La Navase Island, the lust of a nation
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La Navase is a Caribbean island located south of the big island of Cuba, in the Caribbean Sea, northeast of Jamaica, sixty miles from Cap Irlandais and 46 nautical miles of the town of Jeremie, Haiti. The island is mainly an ecologic reserve which has been part of Haiti since it gained its independence from France but became an element of a territorial dispute. Haiti did have to assume a national debt prior to obtain an official recognition for their conquest, in the year 1825, from their ancient French colons. In the mid nineteen Century, a powerful neighbor from the north, the United States of America, claimed the right to own the island under the pretext that American sailors especially a certain Peter Duncan, were collecting Guano (birds’ excrements) on the island for fertilization of their lands. On these facts, a “Guano Island Act” was created to legitimate the usurpation of part of the territory of Haiti. Secretary of State Lewis Casa, decided to take over the island in planting an American flag. This Guano Act was signed in 1856.

They also discovered a mixture of Nitrate and Phosphate which was used for the fabrication of military bullets. In 1917, the United States built a lighthouse while the US Navy assumed an observation spot especially during World War II, by fear of a German submarine attack. One has to remember that La Navase is located at less 160 kilometers (103 miles) of the American naval base of Guantanamo in Cuba. La Navase is inhabited with difficult access and became more of a strategic importance with the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914. This island is part of the territory of Haiti since 1804 and Haitian fishermen have used it to harvest shellfish. Most of the constitutions of the country describe the island as part of the territory and even the 1801 constitution of Toussaint Louverture makes mention of it. This island became the property of France after a peace treaty was signed in the Dutch city of Ryswick between France on one side and the Empire (England, Spain, Holland) on
the other side, under the mediation of Leopold I, King of Sweden. This pact was signed to put an end to the war of the great Alliance which began in 1689 because the new Kind of England, William III wanted to put a check on the ambitious designs of Louis XIV. The dispute lasted nine years and was resolved by the terms of the agreements signed on the 30th of October 1697. France received La Navase, in heritage from the Spaniards by the treaty of Ryswick, which divided the island of Hispaniola in two. France has also benefited from the American Louisiana Territories.

This island is part of a legacy and France recognized the Haitian right for sovereignty in 1825 after due payment of a heavy indemnity. This island has always been the envy of the British, later Cuba and finally the United States of America. La Navase was discovered by Christopher Columbus men when they decided to sail near Jamaica in 1504 on two boats: Diego Mendez and Fieschi Barthelomeo. Fernando Columbus, son of Christopher fell in love with this paradise and wrote extensively about it, in his “Historia del Amirante”. He described how it was difficult to approach the shores, the abrupt mountains and a unique coral barrier falling directly in the sea. Long considered like an ecologic reserve with its plants and exotic animals, many scientific expeditions were able to appreciate more than 250 species of fishes and other animals, especially two endemic lizards (Leucocephalus erimitus and Cychura nigerrima) in 2012. Others may have seen a jewel and a paradise for fishermen without knowing that Haitian fishermen have landed on it for the last two centuries.

La Navase measures around 5.6 km/square (2 square miles) and can reach an elevation of 250 feet in place but most of the land is exposed coral and limestone. The island is covered by a forest with multiple species of trees like poisonwood or mastic etc. The United States claimed that they did not recognize the Republic of Haiti, so when they took over the island of “La Navase” in 1859, they were still in denial of our existence. This was their way to avoid the spreading of the revolution to the American shores. They claimed the take-over to be of little consequence but in facts, our fathers saw in that act, a menace to their first successful slave insurrection. The Americans have never appreciated our emancipation in the world after the French lost their colony. The desire of many American politicians and journalists was voiced and it becomes obvious that many advocated the annexation of all the Caribbean Islands, especially Hispaniola.

The taking over of La Navase was an act of imperialism never seen before when a such powerful United States of America captured a guano island in the Caribbean and annex it to their territories. They ignored the fact that Haitian fishermen have harvested shellfish forever on it. The island was a property of France and became part of the republic of Haiti when Jean-Jacques Dessalines proclaimed the independence. It was the same for other larger islands like La Gonave, Ile de la Tortue, les Cayemites, La Grande Cayes and Ile-a-Vache. Slave holders in the States were afraid of losing their plantations. In fact, an editor of the New York Herald, James Gordon Bennett advocated, in 1850, a plan to annex Haiti first and then Cuba, He also wrote that a war would be “fun and amusement” while Hispaniola will become another state with the possibility in having more slaves”. The government of Haiti, through the Emperor Faustin Soulouque maneuvered around with diplomacy in spreading the news of an American menace to all the other Caribbean islands colonized by Europeans powers. In April 1858, the Haitian Navy attempted to take control of La Navase by sending two war vessels with specific instructions to expulse the invaders. They met with a Mr. Cooper who owed a Phosphate and Nitrate mine. Upon our menace, to leave the island, he turned to his government for help. The United States gave in return ultimatum to the Soulouque government asking them to back out because they have the intention of defending their citizens. The American President James Buchanan ordered immediately the frigate Saratoga to sail in
direction of the island to protect their interests in the Guano operation, in 1858. Haiti sent official protests to the State Department but they were ignored. Emperor Faustin Souluque wrote back that “Even through the law is on our side, Justice and the Legitimacy of our cause will triumph”. Haiti wanted the United States of America to lose their economic interest in La Navase. Unfortunately, many American companies, based in New York and Baltimore showed a will to continue the importation of the guano. They decided to use black American workers from 1857 to 1898 to assure the production. They hired white managers as supervisors and on September, 14, 1889, the workers became unhappy with the way they were treated, so they revolted. Five supervisors were killed and 43 insurgents were charged with rioting and murder. A legal team was hired by two African American organizations (The Brotherhood of Liberty and The Order of Galilean Fishermen) to defend the accused. Three defendants were tried and were convicted to die by hanging, others were accused of manslaughter, or rioting, or prison terms. Three were finally acquitted while the executions were stayed pending an appeal to the Supreme Court (Jones v U.S.).

