Mr. Ambassador
Preval taps Wyclef to be roving diplomat

Wyclef Jean, left, and model Petra Nemcova attend the inauguration ceremony of a computer lab at a school in Croix Des Bouquets, Haiti, on Monday, Nov. 12. Jean was named an official roving ambassador for Haiti by President Rene Preval last month. Jean has announced the creation of several youth-based programs funded by his Yele Haiti charity, which will provide computer labs, classrooms and counseling for jailed child gang members, help local women’s groups sell food in the seaside slum of Cite Soleil, and establish a youth scholarship and soccer program. More, page 15. (AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

Filmmaker turns lens on plight of the undocumented

First time filmmaker Hans Patrick Domercant says he hopes his movie “Sans Papye” will entertain audiences in Boston and elsewhere when it debuts this month. But, he also hopes to shine a spotlight on a marginalized community of undocumented immigrants whom he says are misunderstood and living on the edge. Page 10.

New AIDS study prompts anger

A controversial scientific study that connects the origins of the AIDS epidemic to Haitians was released last month. The BHR talks to the scientist who led the study—and to several Boston Haitian leaders who are outraged by the report. Page 7.

Children’s Hospital helps us make healthy choices for our family.
Page 9

Hans Patrick Domercant, above, will debut his new film “Sans Papye” at UMass-Boston on December 13. The film depicts the strains of Haitians living in the U.S. illegally.
By Martine Louis 

A new Boston Police tactic aimed at taking guns off the streets by conducting voluntary searches of neighborhood homes is being met with cries of protests from some and scores of questions. The Safe Home program, currently in its development stages, would allow unwarranted home searches by teams of police who would enter with parental consent.

On Nov. 20, Boston Police Deputy Gary French, who would supervise the program, explained its concept at a community meeting at the William Monroe Trotter Elementary School in Dorchester’s Grove Hall section.

“We are doing what we have to in order to prevent tragedies,” said Deputy French. “This is not about targeting youths and carrying people out in handcuffs. This is a recovery program. We are trying to provide youths and their families with the support they need.”

Police officials have stressed that the targets of the Safe Home project are not hardened criminals or so-called “impact players” that are already known to police and suspected in other crimes. The audience for this project are young people who may “be headed down the wrong path” and their parents who may suspect that an intervention is needed.

French explained that a list of homes targeted would be kept separate from a larger police database of current investigations. In cases involving the discovery of “significant” drug or weapon caches, police would be able to search homes, but Defendants said they would be able to freeze a home as officers obtain a search warrant. Otherwise, he said, no incidents involving illegal activities would be reported and no prosecutions would be made.

“The big advantage is to take away guns and help build productive young adults,” said Deputy French. “We have licensed social workers available to work with these children and help them gain access to positive resources.”

As parents, youths and community leaders absorbed details of the program hoped to implement in several inner-city neighborhoods, including Dorchester’s Bowdoin-Geneva, Franklin Hill-Franklin Field and Grove Hall sections, a heated debate developed among the audience at the Trotter School.

As a voluntary program, Deputy French explained that everyone has the right to refuse a warrant-less search. “We cannot force our way into the homes of those who deny us access. This program is for those who want to participate,” he said.

Dorchester resident Amaya Atkins thought that policy defeats the purpose of the program. “It makes no sense,” said Atkins. “In many cases, the people who are refusing are doing so because they have something to hide. If your objective is to take guns away from kids, does that just go away because they won’t let you in?”

Another resident, Lidia Nova worried that the lack of prosecution offered a “free pass” for those involved in illegal activities. “We need to look at it from the view of the parents of future victims,” said Nova, a mother of three. “If a child is found with firearms and you just let them go, what happens if they do it again? What happens if they go and kill someone? You had them, you could have stopped them, but you let them go. How do you think the parent of the victim will feel?”

Though Safe Home allows parents to request the search of their homes, Deputy French stressed that so-called “impact players” are not the chief targets of the program.

“We know who they are and the crimes they have committed, but we cannot go into their homes,” said Deputy French. “We would need to open an investigation across the city to ensure we would not be interfering with current investigations in regards to these cases.”

Project R.I.G.H.T. counselor Ra’Shaun Nalls says exempting impact players seemed to be a contradiction to the mission of Safe Home. “With this initiative you would think this opportunity was open to all — especially impact players. If they are the most dangerous ones out there, why not work towards them? How does removing a firearm from an impact player interfere with a current investigation?”

