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Zanmi Detroit

ABOUT THIS ISSUE...



This is the second issue of the newsletter for this year. Ambitious in its attempt to inform, it can be considered a two in one, a bargain "à l'américaine." Since the last issue, HNGD has put on several events that have galvanized the community and educated the larger Michigan community about Haiti, its reality and history. During the winter, we featured the movie "Lakay: You Can Always Go Home" depicting a trip home and the tumultuous emotions that it evoked in three siblings, who emigrated here as children, and their relatives back home. We would like to thank Cliff Lance for facilitating our access to the movie and the producers: Tif Alexius, Remoh Romeo, Hugh Grady and Macdanne Edmond for allowing us to obtain and show it free of charge. The screening was followed by a concise and informative presentation on public health in Haiti by Dr. Jimmy Belotte. As usual, in the spring, we held our traditional celebration of parenthood through a parent day event during which our children paid homage to our effort and devotion through their letters. During that event, poetry dedicated to parents and parenting were read, including a poignant letter from Placide Louverture to his parents, Toussaint and Suzanne Louverture that offered a vivid testimony of filial love and the ability of the human spirit to triumph over the nefarious effects of slavery. Last but not least, came the Haitian Art Festival, "Bèl Bagay Lakay," which was a resounding success, beyond even our wildest

imagination. For two days, we brought Haitian culture to South Eastern Michigan in a blend of colors, tastes, sounds and movements that will be hard to forget. As is the case with life, the community also had painful losses, as some of its members made the transition to eternal life. HNGD joins the affected families in their grief and offers them its deepest sympathy. Hoping that you will find this issue informative and entertaining, we eagerly await your comments, and please share it with all of those around you.

On behalf of HNGD:
**HAPPY READING
AND JOYFUL HOLIDAYS,**

The Editor,

Dr. Jean-Claude Dutès



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Reflections on parenting

While the family is not and cannot be a democratic institution, it must be tempered by fairness, empathy and flexibility in order to produce well-adjusted adults. If the family were led as a democratic institution, no children would live past the first year. By the same token, when it is run as a totalitarian state, it produces maladjusted individuals who are at risk for becoming paranoid and chronically angry. Authoritative, yes, that is, having and conveying a clear sense of the values we want to instill, the standards that we will accept and tolerate, that is tempered by democratic principles. Harmonizing guidance and imposition, persuasion and coercion, we hope to find the middle ground, which at times feels like walking on an invisible tightrope, as being a parent is a journey filled with underlying feelings of insecurity related to a myriad of conflicting emotional states ranging from euphoria to despair.

Healthy parenting, which is always anchored in a caring and loving relationship, is a fine balancing act involving contradictory forces on more than one level. Very early, we learn that our children, even as infants, have ways to resist and accommodate our wishes. At first, we confront the need to synchronize our children's temperament with our personality and personal style. This helps us find the place of comfort between facilitating self-expression and educating, which on many occasions requires some degree of coercion. No one grows to become a well-adjusted adult without having experienced limits or someone saying "no" to you. On the other hand, an infant and child who grew up hearing only "no" or responding mostly to external constraints is at risk for becoming emotionally stunted. Basically, we work hard on finding the balance between indulgence and coercion or between permissiveness and authoritativeness. Through this process, we hope to raise unselfish children who are able to take into consideration both internal and external factors in making decisions, have an adequate level of skill based self-esteem, and demonstrate the ability to love and be loved and to be reasonably happy with their life situations.

Second, we confront the task of estimating the benefits of short term gratification versus long term gains. As most of us have experienced, a two-year old wants what he wants right now. An adolescent believes that we adults do not know anything and that his way or his friends' style is the only intelligent approach. Neither, because of their developing and immature brain, is able to adequately anticipate the long term consequences of his wants and actions. We as parents know, or should know, better because we have been around longer and have learned a thing or two about causes and effects, behaviors and consequences. When, where and on what to compromise depends on a number of factors, likely to include our personality, level of education, past experiences with our own parents and overall stress level.

Third, we work on reconciling our parenting approach with the customs and the societal expectations of the larger culture and of our social group in particular. This is a particular phenomenon for us immigrant parents. In many instances, the customs of our neighbors reflect underlying values that we do not want our children to learn. Yet as children, we know that they have a need to socialize, to interact with other children in order to develop the social skills they will need to be successful later in life. While we want them to grow and prosper, we also want them to be selective in the values, attitudes and behaviors they adopt from the host culture.

Parents and children do not always see the path to success through the same lenses or prisms. As parents, we face the task of preparing children to be successful in a world that is changing faster than we are able to keep up with the changes. While our feet are solidly planted in one generation, our children's feet are navigating our world and the emerging one in which they are immersed and also partly creating. Remember the times when our parents could not do anything right, when we saw them as an inconvenience, an impediment to our freedom and self-expression, although we needed and relied on them? Now my parents, in retrospect, seem like they were more right than wrong in the values that they tried to instill in me and which I challenged. This does not mean that they were always right or that I would do exactly what they did. While I kept many of their values, I changed the manner in which I chose to instill them in my children. They raised me in an authoritarian society that did not respect individual achievements as much as social origins and that valued obedience to and respect for authority far more than personal affirmation. The main goal in that society was to ensure my survival by stressing obedience to authority and conformity. When this dawned on me after I became a parent and had a better understanding of Haiti's history and culture, I developed a deeper appreciation for the love, caring and concerns that guided their actions. However, because in America personal assertiveness is prized and challenge to authority to a greater extent more tolerated, I understood that I had to interact with my children differently in helping them acquire the skill sets they would need to be successful in American society.

As you read the letters written by our children to and about us, most of you will be moved, and many brought to tears, as you process their words of appreciation of your efforts. While I am sure that most of us knew that our children were successful and that they held us in high esteem, I doubt that many of us knew how they would express their appreciation and what exactly about us or our message made the difference for them. As parents, we do the best we can to nurture, shelter, protect and educate our children with the means at our disposal in a dynamic society, a Sisyphean task that I suspect at one time made many of us feel like we were striking against air in our effort to be heard or to assist our children in "getting it right." The letters tell us in vivid and insightful ways that our efforts were not in vain and that we hit the mark more often than we realized. ■



FESTIVAL PICTURES





BÈL BAGAY LAKAY FESTIVAL REVIEWS

BÈL BAGAY LAKAY: HAITI IN FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN

By Drs. Marie Soledad Nelson and Jean-Claude Dutès

The Haitian Network Group of Detroit hosted the first ever Haitian Art and Craft Festival in Downtown Farmington, Michigan. Drawing several hundred participants, the event themed “**Bèl Bagay Lakay**”, Beautiful Things from Home in Haitian Creole, took place at Sundquist Pavilion and Riley Park on July 10 and 11 this past summer.

Notable Haitian artists and artisans from the US, Canada and Haiti enjoyed the opportunity to showcase their work at the event, allowing many to become acquainted with Haitian culture and other aspects of Haitian life that is seldom portrayed in the media. Well received by the local community, members of the diverse cultural groups composing south Michigan attended the festival, beholding the vibrant visual tapestry offered by the paintings, salivating at the smell of tasty foods, moving to engaging Compas rhythm mixed by DJs Fritz Monplaisir and Bahajj Jakar, and bathing in the warmth of Haitian hospitality.