In their proceedings, Jones Lawyers challenged the constitutionality of the Guano Act and the authority upon which the United States of America claimed the right to the island of La Navase. A higher court rejected these arguments but re-affirm the conviction on the 24th of November 1890, in stating that the court was not ready to determine if the government of the USA was right on their claim to occupy La Navase. A petition was signed to urge President Benjamin Harrison to grant clemency, citing inhumane conditions imposed on the American workers. The death sentence was commuted into a lifetime imprisonment. For almost another decade, the collection of guano continued and I invite one to read this book written in 1994 by Jimmy M Skaggs: “The great Guano Rush”. By the end of the 19th century, Americans had abandoned “La Navase” to Haitian fishermen.

The importance of the island resurfaced as we already pinpointed it, with the opening of the Panama Canal to navigation in 1914 and because of the fear of dangerous hazard in stormy weather. Shipping through the windward passage between Haiti and Cuba was difficult. The American Congress authorized the construction of a lighthouse on the island. President Woodrow Wilson reaffirmed then the possession of the island “under the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States of America and out of jurisdiction of any other government”, on January 17, 1916. The imperialism prevailed. At the end of World War I, the American Navy established a Radio Station at “La Navase” while during World War II, the coast guard stationed a reconnaissance unit and a recue launch by fear of possible German submarine attacks.

After the second World War, the coast guard continued to use the island as a Light house reserve while Haitians fishermen were visiting as well. President Harry Truman proclaimed La Navase as part of the contiguous shore of the United States. A representative of the United States, William L Dawson, introduced a bill to disclaim any right of the USA on the island which was referred to the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the House of the Representatives. In Haiti, hope was not lost and intellectuals took the opportunity to voice their rights on the island. A journal “Optique”, reviewed the history of the dispute and summarized Haiti legal position in bringing the pro and con. African Americans also sympathized with Haiti claims but the Eisenhower administration and the State Department ignored the vindications.

In 1977, the Newsday of Long Island found out that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was backing up a group of anti-Castro terrorists and allowed them to find an African swine fever virus, destined to infest the pigs in Cuba during the year of 1971. The virus came from a secret laboratory in the Eastern Long Island NY (Plum Island Lab 257). The CIA tried to deny the evidence unsuccessfully. The virus was delivered to an US army base and CIA training ground in Panama to reach the rebels on the island of La Navase so they can prepare the infestation of the pigs in Cuba. The virus was transported from la Navase to the south portion of the Guantanamo Bay. Six weeks later, an outbreak of the disease (Swine Fever) required the slaughter of 500,000 pigs in order to prevent a nationwide animal epidemic over the entire island of Cuba.

The Newsday did not stop their critics of the CIA involvement and in 1986 again, the journal reported a story from the historian Neil Hurley talking about the island of La Navase, as “a place where chickens only miraculously survive the attacks of Lizards”. It was said also that the US Navy Research team visited the island to look for animal diseases and found a bird which carry malaria.” It is widely believed that they investigated the island for biological toxins while helping the rebels to carry their attack against
Castro forces. Haiti has never relinquished its right to claim La Navase while fishermen and expeditions have continued to flout US authority. Occasional confrontation with the coast guards have been reported especially when a group of visitors who planted their Haitian flag, was asked if they have a permit to visit the island. They cleverly answered to the officer that it was not necessary for them to have such permit especially when they were visiting their own country. The officer relented and welcomed the group to camp for a week until their return to the main island. The island is still considered as a national wildlife refuge and often it will be described as a “unique reserve of Caribbean biodiversity”. Due to hazardous costal conditions, it is closed to the public and visitors need permission from the Fish and Wildlife Office in Puerto Rico to enter the territorial waters or to step on the land. The United States of America has occupied the island of La Navase, illegally since 1857 under the false pretext that they did not recognized the sovereignty of Haiti as a nation after the 1804 independence from the French. They violated the rights of the Haitian people in their collection of Guano on the island for fertilization of their land. They also collected high concentration of Nitrates and Phosphates, for the fabrication of bullet material. This island belongs to Haiti by the treaty of Ryswick between France and the Empire (England, Spain, Holland). Recognition of our independence by France in 1825, gave to Haiti the constitutional right to own this land. Haiti has tried to impose its rights again in 1872 with more denial from the Secretary of State Hamilton Fish. No matter, this island is part of the Legacy of Haiti. The problem is dormant but we will expect a serious effort from a responsible government in Haiti to bring back this claim to a world tribunal. Haiti has not stopped raising the issue. In 1989 the government of Prosper Avril sent a military team via helicopter and planted a Haitian Flag on the island with the notation: “Haitian Sovereignty”. They used a Radio to diffuse a message to Free La Navase, without any consequences. In 1998, a group of Haitian senators took an expeditious trip to the island with no positive outcome. The Island of La Navase has been under the control of the Ministry of the Interior of the United States of America. Recent Haitian governments bought back the problem through their External Affairs Ministry with, Fritz Longchamp in 2008 and with the Prime Minister Jean Max Bellerive, in 2010. As a proud little nation, we may always have keep in mind the famous words of Jean de La Fontaine in his poem: “The Wolf and the Lamb” in which he states “The reason of those best able to have their way is always the best". We are being bullied by a more powerful country and we may never be able to defend ourselves if we do not look for the participation of the world community. Perhaps, presenting our complaints to the United Nations may give us more satisfaction. but I would like to conclude just by mentioning these words of Elie Wiesel: “Let us swore never be silent whenever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take side. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor; never the tormented”. May La Navase return to the country it belongs to!