“It does not make sense to turn down those families seeking help,” Nalls said.

There is not yet a firm date for the launch of Safe Home, but Deputy French says the BPD will continue to host similar meetings in order to spread awareness and build community concerns into the program.

“We welcome all questions and critiques,” said Dep. French. “These meetings are a piece of the puzzle in establishing a program that will make our neighborhoods safer.”

French said Safe Home will initially focus on high-risk neighborhoods and, after a six-month period, the effectiveness of Safe Home will be evaluated and possibly expanded into a citywide program.

City Councilor Chuck Turner this week expressed concerns about the program and called for his council colleagues to join him in sponsoring a hearing.

“Do the police have the authority to go into a home without a warrant? How do you think the parent of the victim will feel?” Turner said. “They may say they are asking for permission to search these homes, but there is an intimidation within the presence of three officers at one’s door.”

“If they want to make a difference, there is a minimum of 11,000 youths out of school and unemployed. Rather than searching for guns, work on helping those who are in need of after school programs, mentoring services and employment,” said Turner.

Elaine Driscoll, a spokesperson for BPD Commissioner Edward Davis, said this week that the department welcomes the chance to get feedback on the program.

“We don’t have a solid launch date,” Driscoll said. “We’ll move forward on this only after we’ve done as much outreach as we can and answered as many questions as possible. We’re very much in the awareness phase right now.”
UN defends its conduct at Haitian storm shelter

By JONATHAN M. KATZ
Associated Press Writer

PORT-AU-PRINCE — The United Nations last month defended its peacekeepers from accusations they abandoned evacuees in a storm shelter to roving gangsters. Haitian authorities, who are supposed to have taken over the shelter after U.N. troops left, said they have opened an investigation into the incident.

Displaced Haitians staying at a school under U.N. protection said peacekeepers fled with the facility’s only generator after sundown on Nov. 2, days after Tropical Storm Noel forced thousands to seek refuge in Port-au-Prince’s seaside Cite Soleil slum.

Evacuees said gangsters then streamed into the shelter, beating them with sticks and stealing blankets and food.

U.N. military commander Maj. Gen. Carlos Alberto Dos Santos Cruz denied that gangs invaded the overcrowded shelter after his Brazilian and Paraguayan soldiers left, and indicated the disturbance was a fight over food by evacuees.

At a news conference, Santos Cruz said that storm evacuees, who had not yet been fed that day, began fighting when food was finally brought in around 6 p.m., local time. Shortly after regaining control, commanders decided it was secure enough to hand over to Haitian authorities.

“At that moment we had complete, absolute control,” Santos Cruz said.

Haitian police spokesman Frantz Lerebours, citing an investigation into the incident opened by Haitian authorities, declined to comment on evacuees’ reports of gangs rushing into the shelter after U.N. troops left.

The 7,800-member U.N. peacekeeping force was installed to break gangs and stabilize the country after a 2004 rebellion ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. But after the deadly Tropical Storm Noel, the force found itself doing disaster relief instead, filling in for a year-and-a-half-old government neither equipped nor organized to handle the crisis. (AP)

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Child slain in Haiti after family can’t pay ransom, police say

By The Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE — Kidnappers executed a 7-year-old boy because his family could not afford to pay $680 in ransom in this impoverished Caribbean nation, police said Nov. 26.

The body of Schneider Hervil was found Nov. 23 in the town of Cabaret, north of the Haitian capital, about two weeks after abductors snatched him from his family’s home, police spokesman Frantz Lerebours said.

The specific cause of his death was not known, Lerebours said.

No arrests have been made.

The child’s family received a phone call from kidnappers demanding $680 for his release, but was unable to raise the cash, he said. At least 16 kidnappings were reported in Haiti through Nov. 20 this year, down from the nearly 80 reported for the full month of November 2006, U.N. peacekeepers said.

They warned abductions are expected to increase in coming weeks as gangs try to raise money to buy Christmas presents. (AP)

Dominican border force reports mass deportations of Haitian migrants

By The Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE — The number of would-be Haitian migrants caught and deported has soared following the deployment of a new, 1,000-member border patrol force seven weeks ago, the Dominican government said.