THEY CAME FROM EVERYWHERE!

Several members of United Haitian Artists dazzled the public by their works. Among them were Michael Brudent, President of the United Haitian Artist association, Gina Samson, and Junior Joel Cayo coming from various regions of the United States. Others such as Jacques Toussaint, Dr. Alix Rey, Eddy Royere, Jean Salomon Andre and Ginette Roy Doura traveled from Canada.

Local Haitian artist, Bécél Dubreuze Jr., who is also the creator of the Bèl Bagay Lakay Logo, gave the public a view of his impressive collection. 92 year old local artist Jean Leonard exposed us to his miniature ships in a bottle collection. Many women coveted the embroidered apparels by artist Josiane Paillière, who was sponsored by Fondasyon Konesans Ak Libète (FOKAL). Nathan Delinois of Florida featured his Art Nouveau, while attractive pieces from Gerry Romain's Exotic Jewellery collections moved us from sight to touch. While everyone was exceptional, Toussaint stood out as much by his work as by his actions as he entertained, educated and titillated our sight with displays of brilliantly mixed colors that leapt from the canvas.

THERE WAS SOMETHING FOR EVERY AGE GROUP!

The organizers did not forget about the cultural education of the little ones. A diverse group of children learned about and had the opportunity to practice drumming. A lesson that

was well planned and ably taught by Marwan Amen-Ra. In addition, they were also introduced to the game “Kay” and listened to Haitian folk stories led and read by Danielle Desroches. With an opportunity to integrate gross and fine motor skills with visual spatial abilities, they learned to play “osselets” under the guidance of Nabilia Perilus.”

“MEN RARA, MEN RARA!” HERE COMES RARA, HERE COMES RARA!

Back to our roots, to “Racine.” At midday on Sunday, RARA came to South Eastern Michigan. Everyone got up, paraded and danced simultaneously to the sound of a Rara trumpet, played by none other than Eddy François, a virtuoso musician from Haiti, who ensured the authenticity of the sound and rhythm of this music inherited from our Taino and West African forebears.

WAIT!

That was not all. The gifted Dr. Soledad Nelson and her charming models brought the house down with her fashion show, spurring the women to admiration and indulging the men into a paradisiac visual trip.

THERE IS STILL MORE!

If you knew anything about Haitians, you would know that no festival is complete without music and food. Enos Fabre, Kenroy Robinson and Wiston Christopher Patterson put aside their busy schedule, and for the second time in a row for Mr. Fabre, volunteered their time to entertain the public. They were so good that the public would not let them leave the stage. Not to be outdone, Martin Mathelier, also putting aside a busy schedule, made time to fly from New York to serenade us with musical selections from his new CD “Colors”.

To talk, walk and dance for two days would be a daunting feat without nourishment. Guerda Harris, owner of Back Alley Gourmet in Ann Arbor, MI and her crew made sure that did not happen. In an efficient manner, so that no one had time to pass out waiting in line, the Black Alley Gourmet's crew served a variety of delectable Haitian dishes that kept people asking for more.

“AU REVOIR”

Just imagine the fun you missed, if you weren't there. And if you were there, just revive the memories again on a cold day to recapture the warmth of the experience.

No problem if you missed it, just stick around for an encore in 2017. ■

ART MEETS AUTOMOTIVE DESIGN

By Dr. Marie Soledad Nelson

It is with enthusiasm that The Haitian Network Group of Detroit (HNGD) featured **Becel Dubreuze, Jr** an artist from the community and former board member of HNGD in our first ever Haitian Art and Crafts Festival, Bèl Bagay Lakay this summer.

A resident of West Bloomfield, Becel Dubreuze, Jr. was born in Port-au-Prince Haiti. Intrigued by the work of great artists, he began to draw at the tender age of 5. In 1981 he moved to Montreal, Canada where he lived for several years. He then moved to Florida in the mid 80's. His earlier education in the field of architecture gave him a great knowledge in the consistent use of lines, color, material and texture with design. In 1987 he married the lovely Katia, and from this union came three children: Yasmine, Tatiana and Becel III. In 1993 he relocated to Michigan, his adopted home to pursue his education, earning a Bachelor's degree in Product Design Engineering Technology in 1998 from Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan and a MBA in Technology Management in 2001 from the University of Phoenix.

His passion for creative arts inspired him to pursue a career in automotive design engineering and he uses his spare time to draw, sketch and paint. His current artwork focuses on human expressions and the moods of nature. His work is a reflection on life and how it frames the human experience. Becel's inspiration comes from the memories of his native land as well as his everyday observation of life, with his religious background and passion for jazz are also fueling his creativity.

Becel's work, which has been exhibited in various art shows and can be found in the private collections of patrons with discerning taste, was in display this summer in the Haitian Art Festival where it enjoyed much success. ■

MADE IN MICHIGAN VIA HAITI CHERIE

By Maggy Corkery

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, Pèrè 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 clos-

er 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, Pèrè 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 Haitian Art and Crafts festival in Metro Detroit, Pèrè Léonard made a very limited number of these artifacts available at the festival, where the public was thrilled to see those unique items made in Michigan by a "natif natal" of Haïti Chérie. ■

A TALENT TO RECKON WITH!

By Margareth Corkery

The Haitian community in Metro Detroit is a crucible of talent. From painters, to musicians, to designers, to culinary artists, we got it all! **Enos Fabre** belongs to that group of select individuals possessing what most consider a God given gift.



Enos was born in a small village in the northwestern side of Haiti called Mare-Rouge. In 1990, Enos immigrated to Miami, Florida. The year 2002 marked a major milestone for the young expatriate as it was when he completed his studies and relocated to Michigan to pursue the American dream. He is currently employed with Ford Motor Company as an Electrical Engineer.

Enos, his wife Céreste and their two children Abéni and Gabriel reside in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Engineering is Enos Fabre's profession, however music is his true passion. He has been playing the guitar in church for more than 13 years and has also been playing in a Christian band for just about the same amount of time. When asked how he got interested in music, he stated "My inspiration and love for music come from God. As a young child, I attended church and enjoyed hearing the band played. As I got older, I decided to join the church band and learned to play the guitar. I've enjoyed it ever since."