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L’école, un peu partout, une fois encore, rouvre ses portes...
Mais quelle éducation pour nos enfants ?

Le long répit imposé par la chaleur de l’été, particulièrement par les canicules de juin et de juillet, et qui avait porté les salles de classe à fermer leurs portes, lentement disparait a l’horizon. Désormais, c’est la rentrée des classes qui s’annonce avec un temps généralement plus doux et plus clément. Les plus petits quitteront papa et maman pour la première fois. Quel gros chagrin! Bébé soupire.

Mais les gosses et les adultes, eux aussi, plus habitués à partir pour l’école, devront dorénavant se résigner à accepter que le temps des plaisirs est bien fini et qu’il faut se remettre au travail. Un travail parfois aussi ardu que celui des parents. Car le dernier train qui part n’est plus celui des vacances...

En effet, dépendant de L’État ou l’un vit ou du district scolaire où l’on est situé, la semaine écoulée ainsi que les jours qui vont suivre, seront consacrés presque entièrement à la réouverture des classes. Les cours mis en veilleuse, sauf rares cas de rattrapage, depuis bientôt trois mois, commencent à reprendre, certes timidement au début, pour gagner plus tard leur vitesse de croisière.

L’éducation, facteur indispensable d’acquisition de connaissance, de richesse, de mobilité sociale et de raffinement de l’humain, désormais trône en seigneur sur la gent estudiantine avide de savoir.

Les parents, comme toujours, apporteront leur pierre à l’œuvre en construction ; les maîtres sont là, eux aussi, comme de vrais potiers, attendant que les élèves arrivent pour les façonner en argile docile, et les rendre malleables. Oui l’éducation, pour réussir, doit se camper sur ces trois paliers solides qui sont les parents, les élèves et la salle de classe, faite généralement d’enseignants et d’enseignantes.

Aucun des trois paliers ne doit être déficitaire s’il faut parvenir au résultat escompté
La responsabilité des parents est énorme. Car l’enfant passe les deux tiers de son temps à la maison, au près des parents qui sont avant tout son premier modèle à émuler. Leur rôle est prépondérant dans l’éducation de l’enfant. Il ne suffit pas d’accepter tout ce que veut l’enfant et prétendre qu’on est bon parent. Mais cela n’est pas facile, dans une ère comme celle-ci où les changements dans les modes de vie arrivent à une vitesse presque vertigineuse, et rendent inutiles sinon obsolètes les conseils que les parents cherchent à prodiguer à leurs enfants et aux jeunes en général.

Le rôle d’un parent ne se limiterait pas à celui d’un simple agent pourvoyeur. Il a pour devoir d’accompagner, de diriger, de conduire, en même temps qu’il doit s’assumer en tant que parents face aux enfants. Cela est difficile, puisque ce sont les jeunes qui dictent désormais ce qu’ils veulent aux parents et qui ne semblent vouloir plus rien accepter en termes de conseils de la part de ces derniers. La vie est tellement agitée que des fois les rôles se confondent à un point tel que l’on ne sait plus qui est aux commandes ou qui doit faire quoi.

Les enfants ont un rôle principal à jouer dans leur éducation puis qu’il s’agit de leur intérêts avant tout et qu’il y va de leur propre avenir Malheureusement, soit par manque de souci ou d’intérêts, soit par un engouement naturel pour ce qui est facile et débonnaire, ils travaillent
souvent contre leurs intérêts en dressant des barrières énormes entre l’école et la famille. Le rapport entre les trois entités est extrêmement conflictuel. Les jeunes filles d’un lycée disaient l’autre jour comment elles passent des heures devant un miroir à se maquiller chaque matin avant de partir pour l’école. Comme conséquence de tout cela : les devoirs à la maison en pâtissent. Le port d’uniforme qui homogénéisait la classe et évitait les excès dans l’habillement a fini par faire place à toutes sortes de modes décontractées dont les unes, aussi provocatrices que les autres. La nature a horreur du vide. Faute de pouvoir imposer un code vestimentaire où tout le monde puisse se retrouver, chacun s’habille à sa guise. D’un autre côté, la technologie n’a pas non plus aidé à alléger les choses.

Les téléphones qui sonnent en pleine salle de classe, pendant que les cours y sont dispensés, sont une véritable distraction pour le nombre de plus en plus restreint de ceux qui prêtent attention à ce que dit l’enseignant. Lors même que les téléphones auraient été bannis des salles de classe, cela ne serviraient à rien puisque les montres sont devenues des pièces de la plus haute technologie où les enfants puissent tout faire et tout regarder sans que personne n’en ait le moindre soupçon.

Le système d’éducation, tel qu’on le connaissait avant, est bien dépassé aujourd’hui. Il a une grande responsabilité dans le déclin observé dans la qualité de l’éducation qui est dispensée dans les écoles.

Beaucoup d’enseignants et d’enseignantes parlent avec nostalgie de la situation de chaos qui prévaut dans les salles de classes. Ils sont littéralement harcelés par les élèves qui se targuent souvent d’avoir pourchassé bon nombre d’entre eux sans que personne ait pu faire quoi que ce soit.

Faut il rappeler combien les maîtres étaient vénérés et constituaient l’extension directe de ce que les parents représentaient à la maison ? Les parents se démettent de leurs taches et rejettent l’échec de leurs enfants sur l’école et les enseignants qui souvent, sont obligés de faire passer l’élève à la classe supérieure même quand celui-ci a flanqué le test de passage.