Since the Specialized Border Security Corps was installed in late September along the porous 255-mile border between the two countries, the government has registered at least 10,000 deportations, Gen. Adriano Silverio Rodriguez said in a statement issued last month.

By contrast, annual total deportations in recent years have ranged from 20,000 to 30,000, according to a report by the human rights group Amnesty International.

As many as 1 million people of Haitian descent live in the Dominican Republic, many of them sugar field and construction workers and their descendants who crossed the border fleeing desperate poverty and violence in their native land.

The border force, which received training and $350,000 worth of scanning equipment from the U.S. military, was formed to fix a broken system in which Dominican authorities were accused of abusing migrants during deportations. (AP)
St. Fleur report finds information gap for after-school help

"The Special Commission on as well as getting to them. Information on the programs, nor is there a way to analyze gaps in service by age, by time of day, or by neighborhood." About 18 state agencies provide some type of service for children ages 5 to 19, but information gaps are widest for programs serving 14 to 18-year-olds, the report says. The report recommends increasing program access to underserved populations, especially low-income children, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth, and ethnic and racial minorities. "After school can't be an afterthought," said Rick Meters, executive director of the Massachusetts Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs' Woburn office. "I think inaction's a choice, [but] inaction has a price," he added.

The report calls for promoting more use of public buildings, maximizing the use of federal grants, studying existing transportation systems to find out how to better use them for the programs, and building a web-based information technology system for policymakers and consumers on the number of children served. It also recommends a program rating system, training and grant opportunities, and a database of programs throughout the state.

Teen reaches plea deal in gang rape and beating of Florida woman and her son

WEST PALM BEACH, Florida — A teenager charged in the horrifying gang rape and beating of a Haitian immigrant and her son agreed to a plea deal that will send him to prison for 20 years.

Jakaris Taylor, 16, pleaded guilty on Nov. 26 to sexual battery and burglary and will testify against three other teens charged in the June attack, according to the state attorney's office. He will be credited for 130 days already served.

Three other teens — 18, 17 and 14 — face charges including sexual battery, kidnapping and burglary. They could face life sentences if convicted. A woman told police that as many as 10 masked teens accosted her and her 12-year-old son in their apartment in a houing project. The teens are accused of raping and sodomizing the mother, forcing her at gunpoint to perform oral sex on her son, and beating both of them. The suspects then doused them with cleaning solutions in an attempt to destroy evidence, police said.

Taylor's lawyer, Chris Huddad, told The Palm Beach Post that the teen has expressed remorse and regret and wants a chance to have a family when he is released.

The accuser is satisfied with the plea deal, said state prosecutor Lanna Belohlavek. "She's hoping by having this defendant testify against the others, she won't have to — nor will her son have to — go through the trauma of reliving it," Belohlavek told the Post. (AP)

T: Mattapan trolleys back on track soon

An MBTA meeting to discuss progress on construction of the Mattapan Station last month announced much of the project will be finished soon, with operations on the Ashmont-Mattapan high speed trolley line expected to re-start by Dec. 22.

Led by the MBTA community liaison Pablo Calderon at the Mildred Avenue Community Center, a variety of community members attended the meeting, including some from the project's community task force, MBTA officials, and state Rep. Linda Dorcena Forry.

Marjorie Madden, MBTA project manager, announced the Mattapan station bus platform could be complete by the end of the month, along with the four renovated passenger stations. She circled the date of Dec. 22, when the trolley line will be operational again, though not all work will be complete on the stations.

"The project is 86 percent done, and the bus platform is near 90 percent done and will be done by the end of November," she told the group.

The trolley line has been replaced by shuttle bus service on Dorchester, Mattapan and Milton roads for the last year and a half.

B.C. High Student excels

Freymer Beaubrun of Mattapan, a senior at Boston College High School, has been recognized for placing among the top 1 percent of students in the National Achievement Scholarship Program. He is one of 3,000 outstanding National Achievement Program participants who will be brought to the attention of about 1,500 four-year colleges and universities in the United States. A roster of these students' names, high schools, and tentative college majors was sent to higher education admission officials to make them aware of their potential for success in college.
Randolph school system gets poor grades from state

By Catherine Williams

State House News Service

In an unusual move, the state Board of Education voted on Nov. 27 to declare the seven public schools within the Randolph School District as underperforming. The act requires state officials to determine over the next 90 days whether to assign school management responsibilities to a state-appointed receiver.