Indeed his love for music is apparent. In his own quiet way, this very talented and yet down-to earth musician has put the Haitian community under his spell. Enos has no reservation about sharing his special gift with others around him. He often performs with a local band called G-Major at different types of private and church functions. More than once Enos has willingly performed at events sponsored by the Haitian Network Group of Detroit. True to his generous nature, Enos, once again without any hesitation answered "yes" when HNGD approached him about performing at the Bèl Bagay Lakay Haitian Art & Craft Festival. On the second day of the event, he serenaded us with a medley of Kreol oldies that revived cherished memories of Haiti Chérie. Presently, Enos is busy working on his own music. He has written several original songs that he plans to release early next year. Stay tuned! No doubt he has something amazing in store for us. Until then, Enos can be contacted at efabremusic@gmail.com ■

BRIEF REVIEW OF PAST ACTIVITIES

By Dr. Jean-Claude Dutès



In April HNGD held a showing of the movie “*Lakay: You Can Always Go Back*” that was preceded by music by Enos Fabre and followed by an informative lecture on Haiti’s health situation by Dr. Jimmy Belotte. Enos equipped with his guitar entertained the audience with his melodious voice while the movie evoked strong feelings of nostalgia, revealed the importance of family connections and demonstrated the reciprocal dependence between Haitians in the US and those in the Haitian diaspora. The evening ended with Dr. Belotte conveying in a concise, eloquent and moving presentation the state of health care in Haiti. In short, HNGD did it again. In one afternoon it managed to entertain, educate and inform members of the Haitian community and others living in the Detroit and Farmington areas. If you were there, thank you for making it a success. If you were not, you missed a great event and we look forward to seeing amongst us in our next activity.

May 31st brought the Parent’s day celebration. Contrary to previous years when HNGD honored fathers and mothers separately, this year both were recognized in one event. For those of you able to recall the temporal flow of seasonal activities, this the third such event that we have held.

Members of the Haitian community were invited to read letters of tribute to their parents pertaining to the impact of a parent or parents on their life. As can be expected, there were many wet cheeks. On occasions strong emotions had to be held back in order for readers to keep reading to an appreciative audience.

Themes were varied, with many dealing with perseverance, resilience, positive effects of parental expectations, being raised in a Haitian home and culture and the endearing qualities of peculiar habits of some parents. The admiration for the attentiveness of mothers, the work habits of fathers and the ability of single female parents to attend to the needs of their children despite herculean hurdles permeated the afternoon leaving no one untouched.

The event also provided an opportunity for 5-year-old Ms. Nia Chapman to hone her skills in public speaking by reading her own tribute to her mother. To say she did a wonderful job would be an understatement. Compliments to her parents: Ms. Jinette Chapman and Dr. Timothy Lamar Chapman for the marvelous work they are doing with her. A darling of the audience, she was a delight to see and hear in her little yellow dress. I would bet that every parent in the audience could see their own daughter or granddaughter in her. While many of the letters were read by their authors, a good number had to be read by volunteer readers from the audience because the writer could not be present. HNGD thanks them for giving life to words that touched and moved us all, parents or chil-

dren.

Last but not least, Dr. Dutès read several poems from a diverse group of poets, including Langston Hughes and Carl Sandburg, and a letter written in 1803 by Placide Louverture to his parents, Toussaint and Suzanne Louverture, while both were in captivity. The letter, which was found after General Louverture’s death in a kerchief he wrapped around his head, is a testimony of the bonds that sustain both parents and children in times of great adversity and living evidence of the power of filial and fraternal love. Below is a translated copy of the text.

My dear father and mother,
I am on board the brig La Naïade. As yet, I am ignorant of my lot. Perhaps I shall never see you again. In that I do not accuse my destiny. No matter where I am, I entreat you to take courage, and sometimes to think of me. I will send you news of myself if I am not dead; give me news of yourselves if you have an opportunity. I am very well situated. I am with persons who are very good to me, and who promise to continue so. [Isaac](#) and [Saint-Jean](#), do not forget your brother! I shall always love you. Many kind thoughts to you all; embrace my cousins for me. I embrace you as I love you.*

Your son,

PLACIDE L'OUVERTURE

*© This work is the property of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It may be used freely by individuals for research, teaching and personal use as long as this statement of availability is included in the text.

Beard, J. R. (John Rely) (1863). *Toussaint L'Ouverture: A Biography and Autobiography*. Chapel Hill, NC: Academic Affairs Library, UNC-CH.

THANK YOU ESPOIR

With a deep sense of appreciation and gratitude, we again thank the non-profit organization, ESPOIR Haitian American Organization, for both its financial and moral contribution in making the above Parents Day Celebration possible.

"ANPIL MIN CHAY PA LOU."

A big thank you to The Chrysler Volunteers. Without their assistance, the festival would not have been as successful. They help with setup and cleanup, keeping the place looking neat without ever intruding. Way to go, may you all have a happy new year! ■

LETTERS FROM PARENT DAY EVENTS



YOU ARE THE ONE

By Che Alc -Jean-Charles

Everyone talks about how their mother is the best or the greatest, but I truly know that my mom was made for me. She has been an inspiration to me countless times, and has been an example of a woman to be like. She would find a way to give anyone five dollars even she only had one and I think that's one of her best characteristics. And as a mother she's done everything in her power to make sure that my brothers and I had every and anything that we've ever wanted or needed. If there were any example of how to be a great mother I would just say look at mine. ■

The HAITIAN SUN

By Jennifer Berkemeier

Haiti has always fascinated ever since I was an Anthropology major; I studied and read everything I could about the country. Fast-forward many years later, I found myself with no children and searching online for my adoption options as a single woman. At that same time, after a long absence, I started going back to the Lutheran church I attended as a child. I noticed in the church bulletin an article about their yearly mission to Haiti. On a whim, I attended a mission meeting and knew when I left that I'd be going to Haiti that July. That same week I got a notice that I had been approved to adopt from an orphanage in Haiti. All of a sudden, Haiti would be in my life forever.

The adoption process took nearly three years....three terribly long, emotional, frightful and challenging years. During that time, I went to Haiti twice with the church and those two weeks will always be two of my life most fulfilling and memorable events. In November of 2012 I brought home a wondering, beautiful, curious and slightly scared little four year old girl named Widma. Since then she has become the light of my life.

Anyone who has been to Haiti knows about the heat and the sun. I like to think I have my own little piece of Haitian sun with me every day. She sleeps in the room next to mine at night; she makes me laugh, frown and she fills me with joy. She brings experiences that are captured in hundreds of photos and memories. She is smart, charming, funny and beautiful. She loves ice cream, peanut butter, chocolate and mangoes. She loves to go to the park, ride a horse and go to the library. She likes to brush my hair and can't wait to go to church on Sunday. I look forward to the day when I can reintroduce her to her beautiful island and we can sit in the sun together. ■

MOTHER, I REMEMBER!

By Dhalia Balmir

To my mother, Marie Lunique Balmir.