Les enfants assis dans une même salle de classe doivent souvent être tous du même âge. D’où un système basé non pas sur le mérite et la compétence mais sur la tranche d’âge à laquelle l’élève appartient. Et moins les parents sont éduqués, moins ils sont la chance de voir leurs enfants acquérir un bagage appréciable à même de les servir dans la vie. Quant ils ne sont pas à la fois au four et au moulin, travaillant pour assurer un gagne-pain à la famille, ils ne parlent pas la langue du pays d’accueil, et ne peuvent pas se présenter aux réunions qui sont tenues dans les écoles pour apprécier le progrès de leurs enfants. Moins on se présente à ces réunions, plus l’enfant devient une quantité négligeable aux yeux du corps enseignant. Les enfants qui leur expliquent le contenu des réunions peuvent leur dire n’importe quoi puisqu’ils n’y comprennent rien. Les enfants signent eux-mêmes les correspondances qui sont envoyées à la maison sans rien dire aux parents.

Le monde litigieux dans lequel nous vivons, le comportement des enfants dans les salles de classe qui se moquent des enseignants et l’attitude passive du système qui ne semble pas trop comprendre vers quelle finalité doit tendre l’enseignement, sont autant de pierres d’achoppement au plein épanouissement du système éducatif. Les enfants représentent l’avenir de l’humanité. Ils sont déjà le reflet de la société de demain. Dans cet imbroglio où la parabole du semeur est encore de mise, il faut croire qu’une partie de la semence tombera sur une terre fertile et finira par porter des fruits. Mais il faut se demander combien de têtes de perdues pour chaque tête qui réussit dans un système où l’on est piégé au départ et semble voué à l’échec ? Souhaitons une reforme en profondeur du système éducatif et disons bonne année scolaire à tous et à toutes. !!!!.

Rony jean-Mary,M.D.
Coral springs ,Fl.
Le 19 Août 1019.
For all of us of African heritage living in the USA, this month represents an anniversary that is barely mentioned in the media and gets short shrift in inverse proportion to its historical significance. Fortunately, a major project is underway to reassess this phenomenon that was seminal in the molding of the New World and transformed the lives of so many million humans. The aforementioned anniversary is none other than the introduction of slavery in modern-day America in August 1619 in Virginia. Obviously it began even before that in the New World under the aegis of a friar called Las Casas in Hispaniola decades before. This seminal project is underway and started a few days ago in the columns of the NY Times. It’s an ambitious endeavor in its breadth and depth, rigorous scholarship and timely relevance that holds special importance to all of us. It’s called “The 1619 Project.” So far each article published is written by intellectuals from academia, journalism, often authors of award-winning publications, thoroughly researched and full of references. Just as importantly, the newspaper has partnered with the Pulitzer Center (pulitzer.org) to establish a curriculum for students (“The 1619 Project Curriculum”) so they can learn about this facet of history poorly taught in school.

A word of caution: the information included contains facts that are crude, raw, nauseous, revolting. Just like the earth-shattering TV series “Roots,” this colossal effort in its quest of evidential data may lead one to come to the conclusion of hatred of an entire race and that would an unfortunate lesson learned. The true value of fluency in historical facts is the ability of answering with cogent arguments to the nincompoops and ignoramuses. They may not know better and may be convinced of their biased beliefs. Knowledge of facts serves as best antidote to vitriolic speech spewed or false information delivered with conviction under the veneer of science. The lesson best learned is to avoid a repetition of the past by being fully cognizant of events the way they happened. Knowledge is power. Being able to influence the future course of history entails mastery of understanding the past.

Some of the startling revelations in the series of articles includes the fact that Jefferson opined without proof that Negros’ lungs have a lower capacity than Whites’ and this has been accepted as gospel since. Strangely enough, this purported deficiency was used as justification for hard labor for slaves to man them up! This opinion has insinuated itself into scientific dogma since it was reprised by a physician called Cartwright who invented the spirometer that included a normal range for Negroes that’s 20% lower than for Whites. For history buffs, reading the article (“Myths about physical racial differences were used to justify slavery and are still believed by doctors today,” by Linda Villarosa, NY Times, 8-14-19) offers the advantage of reading original publications such as Jefferson’s “Notes on the State of Virginia,” Cartwright’s “Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race.” The article gives other interesting references about a slave writing a book on the medical tortures he was subjected to, another one is the publication of a treatise by a surgeon operating on slaves without anesthesia to correct vesico-vaginal fistula. No wonder there’s lingering suspicion by African-American patients toward the medical establishment for all of the documented unethical experimentations over the years. Incidentally Jefferson needs to be taken a few pegs down from the lofty pedestal he has been occupying despite the good deeds he has accomplished for the nation.

Other articles document the systematic collusion of racist white citizenry to subjugate slaves and all the deft maneuvers to counter Reconstruction, including withholding federal health care, prevention of access to economic opportunities and so on. These measures were enacted by conservative white Democrats who have since defected and have joined the Republican Party after LBJ’s passage of the Civil Rights Act in the mid-sixties.

The post-Obama animus is redolent of the angst of the conservative Whites after the Civil War. Plus ça change, plus ça reste le même. Slavery defined America and we are still feeling its aftermath. The good news is that there is a critical mass of progressive-minded individuals of white origin who can help us erect a bulwark against the ever-present scrum made up of hidebound, conservative elements espousing toxic ideas always ready for nefarious activites. We can’t afford the luxury of staying uninformed. We have an unheard-of opportunity to offer access to information to our youngsters that has been excluded, elided, misrepresented, ignored, from history textbooks and more often than not written by revisionists. This anomaly has lasted far too long.
Remembering Jean-Baptiste Jasmin MD

A few days ago, on the last day of July 2019, just a few hours before the end of the month, at 9:30 pm, Dr Jean-Baptiste Jasmin MD, one of the most prominent Haitian intellectual living abroad and most devoted AMHE member took his last breath and expired in a hospital in Florida. His departure will create a large void within the Haitian Diaspora, the Haitian Medical Community at large, and the Haitian Medical Association Abroad (AMHE), just to name a few. But the most afflicted group may not be as prestigious or as important as the ones mentioned here, but for me and for most, it is definitely that cluster made of the 29 survivors who belong to the famous 1964 class of the School of Medicine and Pharmacy of the University of Haiti, of which Jean-Ba was a prominent member.

