had no tread and it suddenly began to slide down the road toward us, despite the best efforts of the driver. Just as the taxi was about to collide with us and push us off the mountain, Maxime turned severely toward the precipice and the tap-tap missed us by inches. There are no guardrails on the mountain road and I have no idea how close to the edge of the road we came. I do know that the drop would have been at least 1000 feet straight down. Looking back, we expected to see the tap-tap fall off the mountain past the switchback. The driver had somehow managed to steer the rear of his vehicle into the mountainside and his passengers were now leaping off. They were safe and we traveled on.

The next day Maxime spotted the same tap-tap while we drove through Mirebalais. He stopped, got out, and hailed the driver.

Maxime yelled "We were up on the mountain with you yesterday." They both began to roar with laughter. In that close call, I learned about appreciation for life, and the solidarity that comes with overcoming great obstacles♦

Upcoming Event Mark Your Calendar!

1804-2004: Celebrating A Legacy The Bicentennial of Haiti's Independence

Friday, November 5th

6:00 pm, Awards Banquet at Vladimir's Banquet Hall
Entertainment: Top Vice
(\$65 per Ticket)

Saturday, November 6th

Charles H. Wright

Museum of African American History
(All Free)

Lecture Series:

11:00am - 12:00pm	The Haitian Flag
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Haiti's Contribution to America
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Haitian Author, Danny Laferriere
2:00pm - 3:00pm	Haitian Children in American Culture

Children's Workshops:

Drums	Geraud Dimanche
Dance	Maxceau Cylla
Games	Gilbert Targette
Storytelling	Adeline Auguste Elizabeth James

Art Exhibit:

11:00am - 4:00pm

Voodoo Exhibit & Lecture:

7:00pm - 8:00pm Dr. Max Beauvoir

Dance Recital/Reception:

8:30pm - 9:30pm

Saturday, November 6th

Charles H. Wright Museum of African
American History
(All Free)

1:00pm - 3:00pm	Film: "The Agronomist"
3:00pm - 4:00pm	Lecture: Haitian Revolution and Human Rights
4:00pm - 5:00pm	Closing Ceremony

Haiti and Its Political Struggle: An Historical Perspective Part I

Marcel H. Leonard

Conflict Over Land Distribution

Since its independence in 1804, the Black Caribbean nation of Haiti has experienced more civil unrest than any country in the Western Hemisphere. This is due, in part, to her socioeconomic make-up.

Following the emancipation of the slaves, Haitians found themselves divided in a struggle for social and economical reform. This division manifested under the guise of differences in skin pigmentation; dark skinned versus light skinned mulattos. In fact, the struggle was for control of power between affluent Haitians of various hues.

Fearing that this conflict might lead to the destruction of Haiti, Jean Jacques Dessalines, the father of the new nation, reminded the affluent citizens of an important fact. The lands belonged to all the sons of the nation, regardless of the color of their skin or their social status.

Dessalines proposed the Agrarian Reform, better known as land distribution. The idea did not sit well with the Black generals of the liberation army or with the mulattos, who felt that they had a birthright to the property of their white fathers. The problem became more complex when some former slave owners issued property deeds to their half-breed sons or to former slaves who they considered to be “des negroes loyal” (*good Negroes*.) Though such transactions the Catholic Church received a good portion of property and was also against the idea of land distribution. Finally, after a well-prepared plot, Jean Jacques Dessalines was ambushed and assassinated on October 17th, 1806, less than two years after the proclamation of independence.

Following his death, Haiti became divided between northern and southern factions.

Alexandre Petion, a mulatto educated in France, led the south and Henry Christophe, a Black ex-slave headed the north.

Henry Christophe established a monarchy on the northern portion of the island, where he proclaimed himself King Henry I. He distributed land to all the high-ranking officers of his kingdom, and to affluent Blacks and Mulattos. The common people were subject to a life of slavery working from sunset to sundown and were allowed to visit the market places only on Saturday afternoons and on Sundays. Paralyzed and ill, Christophe ended his own life with a silver bullet in 1820.