“If something doesn’t happen soon the school system is going to dissolve on itself,”Larry Azer, Randolph School Committee chairman, who was elected in 2003, said during a Board of Education meeting.

Failing MCAS scores and questionable spending decisions were among the reasons cited for the designation. A Randolph school official also said the schools there had gone a decade without new textbooks.

Three school districts – Greenfield, Pittsfield and Saugus – face challenges similar to the ones confronting Rand, said Joseph Rappa, executive director of the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability. The troubles facing Randolph are around the corner in other areas, Rappa told the News Service.

“It is a ghost of Christmas future. It is bigger than just Randolph,” Rappa said.

The Randolph district, which enrolls 6,643 students, joins three other underperforming school districts: Winchendon, Holyoke and Southbridge.

Seven board members, including chairman Paul Reville, voted in favor of what board members call “the label of underperforming.” Newly appointed board member Ruth Kaplan voted against it.

Astonished at the district’s worsening English and math MCAS scores since 2003 and a “history of spending abuses” by municipal officials and school board members, Azer said the budget cuts eliminating teachers, school supplies and the science curriculum, the Randolph school board approved a $68,000 contract buy-out package for joining Randolph superintendent Arthur Melia in 2004.

If the board votes to assign receiver Azer in Randolph, administration of federal, municipal and Chapter 70 education funding would fall out of the hands of community leaders and the Randolph school board.

If the board votes to assign a receiver, it would be the first time in the state’s history, according to Education officials.

Reville said during the meeting that he wanted officials to act quickly to complete the review in less than 90 days. Department of Education officials plan to analyze the budget decisions and board members discussed notifying the Attorney General’s office about looking into “serious allegations” over spending.

“We’ve got to get started on this and look deeper,” this puts the community on notice,” said Reville. The Randolph system has swallowed $12.5 million in budget cuts over the past five years, said Richard Silverman, the Randolph school superintendent.

For next year, the school needs a $1.5 million budget increase to meeting rising costs overall. The faculty is using 10-year old textbooks and teaching with the family telephoned “Jocelyn” (not her real name), the local school district’s Haitian parent liaison.

Using her own car, Joce lyny arranged to pick up the family to take them to the local transitional housing office. She spent the next few days with them to interpret, help complete the necessary paperwork and even provide food. Unable to find a space in local shelters for the family, the agency sent them to one on the North Shore. Jocelyne looked around and got them settled in with food and toiletries. She also looked for donations of cash, clothing and bedding.

After picking up the donated items, she delivered them to the family and shopped for other items they needed. A few days later, they learned that they would be transferred to temporary housing in Dorchester. Jocelyne took them there and arranged for transportation so the kids can return to school.

There are just some of the tasks that the parent liaisons who work with immigrant families take on, although their job responsibilities do not usually reflect them. However, they often feel obligated to provide this support because there is no one else to do so.

Parent liaisons such as Jocelyne can help connect immigrant families, the community and the school. When she heard that a used car was available for a needy Haitian family, she talked to all the parents and then gave it to the family who was best able to maintain it.

Liaisons also encourage parent participation by translating documents, interpreting at meetings and making calls for teachers and staff. They are also effective in explaining to these parents the school’s expectations. Furthermore, while some parents may distrust teachers and administrators, they do trust the liaisons to represent them fairly and respectfully. For example, one father refused to sign Individual Education Plan forms for his son until he talked to Jocelyne about them. Some liaisons have taken students to see their eyes examined in order to get eyeglasses. They have also transported parents to and from meetings. Immigrant parent liaisons also advocate for parents and students who are unable to advocate for themselves. They make sure parents are treated fairly by teachers and administrators.

In addition, they coordinate community and school services. These individuals are invaluable as they also educate American teachers and staff about Haitian culture and schools. Conversely, they educate Haitians about the importance of the school and work to help them understand the need to educate their kids.”

This mother also believes that when immigrant parents don’t speak English and can’t talk to their children’s teachers, major problems can arise. She continues, “The kids know you can’t speak English; so they do whatever they want in school. Without Jocelyne, there would be a void because I wouldn’t be able to communicate with the teachers and stay involved in my kids’ education.”