Indeed, back in October 1958, 45 young men and women fresh laureates of the Haiti school system, chosen through a series of eliminating exams, were gathered at the then unique medical school of the Republic, to make up eventually the 1964 class of the school. Joy, apprehension, shyness were some of the sentiments shared by everybody. But one of us was not at all inhibited. As soon as the Dean Dr Pierre-Louis would have wrapped up his speech, designed mostly to scare the living day light out of us, this gentleman stood up, and while waiting for the duly requested permission to speak, he allowed us to take note of his 6 foot tall imposing stature and, he declared with the firmness of a voice belonging to somebody not coy, not embarrassed, not shy, with a voice as imposing as his similarly imposing tall stature “My name is Jean Baptiste Jasmin and I am from Cap Haitian”. If the guy wanted the dean to clarify some points, why the heck did he have to broadcast that he is from Cap Haitian? In a nutshell, I just told you of the Jean-Ba that we know, a proud gentleman from the northern side of the country, carrying on his shoulders the weight of the northern pride passed from generation to generation since Henry Christophe, the no nonsense ruler who built the “Citadelle Laferrière” on a mountain top in the northern part of Haiti.

Born on May 13th, 1937, from parents that were owners of a general corner store known as “Boutique” in Haiti, Jean-Ba grew up during his formative years in his native Cap Haitian. Initially, he attended the local elementary catholic school of the “Frères de l’Instruction Chrétienne” where you usually would find only the most gifted youngsters in the community. After a successful seating at the state exam for the Primary School Certificate, he checked into the “Lycée Philippe Guerrier” still in Cap-Haitian for the secondary cycle leading to the most dreaded “Rhétorique and Philosophie” state exams for a passing grade, which open the possibilities for a seat at a school of the State University of Haiti, the only higher learning institution available to the young Haitians in the 50’s. During these cycles of formal primary and secondary education, Jean-Ba was picking up embryos of economic principles at home, in dad’s boutique and droplets of leadership behavior style in various clubs of that christophian society where emphasis was placed in your duty to be of service to your immediate environment and to the
whole community in general.
In retrospect, it is totally understandable that when Jean-Ba entered medical school, being under the triple influence of the catholic teachings dispensed at primary school, the economic thinking sharpened at home and the leadership skills honed at various youth clubs of the northern society, he had to set the record straight right at the start. He had to let it be known to whomever would care to listen, that he wasn’t a run of the mill dude. Indeed, he was light years ahead of his peers in social understanding. He knew that he was surrounded by other youths, who while growing up in the capital city, were infested with that French born social disease of the superiority attitude and complex from the capital, that you could meet at any street corner. He was a proud citizen from the north. Indeed Jean-Ba would fill the vacuum at the leadership spot of the class. As such, he would discover intuitively and would follow Law Number 10 of John Maxwell’s 21 irrefutable laws of Leadership: The Law of Connection. He would become a friend to all of his classmates and would know their intimate story. Consequently, he would be the first one to be consulted by anybody in need to design an appropriate response to an event during our matriculation time at the school, be it administrative bumps in our dealings with the medical school or social squabbles between students. Personally, I became the happy fellow at the receiving end of his largesse, when during a trip to Cap Haitian, in our first summer holiday from the school, my friend and I were preparing and organizing there a showing of Albert Camus “Caligula” for my off-campus theater group. Due to unforeseen circumstances, we were literally stranded in the city without food, money or support. I reached out to him, and the next day, we were served at his place, behind the boutique, a gargantuan banquet replete with drinks and dessert.

During the school years, one would find him organizing group photos for the class, or trips to the north to visit the “Citadelle”. At the resolution of that infamous winter-of-1960 student strike, when most of us had to go back to the school, head down and tail between legs, Jean-Ba would teach us that we shouldn’t take it lying down. Under his direction, my class designed a behavior pattern for the strike breakers where they would be forever ostracized, outcast and not spoken to, a pattern that had spread up and down to the whole Medical School student body and that had perdured in time well beyond graduation, during our post University adult life. When shortly after internship, a classmate died unexpectedly, from Cap Haitian where he was in surgical residency training, he sent us a note reminding us, who were stationed in Port-au-Prince, that we had to convey an appropriate response to Wiener Chalviré’s family. This was the forerunner of the role he would play later on foreign soil at each passing of a classmate, when he would organize an appropriate response for that falling classmate.

After settling in the New York area, following a stint in Montreal, he decided to create his family. On August 17, 1968, he entered into matrimony with his fiancé Michelle Drouinaud. The latter would become his devoted wife and would stay by his side for the entire 51 remainder years of his life, all the way to his deathbed last week. Together they would have three sons, plus a respectable number of grandchildren.

As portrayed above, Jean Ba was a born leader and he never relinquishes his leadership role over the class even in post-graduation period and on foreign soil. During his Surgical training first at Long Island Jewish Hospital and then at Brooklyn Saint John Episcopal, he organized the first get togethers for those of us in training or residing in the New York area. When five of us Haitian physicians, got together to create the Haitian Medical Association Abroad (AMHE), I reached out to him to request his
support. He subscribed wholeheartedly to the nascent idea, and in 1972, at the second Harlem Hospital meeting in Manhattan, when the New York Chapter was given birth, he was there to take matter in hand, and to nurture that chapter to life while it was still fragile and making baby steps. Shortly thereafter, with other friends, and way before the Kaplan Courses became available, he participated in organizing courses for the younger Haitian physicians in order to help them in their quest of success at the ECFMG exam, necessary condition to land a training post at an American hospital. It was an unconditional, unselfish commitment. There was for him, no monetary gain, no political or social gain to advance his standing among others, no marketing maneuver to enhance his medical practice. It was a pure and unfettered desire to advance the standing of the Haitian intellectual elite on foreign soil. Here again, we had a whiff of the young Jean-Ba who, under the triple influence of his youth, when entering medical school had to reaffirm that he was born with the christophian legacy and duty to be of service to his peers and to the larger society. He was still the honorable and reliable servant from the Northern Countryside.