When I think of you as my mother, first I think of all the warm and fuzzy thoughts, for example, how you are so unconditionally loving, nurturing, self-sacrificing, full of "I love you's" and hugs and kisses; you know, all that good stuff. One of my favorite memories of when I was a kid was sitting in your room, and the two of us latch hooking together. There was something about those moments with you that I haven't ever forgotten and even as a mother myself, I haven't been able to duplicate those special moments that I had with you with my own kids but what I realized is that the reason for this is because our relationship and our moments are so unique to what we have as a mother and daughter and this is different than what my own children each have with me. What you've taught me is to pass on the warm and fuzzy moments to my daughter and son so that I can have those unique "special moments" with each of them in our own way. As an adult, one of my favorite memories actually was when I was going to have surgery and you came out to San Diego to be there and help me. I remember Johanne being so worried because she thought that we would drive each other crazy which we could have...but we didn't. That time for me, was one of the most precious moments that I think I've ever had with you in my adult life. We had a lot of fun just being there together and spending time getting to know each other as if all over again. For me, you are so much more than warm and fuzzy. You are such a strong mother, woman and person. I've seen it my whole life but it never truly resonated with me until I became older and had some life experience. Looking back I realize how lucky I was to have someone like you in my life. You've taught me how to love wholeheartedly, be positive, take risks, and be independent and live life and each day to the fullest. I think to myself, "wow", my mom is amazing, through all the craziness of starting new in an unknown country, raising 2 girls, dealing with a challenging husband, running a household, battling life as a working woman in America and facing the unknown. Through it all, you have remained this perpetually positive energy AND still looked fabulous. Everyone knows that Lunique has the warmest heart and great style! This is obvious but what I'd like to share are some not so obvious things that I love about you. For example:

When you call and leave a message on my voicemail and you say "Dhalou, this is your mother"- mom, who else would it be? You are the only woman with an accent that's my motherJ. You are so funny.

How your voice projects REALLY loud- it's both irritating and lovable- the crazy thing is, I find myself doing the same thing!

How you ask the same question over and over and over again- this is not due to aging because you've always been this way.

When you tell a story and how it takes you FOREVER to tell it. And how you are such a good sport when I ask you to please tell the short version this time.

How you always think positive no matter what the situation and live your life this way.

Telling me that's you're proud of me and proud you are of the life that I've made for myself.

Even though I'm far away, I can't imagine my life without you. In so many ways that you probably don't even know, you have helped me to become the person, woman and mother that I am today. I appreciate you and love you.

Your oldest (and favoriteJ) daughter, Dhalia ■

LIVE, LIFE, LOVE: IN HONOR OF MY PARENTS

By Nadine Compere

I'm fortunate to have amazing parents in my life, and these three words – Live, Life, Love – embody the essence of what my parents mean to me...each in their individual way!

LIVE - Let's start with Dad

Dr. Pierre "Mano" Compere – Caring and protective, my father has loved me in a gracious way. Taking on his kind, mild mannered, and human loving ways, I'd like to think that my poise and career in healthcare stem from his early lessons in caring for people. I love shopping and I can't say that I took on his frugal ways, however you look at his love for soccer and my athleticism or even his smile and you know that he's a part of me. From teaching me how to ride a bike as a child to spending some time with him earlier this year in Florida, our memories continue to build and will always be priceless.

LIFE - My Stepfather

Dr. Serge Jean-Louis – Where do I begin? He's one of the coolest people in my life and I have learned so much from him! A very sharp and motivated man, I believe that my business acumen and drive come from his many lessons in life. An extremely witty and humorous man, he is the parent that I can come to with a serious situation and be comforted by good jokes, a strong drink, and precious advice that will last me a lifetime! While the perception may be that he is often buried in his work, he is truly grateful for his life and fuels me to be as well. He has always been kind and loving. I am a better person personally and professionally because of his teachings. In addition to being an amazing father, I'm proud to also call him a friend. I'm fortunate to have him in my life.

LOVE - My mother

Rose Marie Jean-Louis – I hate to play favorites, but maybe I saved the best for last! My mother's warmth has been with me from day one...She loves me and I love her more! Loving and protective, my mother has always showered me with her time, treasure, and talents. Although she might have given me a few spankings when I was younger, my mother has instilled the important values in my becoming a classy woman...and I am thankful! Pushing me to excel in my education, encouraging me to make smart decisions in life, entrusting me as her confidant as she is mine...our mother/daughter bond is phenomenal. From traveling together, to cooking together, to shopping together, to sharing meals, to our bi-weekly girl time at the nail salon, every moment I get to spend with my mother is precious and I cherish each one of them. I strive to share the kind heart, generous, loving spirit of this woman, and I am blessed to call her my mother. I know and appreciate how much you love me mom, and I want you to know that I love you more... ■

TWO AMAZING PEOPLE: Jean-Claude and Magareth Dutès

by Jean-Paul Th. Dutès

This letter is about two amazing people and a son who is truly grateful for all of their kindness, support, sternness, love and guidance.

I am not very good at expressing my emotions. I believe I get that from my father. When I was younger, I don't remember him expressing his love for me through words, it was done through actions. I never once in my life doubted that my father loved me because of the hard work and sacrifice that he and my mother put forth in order to provide a carefree, easy life for my brother and I. My father has always been a calming voice in my life and someone I know I can talk to and get the truth about the situation or myself. I want to thank him for that. I get my patience, confidence (from my mother too), openness to new things and people and my drive to be great from my father. My father has always encouraged me to not just accept the status quo and to do research myself to find answers to life's questions. When I do something that my mother doesn't like, she'll often say I am just like my father. I realized that I am like my father, good and bad and I am very proud of that fact.

My mother is all about family; she has been that way from the time I can remember. I am and have always been extremely close to her side of the family because she made sure that happened. My mother is my biggest supporter as well as my biggest critic. She calls me everyday, literally everyday just to see how things are going with her granddaughter and me. From my mother I get my strong belief in family, my faith, confidence and the need to pass these on to my daughter. I know that my mother has never made it a secret that she has always put me first and for that I cannot thank her enough. She is the person I call when I am frustrated and need to vent and her uncanny ability to listen and know exactly what to say is unbelievable.

Like I said earlier, I am not very good at expressing my emotions. I am positive I skipped so many examples that could better highlight exactly what it is I am trying to say. With this being the case, I will just say that, my parents have had the biggest influence on my life, I strive everyday to make them proud of me, they are two of the three most important people in my life and I couldn't imagine not having them as parents. I love them dearly, they are simply the best parents and I am lucky to have them as mine. ■

WE GET IT NOW!

By Jessica Lamarre

To Jessie and Pierre Richard Lamarre

You never notice how much you take for granted until you reflect back on all that has been sacrificed, all that has been experienced and all the love shown. Our mother and father epitomize the meaning of great parents. We thank our parents for giving us the opportunity to brag about the many family trips, the festive and fun holidays, family dinners and the love shown and given to us all from child hood to now. Mom we thank you for all the sacrifices and patience you have shown. Without any award you have given us your last. Instilling in us strength, love and good character. Watching you raise us and your approach to handling family, you are a true example for us and we love you more than words can express. Dad thank you for always pushing us to be the best that we can be. You never allowed us to settle for being mediocre. We owe our accomplishments to your push. Thank you for allowing us to experience so much growing up. Family is important to you and you've showed us that throughout our lives. Mom and dad this small passage can't express or sum up our love and gratitude towards you. We hope that each day we can get better at expressing it. We are blessed beyond measure to be raised by you and are so proud of the parents you are to us.