To appease his major constituents, Alexandre Petion distributed land to the affluent Blacks and Mulattos of the south. He also reserved and distributed a portion of the land to the common people. Petion was seen as a humanitarian not only for his work in Haiti but also throughout South America for the help he extended to Simon Bolivar in their war of emancipation against Spain. Petion died peacefully in July 1818.

After their deaths, the north and the south were united under the leadership of General Boyer, who followed the principles and politics of Petion. During his administration, Boyer unified the Eastern portion of the island, known today as the Dominican Republic, into one nation. He freed the remaining slaves of the east and introduced reform envisioned by Dessalines to the eastern portion of the land. Boyer nationalized the lands, which were under the control of the Catholic Church and Spanish Government and redistributed them to ex-slaves and soldiers.

From 1820 to 1843, Haiti enjoyed a period of political stability and economic prosperity.

In March 1843, Boyer was overthrown. The civil unrest between the Mulattos and the affluent Blacks divided the nation once more

(Continued on page 4)

Political Struggle (Continued from page 3)

into East and West. This time, the nation became embroiled in a bitter civil war that took the lives of thousands and led to the rapid overturning of a number of presidents. Most of these provisional Presidents were either removed from power or assassinated in less than six months. These conditions created a state of anarchy and persisted until the invasion of Haiti by the U.S. Marines in 1915
(To be continued next edition.)♦

New arrival



A new addition to the A-Alkebu-Lan family has arrived. Semu-Amen A-Alkabu-Lan was born on October 5, 2004 at 7 lbs., 1oz. Mrs. Sabrina A-Alkebu-Lan and the healthy baby boy are doing well. The Haitian Network Group and friends congratulate them with warm wishes for a wonderful new beginning♦

Haitian Network Group of Detroit
Awards Banquet & Dance
Featuring
TOP VICE



Tickets:
\$65 (Cocktails/Open Bar & Dinner Dance)
R.S.V.P. by OCT. 10th

Evening Attire will be appreciated

FRIDAY NOV. 5, 2004 6pm-2am

VLADIMIR'S
28125 Grand River Rd. Farmington, MI
(East of Middlebelt Rd.)

For more info. call (248) 895-8978, (313) 319-3723, (313) 570-8769
Discounted Hotel Rates Available

The Haitian Network Group is having an Awards Banquet & Dance (above.) Proceeds will go toward the HNGD Michigan Haiti Flood Relief Fund.

Local Leaders Establish Haiti Flood Relief Fund

Nirva Civilis

Haitian Community leaders of the Metropolitan Detroit Area are uniting resources to help the victims of this September's Hurricane Jeanne in the Caribbean country of Haiti. In the aftermath, floods and mudslides resulted in more than 1,600 deaths and 300,000 homeless. The HNGD Michigan Flood Relief Fund was established in order to provide vital goods such as food, water, and medication to aid the hurricane victims in the city of Gonaives. Tax-deductible contributions are currently being accepted in the form of non-perishable goods and cash/check donations.

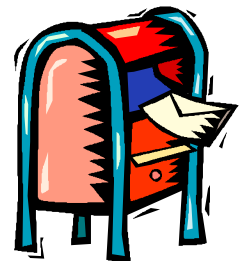


Send monetary contributions to the following address:

HNGD Michigan Haiti Flood Relief Fund
P.O. Box 19195
Detroit, Michigan 48219

Bulk items will be accepted at the following location:

P.V.S. Chemical Co. Warehouse
10900 Harper Avenue
Detroit, MI. 48213
M-F 9:00am - 3:30pm



For more information contact:

Pierre-Richard Lamarre at (248) 569-7897
Or
Dr. Marie Soledad Nelson at
(248) 895-8978 or www.hngd.com