It is critical for school districts with a substantial Haitian population to support students and families by hiring parent liaisons. They give parents who feel voiceless and powerless a say in their children’s schooling. Parent liaisons are a lifeline for Haitian families.

Yolette Bokette, a veteran educator writes monthly for the Boston Haitian Reporter.

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Justice delayed, once again, for Jean-Juste

By Brian Concannon, Jr.

Rev. Gérard Jean-Juste’s struggles with Haiti’s criminal justice system have good grounds for strengthening the system’s health for the last three years. The latest episode, on Monday, Nov. 26, showed that rule of law is alive in Haiti—but kicking.

“Fr. Gerry,” is a Catholic priest well-known as an advocate for immigrants in the U.S. and the poor in Haiti. He helped head the Interim Government of the Defaulter dictatorship in the 1970s and studied at Northeastern University. Since October 2004, Fr. Jean-Juste has led a staunch array of a murder, treason, weapons possession, disturbing the peace and criminal conspiracy. Haiti’s unconstitutional Interim Government arrested Jean-Juste three times and jailed him for a total of seven months.

No one has ever produced any evidence of criminal activity for Fr. Gerry. He told the court on Monday “My only weapon is my rosary,” and there was no witness or police report in the file to contradict him.

Gérard Latortue, who headed the Interim Government (March 2004-May 2006) and made Fr. Gerry’s persecution a personal priority, is now back home in Boca Raton, replaced by an elected government headed by President René Préval. Jean-Juste has been out of prison since July 2006, when he was released provisionally to seek treatment for leukemia in Miami. His lawyers have succeeded, was released provisionally to seek treatment for leukemia in Miami. His lawyers have succeeded.

Jean-Juste’s appeal was dismissed in two days in the absence of proof. Mr. Latortue, who has been so widely denounced by the rights groups and members of Congress as political persecution by an undemocratic regime. The Mi-
om-tout (“the whole”) government, said he was in jail, thousands of other men and women arrested by the Interim Government are stuck in the same legal limbo.

Fr. Jean-Juste has now faced charges under the Préval administration for as long as he did under the Latortue regime. As the office-gate editor, Fr. Gerry is considered to be on trial.” I, Fr. Jean-Juste filed his appeal, and seven months since a previous appeal dismissed in April. The governor, Fr. Jean-Juste and his lawyers will be able to make their case freely, and hundreds of prisoners turned out without incident. The hearing was orderly, and the judge dismissed Jean-Juste at his request.

The prosecutor formally recognized that there is no evidence against Fr. Jean-Juste and recommended dismissal of all charges.

But the judges declined to dismiss the case, claiming they needed more time to review the file. The filing date was July 2006, when he was released provisionally to seek treatment for leukemia in Miami. His lawyers have succeeded.

One of Beacon Hill’s most publicly contentious issues of the last several years, dormant in 2007, is likely to return in early 2008, with advocates pushing Gov. Deval Patrick to use his education reform package to propose public higher education discounts for unauthorized immigrants.

With Patrick, Senate President Therese Murray, and House Speaker Salvatore DiMasi all vocal supporters of extending in-state rates to unauthorized immigrants, hopes for quick action on the measure, which would take effect in January 2008, were high heading into this year.

But, while immigration issues have raged on the national scene, the Massachusetts policy of allowing resident discounts to immigrants who obtain a high school-level education from a Massachusetts school have been largely silent, eyeing passage through Patrick’s omnibus education reform, expected as early as March.

“Right now, our strongest champion is the governor, so the vehicle that has been identified in terms of higher ed reform is the Readiness Project,” said Ali Noorani, executive director of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition.

“We want to make sure we do this in a way that we win.”

Patrick told the News Service, “I think it’s an issue of basic fairness, and also an issue of economic sense for the governor.”

The governor also hinted the administration could pursue the policy change through other avenues. “There’s a question even whether it is done by the legislature. It’s not been a priority over the last two years. We are doing the best we can do. I mean, we have been looking at all of those questions independent of the Readiness Project.”

Patrick’s Readiness Project, which the administration is hoping will serve as a legacy cornerstone, is exploring ways to remake the state education system and the state policy radar, immigration has remained high since the springtime. So I don’t want to get ahead of the governor,” Noorani said.