Love Jessica Natalie and Greg ■

WORDS DON'T SAY ENOUGH

Danielle Desroches

I was asked to write a few words about my mother. I thought to myself, don't they know I'm the mean sister. My sister is more gentle and patient, and also far away. So, I guess it's up to me. Well, my mother makes it easy to say something good about her. She's my ride or die. She's had my back from day one. And I know deep in my soul even though she has physical limitations due to her back, she'd carry us on her back to the end of the earth if she had to. I can only wish to pour as much into my son as she's poured into us.

My mother taught us the value of hard work and dedication, being part of a community, and caring about the less fortunate. She taught me that poverty is a condition of the mind, not just of finance. My mother is a passionate, caring and God fearing woman, not to mention funny.

I'd like to thank my mom for all her sacrifices and her love. I am of the age now to take care of myself, but she's still here for me, now helping with the next generation of our family. I could not have asked for a better mother. I am ashamed to only have mere words to say thank you. With much love and affection, merci mama.■

STEADY DESPITE THE WAVES

By Cristelle Garnier

My mother....or should I say my hero, my rock, my support system, and my inspiration. When I think of my mother, I think of the strongest person in my life. I think of a woman who has broken all barriers to provide for her family, a woman who has never given up on her dreams, a woman who has inspired others to be great, and a woman who has dedicated her life to helping others. Above all, she is the woman who has inspired me to be the person I am today. Without her love and support, my brother and I would be lost. Thank you for being there for us through thick and thin and for dedicating your life to fulfilling our dreams. Today is not only a day to celebrate the best mom in the world, but also to celebrate a woman who served as both mother and father-figure. So happy mother's day and father's day Mom! You are the best and my brother and I are so grateful to have you. We love you so much! ■

MAGNITUDE OF LOVE: FOR Mona Desir

by Mgaie Wax

I was asked to write a letter about my mother. This has been a difficult task, not because of grammar and spelling or the feelings I have for her. But to put into words the magnitude of love and gratitude that I feel for the woman that brought me and my four siblings into this world but also continues to teach me by example the essence of what it is to be a mother.

I recently read an article entitled "I finally understand". In it the author explains how feeling overwhelmed with her own children her mother came over night after her laundry was done and provided her so much comfort and put her at ease. My first thought was I have been there, and my mother came right after the phone call.

Another example in the same article was how time again her mother would forgoe the last of her food or seconds of her meal in order to feed her children what they wanted. Again I thought, my mother would have done it slightly differently. If you've ever seen my mother at any family dinner or family function she cannot sit down (and in fact is often yelled at by her children to do so). I too used to think it was just "her way" but I realize it is so much more. Her way is of the ultimate mother. I think not only does she want to provide her children with what they want even if it at the expense of herself but also to look at all her children, to marvel in her offspring and what she had accomplished. The laughter, the nourishment, the happiness. My mother is proud. As she should be. Today I want us to look at you mother and your laughter, your happiness for you are truly extraordinary. Thank you. We marvel in your being. ■

GIFTS FROM THE HEART

By Jonathan Désir

Hello, this letter is about Julio Desir Sr. and Mona Desir who are my parents.

I am very much honored to write this. I truly feel like the luckiest son in the world to have them as my parents. Where do I begin...

I have 2 brothers and sisters, and countless aunts, uncles and cousins. Family is very important to us and we are all still very close to this day. In fact, here in Chicago, I live in the same building as my sister currently and our brother lives 20 minutes from us. And we face time with the other sister (who lives near my parents in Michigan) on almost a weekly basis.

Our other brother passed away years ago, had it not been for the strength of my family, I don't think I could have survived the pain. That is one of the greatest things about Mona and Julio, their strength is unbelievable. Lord knows we have been tested time and time again, but they never waiver from their character and always remain strong.

My father was an auto engineer, traditional Haitian American dad. Worked a 9-5, very smart, watched a lot of boxing and news, and playing bezique. But he was also the life of any party we would go to. Though I never learned the language, I could always understand the laughter. And he had a strong moral compass. Never touched a cigarette. Never got a speeding ticket. Always taught us to be aware of our reputation and what it means to be respected and honorable.

I was very close to my mother growing up because I was the middle child. And a lot of my childhood she would babysit me and we would watch soap operas on the couch together. I am crying a bit, tears of joy, remembering this because those were truly some of the best times of my life. A mother's comfort without a care in the world. I never knew how much I would miss those times.

My mom is the sweetest most caring woman I've ever met or will meet. Even though she can annoy me (if she is hearing this I'm sure she is chuckling now). I know it is because she cares so much about me she has no other way to act. I am and will always be her baby. We joke about it now. She would literally do anything for me to the point that sometimes my other siblings would be jealous. She taught me unconditional love and empathy, two traits I hold very dearly. And remember I said she is strong, during 9/11 she was in NY and survived being less than a mile away from the world trade center when they came down. Talk about needing family, I still remember that day like it was yesterday, I thought I'd never talk to my mother again... And that's not the only crazy time, the day before the massive earth quake that hit Haiti, they were in Florida waiting for their connecting flight to Port Au Prince to visit family. They are survivors, always finding a way to be there for their loved ones.

Both parents were born and raised in Haiti but met in NY where they had my 2 older brothers and me before moving to Michigan. I

can easily say the most significant contribution they gave to me is my culture. The beautiful Haitian culture that I wish I knew more about in all honesty. As a kid I just wanted to be an American boy more than anything, and I regret that so much. Once I became more of a man in my early 20's, I embraced it realized how much it still shaped who I am. The stories of my family who still live there to this day, the food, the music, the language, the dominos, the art, the rum (love that rum), is all so very important to me.

I could not be more proud of the country that is in my blood and how they have weathered the storm through the harshest of adversity. If I can be half the man my father is and find a woman who is half the woman my mother is, I will die very happy. I am so very honored and blessed to be their son, and fight every day to make them proud.

Jonathan Désir ■

LOVE AND DEDICATION: Maggy and Michael Corkery

By Jonathan Corkery

Mom & Dad,

Words cannot even begin to describe how much love and dedication you have given me, but I will try my best regardless. You have constantly shown an undying devotion to me throughout my life, and for that, I have unending appreciation. For every hardship, worry, and anxiety, you are there to help me through. For every dream and goal I have, you are there to support and guide me. For every mistake I make, you give me what I need to make it right. All this and more you do for me. And what do you ask for in return? Nothing. The least I could do is try to be the best son I can be and help you in any way I can, but you deserve so much more.

I only hope that I can one day become as encouraging and loving as you.

Love Johnathan ■



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 of 2015 for their academic and /or professional achievements.