Later, these 1964 class intracity encounters would take the form of trips commemorating every fifth year the graduation anniversaries of our class. Under that banner, he would organize visits to President Roosevelt birthplace in Upstate New York, to the Old square in Montreal City, and to the Magnificent Mile in Chicago City to name just a few. Then he would settle for cruises visiting the Caribbean Sea, the Greek Islands, the Baltic Sea of Northern Europe, or the Mediterranean Sea of Southern Europe. Under his suggestions, we would later adopt the shorter two-and-half year interval for these cruises, when we sensed that too many of us, reaching Senior Citizen Status, would run the risk of missing these friendly encounters while spaced at the five-yearly intervals. He had organized the last one a few months ago, in May just passed. Jean-Ba, for all of the above, we will miss you dearly. We offer that recital of your past deeds in life as a memorial, so the following generation of Haitian physicians have the knowledge that you were the giant that help fashion that society which is theirs now. So, they can know that you had carried the torch proudly and forcefully. So, they can take you as a shining example of what their life can be. We ask that from wherever you may be now, with new powers given to you by the Almighty, you may continue to guide us. We ask that, you continue to keep a watchful eye on us your survivors, in our Haitian society abroad and inside the motherland, that you continue to visit and shape our association as you had done it faithfully every July for so many years. So much of your time and talent had gone to refurbish it that you cannot abandon it now. We wish that you continue to guide us, so we can navigate safely among these social and psychological reefs at the ready to break us and blow us into pieces. We implore you to help us tame the devil inside us, so we can go on with our lives peacefully, with pride and honor. And may God receive your soul safely in His kingdom.

We present our sincere condolences to Jean-Ba’s family, his brothers and sister, his wife Michelle, his children Kettly, Jean-Michel, Jean-Edouard, and Leslie, to his grandchildren and the rest of the family.

Respectfully submitted
Emmanuel Francois MD, MPH
My father was a man in every sense of the word. He was a man who was not afraid of speaking his mind. He was a man who understood how and what it meant to protect your family as a man of color in this country. He always told me that to make it in America you had to be 3 times smarter and twice as good as the people around you. I saw him live that creed everyday growing up. He was always studying and reading. Dad was either polishing up the skills he already mastered or he was learning something new. It was amazing to see how focused he was.

Dad always wanted the best for us, and he never stopped telling us that as well as live by his advice. He also had a heart for his fellow countrymen. He always looked for ways to do his part to improve Haiti. He organized food and medicine drives for the poor. He built a business that would provide jobs, and thereby hope to people who felt like there was none. Unfortunately Dad was unable to fulfill this dream due to the political unrest that took place at the time.

Another thing I admired about Dad was his zest for life. He loved having fun and partied just as hard as he worked. I can't count how many times he loved to yell decabess as he slammed the winning domino down on the table. It was funny watching how mad the other players got every time he won. Dad loved to travel as Mom can tell you. They went all over the world, experiencing things, people, and cultures that opens your mind in ways you couldn't even begin to dream of! Dad believed in making and enjoying the most of every minute and every day. He loved his family like there was no tomorrow.

Dad, thank you for loving me the way you did. Thank you for whooping my butt and showing me tough love when I needed it, even though I may have hated it at the time. But you knew what the world was waiting to throw at me when I spread my wings to make my way in the world, and you wanted to make sure I was as ready as possible. Thank you for showing me what a man is. I love and appreciate you with all that I am. May God keep you and bless you.

Jan Jasmin
Ce soir la vie nous fait mal et nombreux sont ceux qui se sont présentes pour dire un adieu à un confrère. Repose en Paix Jean Ba, tu seras parmi nous pour toujours dans la AMHE.
MC

Chers membres et volontaires,

C’est avec beaucoup de peine que nous vous faisons part de la triste nouvelle du décès tragique de notre confrère Dr Weiner Bastien survenu ce mardi 13 août 2019 à Miami des suites d’un accident de la circulation.

Dr Bastien était un ophthamologue très connu et compétent qui avait choisi d’établir sa clinique depuis près de 35 ans au cœur de Little Haiti.

Ses milliers de patients vont certainement beaucoup le manquer.

Il y a 3 ans Dr Bastien avait offert ses services à la population de la région de Léogane au cours de la mission médicale annuelle de la HUH à la Cité d’Anacaona

Les funérailles du Dr Wiener Bastien seront chantées le samedi 24 août à l’ Église Notre-Dame d’Haiti à Miami

HUH présente ses sincères condoléances à son épouse Ghislaine Rameau Bastien et à toute la famille affectée par ce deuil

Paix à l’ âme de Weiner Bastien!
MC
Dear Members, Volunteers & Friends of AHDH & Haiti:

On behalf of the Executive Committee of AHDH, Inc., we would like to share with you our latest mission report, AHDH’s Summer 2019 Medical & Educational Mission Report, our 75th since 1986, which took place from June 21 thru 27, 2019.

Unlike recent challenges we have faced, the unpredictability of the socio-political conditions on the eve of our departure left us no choice but to call the mission off.