Asking if the tuition plan could be included, Patrick replied, “I don’t want to pre-judge the Readi-

ness Project. They’ve got a lot of work to do on a lot of different fronts. So I don’t expect their attention until the springtime. So I don’t want to get ahead of them.”

Since losing in the House and failing from the state policy radar, immigration has remained high on the national agenda. Democrats’ appetite for pushing through a politically palatable reform is the key to shutting down the Republican primary. Immigration reform efforts have likely cooled atop Democrats’ appetite for pushing through a politically
difficult reform.

House Minority Leader Bradley Jones (D-North Reading) said that, despite the removal of a GOP chief executive as a veto threat, national failure of immigration reform efforts has likely cooled atop Democrats’ appetite for pushing through a politically
difficult reform.

“I think despite the fact that the governor, the Senate president, and the speaker are all in favor of it, I think they realize that out amongst the public it’s a lead-pipe issue that they don’t want to have tied around their waist, or maybe around their neck,” Jones said.

Noorani calls driver’s licenses “a completely different animal” from in-state tuition rates. Advocates say between 400 and 600 students would likely take advantage of the in-state rates.

Several House members who opposed the proposal in 2006 have since left, with nine opposition votes and five supporting votes leaving that chamber. Minority Whip Lida Harkins and Speaker Pro Tem Thomas Petrolati, defecting to vote against it.

Warren Tolman, an attorney at Holland and Knight and former state senator, said, “I think that’s how it’ll get dealt with, if it is dealt with, as part of the bigger package. Or as an education piece that’s tied around a budget.”

“The key leaders in this state want to see this done, and I think we just want to make sure it can be done,” Noorani said.

“It’s premature for anyone to begin talking about votes,” said DiMasi spokesperson David Guarino. Ali Noorani, “We’ve just begun vetting this piece of legislation. We want to have extensive public input as well as fiscal analysis and economic analysis, and that’s going to be a lengthy process.”

But, said Tolman, “There are probably a hundred one thing that the governor, the Senate president, and the speaker of the House are in line with that, for whatever reason, won’t rise to the top and get done.”

Patrick was widely hailed by the immigrant community as an answer to their hopes, after many had felt that former Gov. Mitt Romney had dealt harshly with immigrant policy. During the 2006 gubernatorial campaign, both Patrick and a Democratic rival, former Attorney General Thomas Reilly, campaigned in favor of in-state rates, Reilly at one point holding press conferences in the capitol to tout his support.
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By Martine Louis
Report Staff

An AIDS research article released in late October that directly linked Haitians to the spread of the virus in the United States is being criticized by some members of the Haitian community — and local organizations are mobilizing to fight back. The chief author of the study, however, is defending his team’s work.

The study in question — “The emergence of HIV/AIDS in the Americas and beyond” — was produced by a team led by Dr. Michael Worobey and was published by the National Academy of Sciences in November. The scientists analyzed archived blood samples from five of the first AIDS patients identified in America, all Haitian immigrants. Their findings show that the first strain of the virus discovered in the U.S. in 1969 is the dominant strain of the AIDS virus in most countries outside sub-Saharan Africa.

In his article, Worobey concludes that “almost all the viruses in those countries descended from the one that emerged from Haiti.”

The study outraged many members of the Haitian community and became a hotly discussed topic on Haitian e-mail chains and Internet chat boards. In Boston, protest preparations turned into a heated debate at a Nov. 9 meeting organized at the headquarters of the Haitian-American Public Health Initiative (HAPHI) in Mattapan Square. Those in the room were initially divided over what was right and wrong in the study, which many felt was placing blame squarely on Haitians.

“The white Americans have identified us as the cause so they can eliminate Haitians from their society!” one man cried out.

“He [Worobey, an assistant professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at The University of Arizona] has produced an educated theory in a field in which he has a degree — this is not a conspiracy,” another responded.

“If we continue to fight among ourselves and point fingers we will never get anywhere,” Oswald Neptune interjected. “We cannot wait for scientific results. We need to educate our community and help ourselves.”

Reached at his office in Arizona this week, Worobey said the purpose of the three-year study was not to assign any blame to any group, but to aid in the search for a vaccine.