This past May **Johnathan Laurent Corkery** graduated from



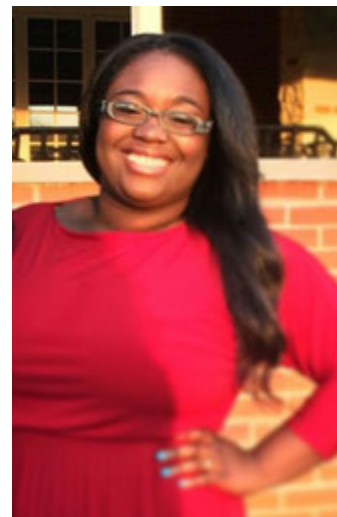
Ann Arbor's University of Michigan College of Engineering with a B.S in Computer Science. Upon completing his internship at EKK Inc., a metal casting process simulation software and consulting services Company located in Farmington Hills, Johnathan was immediately offered a Software

Engineer position. Johnathan plans on taking a 2 year hiatus and then resume his studies to pursue a graduate degree. His parents Mike and Maggy are very proud of his accomplishments. Johnathan truly lives up to his maternal grandfather's personal mantra "Excelsior!". Congratulations Poussin, we look forward to seeing all the great things you have in store for us! ■

a memorable fight at the Joe Louis Arena, Matthew won the much coveted Donofrio-IFL Welterweight Championship Belt. He is currently the youngest amateur Champion MMA fighter in Michigan. Congratulations Matt! You have given your parents, Maxceau and Julie, many reasons to be proud of you! ■



18 year-old **Matthew Cylla** graduated from Northville High School this past summer. He is an avid and accomplished Mixed Martial Art (MMA) practitioner. His ultimate goal is to one day represent Haiti in one of the well-known international competitions. Matthew's training in contact sport started at a very young age. While other kids his age were spending countless hours in front of a game console, he chose to dedicate the majority of his time to his beloved sport. His hard work has paid off! Over the years he has participated in his share of competitions and has was awarded numerous medals. In November 2015, after



Whooby Deriveau graduated from Kettering College, in Kettering Ohio, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Biology. Her short term goal is to obtain a Masters degree in early childhood education from Oakland University while working at Troy Adventist Academy Preschool and then do her Doctorate in Occupational Therapy at Kettering College. Her hope is to one day become a Pediatric Occupational Therapist. ■



Jonathan Wesley Dorcely graduated from Farmington High School planning to attend Bowling Green University majoring in Business. He is the proud son of a Haitian mother Carline Désir. ■



AN AMERICO-HAITIAN AT WEST POINT

Michael Matthews, the son of Drs. Dominique Monde- Matthews and Roger Matthews, completed high school, graduating from The Roeper School on June 7, 2015. He started at Roeper at the age of 4 and on June 29 of this year began basic training at The United States Military Academy at West Point in New York. Congratulations Lieutenant Candidate Matthews and good luck. ■



MOVING FORWARD: ANOTHER STEP HIGHER

By Dr. Jean-Claude Dutès



Jean-Paul Thrasybule Dutès graduated from Case Western Reserve University with an MBA degree in May of this year. He was born in Grand Rapids, MI and graduated from East Lansing High School. As a student, he was very active in sports, leading his preteen soccer team to many victories, a feat that his father could have never imagined for himself growing up, and played varsity basketball while in high school, another achievement beyond his poor father meager athletic abilities. He

definitely got his athletic ability from his mother's side. Ok, I won't tell anymore family secrets! As part of his graduate studies, he attended schools in the People's Republic of China and India, an experience that broadened his cultural perspective and enhanced his diversity skills. HNGD wishes him continued success and much luck, as he has the skill sets to match any opportunity he is likely to encounter. I can hear him now saying, "That's enough Papi, did you really have to write all that?" and in reply I write "Yes, my son, it's the syndrome of a proud Papa." ■



NOTED ACHIEVEMENTS



WELL DONE NIA

by Maggy Corkery



In July 2015, six-year old Nia, daughter of Dr. Timothy and Jinette Chapman, was a contestant in the National American Miss (NAM) Pageant. It was a unique opportunity for her to compete with 65 other girls for the much coveted title of Michigan Princess. With poise, self-confidence and excellent communication skills, Nia managed to rank 10th among the other contestants and snatched the third place for the talent competition. Quite a feat for a first try! Bravo to our Little Miss! Keep your eyes on the crown, you are almost there. ■

GIFTED, HARDWORKING AND HUMBLE

by Rilck Noel and Maggy Corkery

The youngest child and only daughter of Rilck and Marie Noel, **Rilka** is a mixture of beauty, brain and athleticism. With two older brothers, Christian and Patrick, she is 19 and currently plays soccer for the University of Notre Dame. Until a few months ago, she was also a member of the Haitian U-20 Team and The Haitian National team. At the age of six she started playing soccer here in Michigan, in the Lakes Area Soccer League (LAYSLE). Her dad coached her for the first four years until he turned her over to coaches from the Hawks and Jaguars so they could help her continue to hone her skills and game awareness. Rilka has also benefited from training in soccer skills development and conditioning from Aaron Bird and Frantz and Pierre Lamarre.

Rilka has been able to use her athletic skills in helping the teams that she has played with. She has been able to make contributions to both American and Haitian teams. She had been called to the US National Team camp about 10 times. In November 2014, Coach Shek asked her to join the Haitian Women's National Team and to be the captain of the U-20 Haitian National Team, which is hoping to qualify for next year's Women's U-20 World Cup in Sweden. Her team won a

State Championship at Marian High School during the year she played for them and she was named the MVP of a tournament that was held in Costa Rica. Moved by altruistic desires to give back, she participated in a humanitarian mission as part of the Olympic Development Program (ODP).

Rilka has been able to leverage her soccer skills and intelligence to gain admission to Notre Dame, a university renowned for both its outstanding academic and athletic program. People have asked her parents if they were proud of her achievements on and off the field. You bet they are! They are also extremely pleased to see a well-balanced young woman capable of making her own decisions who is well aware of global issues and doing her part to help address them. In spite of her success on the field, she has maintained a strong sense of humility and an acute awareness of her roots and of the social issues that Haitians face at home and abroad. In a nutshell, this is Rilka: a humble person who tends to shy away from too much publicity.

Soccer will pass... Rilka does not want to be defined as only a soccer player. She is very versatile and takes her studies seriously. She is fluent in Haitian Creole and French. She has written essays on poems by Ronsard, including the one titled: "Je n'ai plus que les os". She can also explain to her grandmother, Cicie, in Kreol why the "griot" was not as delicious this time as the previous ones.

Rilka values the importance of sport in young people's lives and she is always willing to share with any of the aspiring soccer players in our community what it takes to be successful at this beautiful game. ■





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. Two HNGD members have decided to break the ice and be the first ones to take the plunge.

GONAÏVES, MA "TERRE SALEE" I

C'est toujours avec émotion que je me rends aux Gonaïves, ma ville natale. Je l'appelle "ma terre salée" parce que lorsque le Nordé y souffle, il soulève la poussière qui se dépose partout et laisse un goût salé sur les lèvres. Au jour tant attendu de notre départ pour notre chère Gonaïves, mon père nous accompagnait à la station de bus et nous confiait mon frère, mon cousin Oswald et moi au chauffeur du bus avec force recommandations. Nous étions impatients de le voir s'en aller, craignant qu'il ne se ravise quant à notre départ vers les Gonaïves, notre ville natale. Le bus ne partait pas avant que toutes les places aient été prises. En attendant le départ du bus, nous avions un rituel pour faire passer le temps: nous mettions les mains sur le siège devant nous que nous poussions en avant tout en imitant le bruit d'une voiture qui démarre: "Vroum ! Vroum !". Finalement le moment du départ arrivait.