Please, open the attachment for full report, soon to be posted on our website: [http://www.AHDHhaiti.org](http://www.AHDHhaiti.org)

See also the awesome new video just completed by our "Junior Angel", Gaele P., which we can't think enough for keeping AHDH alive and well her own way: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nBf86vMwtBgvsiZFMced3OoBblBY8pNk/view?usp=drive_web](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nBf86vMwtBgvsiZFMced3OoBblBY8pNk/view?usp=drive_web)

Thanks again for your unwavering, generous participation to our mission,

Charles
(Charles René, M.D., F.A.C.O.G
Co-Founder, Treasurer, Director of Projects in Haiti
Association Haïtienne de Développement Humain, Inc.)
www.haitiahdh.org  chasrene46@bellsouth.net)
Radio Télé Solidarité in its great effort to meet all the leaders of the community was very happy to have an interview with Dr. Schiller Castor, president of the Haitian Physicians association of the Montreal Chapter.

Dr. Schiller Castor is a former student of the School of the Christian Brothers of Haiti (St Louis de Gonzague) which is one of the best schools in Haiti. He also attended the Faculty of Medicine of Haiti and is one of the graduates of the promotion of the year 1983-1990. Dr. Schiller Castor looks like a very humble and very friendly doctor yet, He is among the leaders of the Haitian community in Montreal, Quebec.

Dr. Shiller Castor despite his obligations understands the importance of returning his calls. We have always made this effort at radio Solidarité to return our calls thus encouraging good manners in the community. We feel that it is impolite and disrespectful not to return a call especially nowadays when modern technology renders that practice quite easy. Let’s strive not to lose our traditional nice manners.

Many Haitian Physicians practice their profession in Montreal and we think that it is a very good thing for them to join together in an association and to form a chapter of the Association of Haitian Doctors in Montreal. Many of them have done some of their studies in Haiti and even their university studies so they already know each other.

Dr. Castor informed us that he left Haiti in the year 1991 and lives in Montreal since the year 1992. After graduating as a Physician at the Faculty of Medicine in Haiti he did a master’s degree in Physiology Cardio Vascular at the University of Montreal in the year 1994 and he was accepted as a doctor in the province of Quebec in Montreal in the year 1995. The medical studies in Canada are strictly regulated. After the medical studies Doctors have to take the federal and provincial exams they can assume medical practice.

Dr. Castor let us know that there are at least 100 Haitian doctors in Montreal and one of the challenges of the Haitian doctors association of the Montreal Chapter is to achieve unity. Otherwise, he added that his association has a very good relationship with the Haitian community of Quebec. Dr. Castor's interview will be televised soon at Radio Télés Solidarité at Long Island's Cable Vision and at Cable Vision in New Jersey, and we will soon have a second article on the Haitian doctors' association in Montreal.

Brother Tob
Montreal-Entretien avec Dr. Shiller Castor, President de l’association des Medecins Haitiens du chapitre de Montréal.

La radio Telé Solidarité dans son grand effort de rencontrer tous les leaders de la communauté était très heureux d'avoir un entretien avec Dr Schiller Castor, le president de l'association des medecins Haitiens du chapitre de Montreal.

Dr Schiller Castor est un ancien étudiant de l'ecole des Frères de l’instruction chetienne d'Haiti qui est l'une des meilleures eoles d'Haiti et diplomé de la faculté de Medecine d'Haiti de la promotion de l’année 1983-1990. Docteur Schiller Castor a l'air d'un medecin très humble et très sympathique. Il est quand même parmi les leaders de la communauté Haitienne à Montreal au Quebec.

Dr Shiller Castor malgré ses obligations comprend l'importance de retourner ses appels. Nous avons toujours fait cet effort à la radio telé Solidarité de retourner nos appels et d'encourager tout ce qu'il ya de beau dans notre communaué. Ne pas retourner un appel est un signe de non respect ou simplement une impolitesse car la technologie le permet aisément car l’on peut le faire même par un test. Dans notre communauté parfois les bonnes manières disparaissent sans laisser de traces.

Plusieurs medecins Haitiens exercent leur profession à Montreal et nous pensons que c'est une très bonne chose pour ces derniers de se regrouper en association et de fonder un chapitre de l'association des Medecins Haitiens à Montreal. Beaucoup de ces derniers ont fait une partie de leurs etudes en Haiti et même leurs etudes universitaires et donc se connaissent déjà.


Dr Castor nous fit savoir qu’il ya au moins 100 medecins Haitiens à Montréal et que l’un des defis de l’association des medecins Haitiens du chapitre de Montréal c’est d’arriver à la Cohesion. Il ajouta que son association à de très bonnes relations avec la communauté Haitienne du Quebec. L’entretien du Dr Castor sera televeisé sous peu à la Radio Telé Solidarité à Cable Vision de Long Island et à Cable vision de New jersey et nous aurons aussi sous peu un 2ème article sur l’association des medecins Haitiens de Montréal.

Brother Tob
Corner of Traveller:
La Rubrique de Odler Jeanlouie MD

BACK FROM CUBA...

On June 4, the White House announced a new round of travel restrictions to Cuba. It also ordered the cancellation of all recreational trips to the island. The decision disallowed all US vessels to use a Cuban city as a port of call.

That was a disaster for the cruise industry since several hundred thousand customers had already booked itineraries for which the main attraction was Havana. The travelers were to be reimbursed.

When I landed in Varadero, last week, I was approached twice by Cuban security officers. The first time, they wanted to understand why I was in Cuba. The second time, they detained my passport for 20 minutes trying to set apart my medical educational mission and my touristic objectives. Therefore, the travelers to Cuba must keep it simple, since the different menus put forth by the US State Department seem to remain indigestible on the island.

Varadero can be easily conceived as the Cancun of Cuba, as Cancun looked 40 years ago. Varadero is a peninsula on the Northwestern coast of Cuba. It takes three hours to drive there from Havana. A 50-minute non-stop flight from Miami will drop you there.

Replete with magnificent beaches and inexpensive resorts, the area attracts the international traveler who has already seen Havana and its magnificence. Varadero offers around-the-clock entertainment, and multiple cultural attractions to Canadians, Americans, and Western Europeans alike. The South American crowd does not seem to be prominent by its presence.