J'attendais toujours avec impatience l'instant magique où j'apercevrais le toit de la

Cathédrale du Souvenir. Mon cœur battait plus fort, car nous étions enfin aux Gonaïves!

Dans un même élan, nous nous regardions tous les trois et nous échangeions un sourire triomphant. Bien vite, le bus atteignait la fontaine Madame Colo, le poste de police, et finalement le chauffeur nous déposait à la Rue Christophe où se trouvait la maison de nos grands-parents. Chaque année nous restions aux Gonaïves de Juin à Septembre. Mon père tenait à utiliser nos derniers jours de vacances au mois de Septembre pour une révision des matières de base: mathématiques, Latin, Français. Quelle guigne ! Nous aurions bien voulu rester jusqu'au dernier jour des vacances, jusqu'à la fin du mois de Septembre. Mais résignés nous nous disions: "Tant pis ! Vive les vacances !"

Ils étaient la sur la galerie à nous attendre: nos grands-parents, tante Doune ainsi que nos cousins et cousines qui étaient déjà sur place. Pendant les vacances la maison de nos grands-parents était le lieu de réunion de leurs petits-enfants. Ceux qui habitaient les Gonaïves venaient passer la journée avec ceux qui étaient rentrés de Port-au-Prince.

Souvent on pouvait compter jusqu'à seize le nombre des enfants présents. Marie Yolaine, Junie, Dadou et Macatou vivaient aux Gonaïves avec mes grands-parents. Nous étions au moins trois, Raynald, Oswald et moi qui venions de Port-au-Prince.

Parfois Yves et Carole, les enfants de Mon Oncle Antoine, rentraient aussi de Port-au-Prince). A ce groupe s'ajoutaient les autres cousins qui vivaient aux Gonaïves et ve-

naient passer la journée en notre compagnie: les enfants de tante Paula : Netette, Bob, Michou, Nounoune, Daniel et les enfants d'Oncle Georges: Fred, Evelyne, Windsor et Yanick. Que de folles vacances nous avons passées tous ensemble à la Rue Christophe ! Des moments à tous points inoubliables.

Après avoir dit " bonjour", la journée débutait par la rituelle tasse de café prise "avec deux mains", ce qui veut dire avec du pain; ceci pour nous faire patienter jusqu'au petit déjeuner: bouillie de "farine chandelle" ou du maïs moulu aux harrengs saurs accompagné de tranches d'avocat, ou foie dur, bananes et patates. Entre le petit déjeuner et le repas de midi, notre grand Père que nous appelions Papa Énoch ou Papa Dede, faisait la joie des marchandes et la nôtre en nous achetant du maïs bouilli, des "labapens," bougonen," "kenèpe" ou "ponm kanèl". Le moment des repas était enchanteur. Papa Enoch, présidait autour d'une grande table. Notre grand-mère, Manman Virgine, Manman Dede pour certains, et Tante Doune nous surveillaient pour s'assurer que quel que soit le menu, nous faisions honneur au repas.

Sous l'œil réprobateur des "gran moun", on n'arrêta pas de faire des plaisanteries, d'échanger des coups de coude ou des coups de pieds sous la table. On était pris de fou rire lorsque malgré la vigilance des adultes, nous parvenions à échanger les morceaux dont nous ne voulions pas, ou lorsque mine de rien, les plats changeaient de mains. L'important c'était qu'à la fin du repas, toutes les assiettes soient vides. Manman Virgine n'y voyait que du feu et se félicitait d'avoir bien nourri sa couvée. Papa Énoch passait la journée dans une "dodine" sur la galerie. Son chapelet en mains, il priait un rosaire entrecoupé d'échanges de salutations avec les passants: marmotant "Je vous salue Marie, pleine de grâces" suivi d'un retentissant "Bonjou Madan untel, e moun yo ?" Puis imperturbable le doigt sur le grain du chapelet, il continuait "le Seigneur est avec vous..."

Nous n'attendions que cela pour éclater de rire. Le vacarme qui accompagnait nos jeux ne semblait pas non plus le déranger dans sa prière. Question de principes, de temps à autre, il nous criait après pour réclamer un peu de silence. Heureusement qu'à côté de la maison il y avait un grand terrain vide qui pouvait accueillir nos ébats: on y jouait au "lago", Colin Mayard, "la lin ak soley", on sautait à la corde ou bien on organisait une partie de football ou une guerre entre cowboys et Indiens: il y en avait pour tous les goûts. Lorsque nous étions fatigués de courir ici et là, nous nous regroupions sur la galerie et dans la première pièce pour jouer aux osselets, aux cartes, au ludo, au checker ou aux dominos. Ce n'était pas le calme tant espéré, car les discussions ne manquaient pas entre les joueurs. Lorsqu'une bataille éclatait entre nous, Papa Énoch ne savait à quel saint se vouer pour rétablir le calme. Il confondait nos noms et en citait quelques uns au hasard. Bien sur, personne ne se présentait à lui et excédé il finissait par lancer: "vin icit, ti pa Carmen nan oui !" " Hey, ti



pa Paulaa”.

Heureusement que sitôt le calme rétabli, les jeux reprenaient de plus belle.

Par moments, deux ou trois d'entre nous s'approchaient de grand père pour quelques instants, car il ne manquait pas de nous raconter d'intéressantes anecdotes: il parlait souvent de la guerre des Cacos, des bals auxquels il participait dans sa jeunesse, de la façon dont les jeunes gens et les jeunes filles de son temps se comportaient. Hochant la tête il disait: "Non ! Yo pat tankou jènès jodia ki pa kon danse, se sèlman dodo meya". Pour notre plus grande joie, joignant le geste à la parole, il illustrait ce qu'il entendait par le "dodo meya" des "boléro". Parfois il nous démontrait comment de son temps on dansait la contredanse aux cris du meneur: "Cavaliers croisez les huit". J'aimais beaucoup sa compagnie car je raffolais de ses histoires et ce qui ne gâtait rien, il avait toujours des pièces de monnaie qu'il nous glissait en cachette, nous recommandant de n'en rien dire aux autres, car il n'en avait pas assez pour tout le monde. Après quoi, je retournais vite rejoindre mes compagnons de jeux. Ma grand-mère, elle, s'activait à la cuisine pour superviser la préparation des repas devant nourrir sa bande d'affamés. De temps à autre, elle venait vérifier nos ébats sur la galerie ou dans le terrain vide. Elle comptait son monde nous identifiant par le nom de nos parents. Elle disait:

"Kote ti pa Carmen yo ? Kote pa Paula yo ? E pa Georges yo ?" Puis elle s'en retournait vaquer à ses occupations. Tante Doune était souvent avec nous sur la galerie en train de lire, de broder ou de blaguer avec ses amis. Elle était la seule à pouvoir ramener le calme quand nous dépassions les bornes. Par moments aspirant au calme, je prenais un livre dans la grande malle de ma tante et restais à l'écart pour lire. Manman Virgine n'aimait pas me voir ainsi perdue dans la lecture, elle me disait: "yon jou, je ou ap pete wi !"

Les amusements ne manquaient pas dans la ville des Gonaïves elle-même.

Tante Doune planifiait et supervisait nos activités. Elle nous menait parfois au bal, On organisait souvent des randonnées à bicyclettes, des promenades sur des plages ou dans les zones avoisinantes de Passe-Reine, ou Aux Poteaux. Il y avait dans la ville un groupe culturel qui donnait parfois des représentations théâtrales. De notre côté, nous autres enfants, nous organisions entre nous notre propre petit théâtre sur la galerie, récitant des poèmes, chantant des ballades et dansant à la cadence du "Congo". Certains jours, très tôt le matin, au lever du jour, Papa Enoch nous emmenait en ballade à pied jusqu'à la Vierge de Bigot, puis nous visitions les jardins d'où nous revenions chargés de mangues, cannes à sucre, "kenèpe" et amandes. D'autrefois c'était au tour de Manman Virgine de nous emmener promener "Ka Solèy" ou dans la zone des marais salants où nous pouvions admirer la splendeur orangée du soleil levant scintillant sur la blancheur des bancs de sel. Le soir notre grand-mère, Tante Doune et Tante Paula nous emmenaient pour la rituelle promenade sur le "warf" qui à l'époque était ouvert au public. Une bonne partie de la ville s'y retrouvait pour jouir de la brise du soir. Là se déroulaient les intrigues amoureuses entre jeunes gens et jeunes filles à la barbe des adultes. Des deux côtés du "warf" il y avait deux night clubs qui offraient l'entrée libre aux jeunes filles et aux femmes. A l'insu des adultes, nous nous y relayions pour un tour de danse tandis que le reste du groupe affectait de se

promener innocemment. Pres du "warf" il y avait aussi un rond point où la fanfare de la gendarmerie donnait parfois un concert. Le Dimanche Maman Virgine emmenait fièrement sa troupe de petits enfants à la Messe. Après la grande Messe, deux salles de spectacles offraient des "matine" ayant à l'affiche des films de "cowboy". Parfois les jours de marche, notre oncle, Me Blanc, nous emmenait jusqu' Aux Poteaux où nous nous gavions de "boukousou" avec du "griot", de mangues et "ponm kanèl" et nous buvions l'eau rafraichissante des noix de coco "ole". Adolescents nous participions aux surprises parties des "Mardi" ou "Jeudi Chics" dans les salons des parents de nos amis. Une habitude s'était établie pour les enfants qui comme moi venaient de Port-au-Prince: certaines familles tenaient à nous recevoir chez eux pour une journée. Quand je rencontrais ma marraine, mon oncle François ou Mme Dufort Mitton, ils me demandaient "quand viendras tu me donner mon jour ?" et ma grand-mère s'arrangeait pour m'envoyer chez eux au cours de la semaine suivante.

La première semaine de nos vacances, mon frère, mon cousin Oswald et moi nous allions à l'ODVA chez notre cousin Zamor qui s'occupait de ses jardins dans la zone. Pour nous recevoir, il faisait tuer un cabri que nous dégustions avec plaisir. Il y avait aussi du lait frais, du lait caillé, des noix de coco et des mangues en quantité. Il nous réveillait tôt le matin pour nous emmener dans les rizières avoisinantes dont la verdure s'étalait à perte de vue. Nous admirions le lever du soleil parmi les cocotiers au loin et par-dessus les vastes rizières. Notre cousin voulait nous faire apprécier Aux environs du 12 Août, fête de Marchand Dessalines, le bourg natal de Maman Virgine, nous nous rendions à Marchand pour deux semaines. A nous les feux de camp organisés par les scouts et les bains quotidiens à La Source ! Pendant ces deux semaines, tous les jours, sauf le dimanche, nous mangions sans nous en lasser de la bouillie de farine "pitimi chandel" le matin, du riz blanc avec "lalo" ou "kaya" le midi et des "fritay" le soir. Puis on retournait aux Gonaïves chargés de mangues et canne à sucre provenant des jardins.

Helas! Au retour de Marchand, nous nous sentions bien tristes car la fin des vacances

S'approchait pour nous. Mon père nous attendait pour nous donner des leçons pendant le mois de Septembre, histoire de faire des révisions avant la rentrée des classes. Autre mauvaise perspective, avant de nous renvoyer chez nous, Maman Virgine nous infligeait à tous une purge au "sene" ou à l'huile de ricin, suivi d'un "laveman". Quelle horreur ! Mais elle y tenait, pas moyen d'y échapper. C'était le seul point noir de ces délicieuses vacances ! Contrairement à Port-au-Prince, les activités s'étaient multipliées: nous n'avions pas le temps de nous ennuyer. De plus, aux Gonaïves, nous étions libres de nous promener ici et là, nous ne restions pas confinés derrière une barrière. Nous commencions à ressentir la tristesse de notre prochaine séparation d'avec nos cousins. Mais nous avions le sourire aux lèvres, en rêvant déjà aux vacances de l'année prochaine qui, sans nul doute, nous ramèneraient vers notre chère "terre salée".

Mimose Pierre Mevs ■

FROM A FRIEND TO A FRIEND: URBAN FARMING By Mr. Jean Raphael Bolivar

It is one minute before the hour. I am calling because I have a message for you. I have no way of knowing whether your native tongue is French or English, German or Spanish. Today I only need to ask you one simple question: do you really think that we have something in common? - If you say yes, and I do believe that we have more than one, - then we can work together on that basis.

In 1944, for example, Countries speaking different languages came together to eliminate one of the most ferocious European jackals: Adolph Hitler. In 1791, in Saint Domingue, now Haïti, Africans speaking different tongues came together to force slave owners to withdraw from the Island. In 1804, Haiti became the first Black Independent Republic in modern History and the only country in history in which slaves successfully overthrew their masters.

I hope I will have a chance to talk with you again. Until that time, remember the words of Oswald Durand:

"Plow the soil of Dessalines.
Our wealth is here in our small valleys.

Good Luck! ■

KREYOL PALE, KREYOL KONPRANN

Here are a few more Haitian proverbs in which astute observations have been translated into wise reflections.

"Pise gaye pa kimen."

What does it mean to you?

"Bouch gran moun santi, men parole li pa santi."

Deal with this one.

"Deye monn gen monn"

Can you think of a similar English or French equivalent? If you do, we would love to read it.

« Apre dans tanbou lou. »

It has been reported that former president Carter made that statement to a former Haitian president after his election. Do you know or remember which former president and why did he say it? What was the former president answer?

Until next time, that is all for now. ■

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Thank
You*

They head the call and they responded. Some came from other regions of Michigan, while others from other states or another country. Some provided funds while others contributed their ideas and labor. Single minded in their devotion, like ants they went efficiently about doing their share, creating the event and sustaining it. On behalf of HNGD, the editorial staff wants to recognize their work and thank them for their selflessness and tireless dedication.

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***Alain Desvallon-Mentor** (Alain was instrumental in bringing the Chrysler volunteers to the event and brought some items from Haiti)

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