A few days in Varadero or in Havana will easily convince you of one evidence: Cuba is potentially a major economic rival for Miami and South Florida.

About five times the size of Haiti, Cuba, at 110,000 sq km, is not a Caribbean islet; it is much larger than Portugal or Switzerland, with a very diverse swath of land, and quite an attractive climate.

The median age of the population is 40. A Cuban is expected to live to the age of 80, longer than the average American. Excellent healthcare, based on prevention, is nationalized and totally free; it is considered the best healthcare system in the world.

The educational system, equally free, does not come far behind. Any average Cuban has a master’s degree, and will never have to worry about student loans, credit card bills, alimony, child support, insurance installment, or funeral expenses.

With so much education, vitality, culture, art, skill, workmanship, all for sale and for cheap, Miami will not stand a chance against Cuba. When Cuba opens up, American college students will graduate in Havana, their older sisters will marry in Varadero, the guys will party in Cienfuegos, and the parents will have their doctors in Santiago.

Or will the Cuban yield to the American gold rush, and abandon the island?

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Cuba is a small Caribbean nation of 11 million souls. It is begging for dignity through tourism, investments and trading partners. It is ready for prominence.

On my way back home, I left Melia Varadero at 8:50 AM. I flew American Airlines from Varadero to Miami. The flight lasted 50 minutes. After a four-hour wait, another American Airlines flight took me to JFK. My limo dropped me home at 9:30 PM.

It was a long trek, it gave me time to ponder on why we are negotiating with China, the biggest communist nation in the world by far, while, we are punishing Cuba, for the same ideology that the island wants to give up.
Dear 2019 Convention Participants,

The Central Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees, and the Convention Organizing Committee thank all of you for attending the 46th AMHE Annual Medical Convention in Havana and Varadero, Cuba July 20-29, 2019. The 2019 AMHE Convention concluded successfully and we hope that all our participants are home safely having taken with them memory-making moments of the event while looking forward to the 2020 convention.

The Annual AMHE Medical Convention provides opportunities that include but are not limited to: 1) fundraising for the Association; 2) promoting friendly amicable interaction among conference participants; 3) stimulating interaction amount professionals in the Haitian medical community; 4) joining forces to support our communities in the US and in the homeland. Your participation at the 2019 convention is a true testament of your support for the work AMHE is doing in targeted communities. The 2019 Convention presented its own challenges, but we are pleased that it turned out into one of the best conventions AMHE has organized in recent memory. In the next couple of days, we will send you a Convention Satisfaction Survey. We would be grateful to hear your opinion and gather your recommendations for future conventions.

AMHE especially thank all our convention speakers for their outstanding presentations. The social events this year included cultural enrichment excursions and they were well attended. The success of these events must be attributed to the coordinators, organizers, volunteers, and participants. Kudos and special thanks to the AMHE New Jersey chapter social committee for a remarkable output. Last, but not least, we take our hats off to the volunteers who organized the Chapter Night event and for their dedication and commitment. We want to send our special thanks to Mrs. Jacqueline Murray for hosting an amazing Chapter Night event.

Hoping your families are enjoying the last few weeks of summer, we send you our best wishes. We hope to see you at different AMHE events, most particularly next summer at the Convention being planned for the 47th Annual AMHE Medical Convention in July 2020. Please stay tuned for future communications.

Yours sincerely,

2019 Convention Organizing Committee

PS: Please kindly share this thank you letter with your family and friends who attended the convention with you.

Published on the AMHE Facebook page last two weeks

- Surgical Procedure Aims to Delay Menopause - Carpal tunnel usually starts with a tingling or burning sensation that comes and goes - Haïti remporte le Championnat Junior de Volleyball des Nations de la Caraïbe - Jennifer Abel, première Noire et première Haïtienne à exceller dans un sport aquatique au Canada - Cryotherapy is getting popular again and we need to watch for the complications. MC - Le biologiste marin haitien, Jean Wiener, gagne le prix de l’activisme environnemental - About Shin Splints. MC - Nos confrères du Nord. MC - How Does Medicare for All Affect Doctors? - A Visual Guide to Shingles

And more…
Pierre Paul Cadet MD, nouveau CEC président a la AMHE a participe a la recente reunion des doyens de Faculte de Medecine en Haiti. Nous souhaitons que les changements de curriculum requis vont bon train. Nous avons tous un devoir d’aider L’Ama Mater et les autres Universites a relever le defi avant l’annee 2023.

Maxime Coles
Upcoming Events

October 5th, 2019

Please come celebrate with us the 85th Birthday of Bishop Guy Sansaricq

Address: St. Teresa of Avila Parish
565 Sterling Place
Brooklyn NY 11238

Time: 7:00 PM to 11:00 PM

For info please call: 631-889-0684 or 718-856-8323

$100.00

VENEZ RENCONTRER JOËL DES ROSIERS

 lean Vendredi 17 Août de 11h à 20h au Centre M A R I POUR LA JOURNÉE DU LIVRE HAITIEN

Joël Des Rosiers « fertilise la mémoire, féconde l’imaginaire, enseigne l’esprit avec des mots qui ne sont jamais des mots d’ordre, mais de l’air libre qui épouse au plus près les formes imprévisibles du chaos qui est en chacun. »

PIERRE OUELLET

« Sa géographie poétique a toujours été ouverte, mouvante, elle ne s’est installée dans aucun lieu stable ni aucune recette qu’il se serait agi de reproduire. Cette œuvre progresse en amplitude mais aussi en profondeur. Rassemblée en un seul livre, elle manifeste mieux encore son ampleur et sa cohérence, tout en se révélant riche en promesses. »

PIERRE NEUVEN

Joël Des Rosiers

Œuvres complètes
Poèmes 1987-2015

triptyque