“I knew in some quarters that linking the virus to Haiti would potentially raise some concerns, but for the better part of ten years I have been tracking the virus from Central Africa to elsewhere — which is the roadmap for useful vaccines and other control methods,” Worobey said. “Whether it be Haitian men and women or homosexual men and women there is no sense in blaming a group of people for a virus we did not know existed. Instead we as a community should be extra sympathetic to those who are infected with the virus.”

“Honestly, of all the criticism I have heard or read about over the web — none of them hold any truth,” Worobey continued. “Yes we did analyze the blood of Haitian immigrants, but that was not on bias terms as many people believe. We also tested 117 different strains from all around the world. I feel the public needs to look at the whole picture of what we have done here and not just look for reasons to reject it.”

“Point blank, Haitians are blameless in this, that’s how I feel about it. The last thing we need is for this virus to cause more division,” Worobey told the Reporter.

At the Nov. 9 meeting, HAPHI and H.A.U. decided to combine their efforts to coordinate a fundraising campaign in order to provide Haitian communities with the necessary financial means to engage with other institutions to respond to Worobey’s article.

“We have to inform our neighbors and engage them in the fight,” said Neptune. “Let us become mobilized in giving a collective response.”

“The main thing is to work together and combine resources with other committees in various cities,” said Wilner Augustine of Haitian Americans United, Inc. “Our objective is to work together with physicians and Haitian medical organizations (such as the Harvard AIDS Institute and MGH) so we can present strong scientific results and overcome the challenges we have recently been faced with.”

A full version of the Worobey report can be viewed online at www.pnas.org/content/vol104/issue47.
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What are some good tips for school age children and teenagers?
* Aim for at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Try to serve whole grain breads and pastas, which contain fiber. Make sure they are getting enough calcium by giving them low-fat milk and eating other dairy products. Whenever possible, eat well-balanced, home cooked meals together as a family and have your children participate in meal preparation.

How can I encourage my children to stay active?
Encourage them to participate in fun activities that will get them up and moving such as walking, dancing, exercising and playing games and sports. School age children and adolescents should be physically active for at least one hour every day. Limit TV and videogame time to no more than two hours per day and avoid putting a TV in your child’s bedroom.

Which types of beverages should my child drink?
Water and low-fat milk are the healthiest beverages for children and they should be drinking them regularly with their meals. Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages and sodas. Limit juice to four ounces a day. Sparkling water with a slice of lime, lemon or orange can be a tasty alternative.

Did you Know?
A 20-ounce bottle of soda contains the equivalent of 17 teaspoons of sugar.

Children’s Helps Kids Make Healthy Choices
Children today are more at risk for obesity than they were 20 years ago. In the U.S., nearly 20 percent of children and adolescents are overweight or obese. Another 16 percent are at risk for being overweight. In Boston, a recent study showed that 14 percent of toddlers from low-income families are overweight.

Children’s Hospital Boston is supporting programs on site and in the community to help children and families live healthy lives. The One Step Ahead GSA and Optimal Weight for Life programs at Children’s teach patients and families about the importance of being active and maintaining a healthy diet. Children’s Fitness in the City Program supports 10 Boston community health centers, including Martha Elliot Health Center’s I’m In Charge program, to educate patients and families on nutrition and connect them to fitness and recreation opportunities in their community. For more information about those programs or how to live a healthy and active life, please talk to your doctor or contact your local community health center.

Elsie Taveras, MD, MPH
Director of the One Step Ahead Program

Q. What is your position and responsibilities at Children’s?
A. At Children’s, I am an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and the Director of the One Step Ahead Program at our Primary Care Center. The One Step Ahead Program is a multidisciplinary, childhood overweight prevention clinic.

Q. What is the most rewarding part of your job?
A. Helping families make healthy lifestyle changes that will reduce their risk of chronic diseases.

Q. What is the most challenging part of your job?
A. Overcoming the common barriers that prevent the families I see from eating healthy meals and being physically active.

Q. If there is one message you would like to convey to parents of kids who are obese, what would it be?
A. Small changes can make a world of difference. Many families I see think they need to replace every food item in their diet and work out at a gym every day. The truth is that even small changes, such as eliminating soda from your diet and walking to school, can be beneficial and a good starting point for other lifestyle changes.

For more helpful health information for your child and family, visit us at www.childrenshospital.org.
Back home you were living the most prominent life. When you are in America you become nothing.

As an illegal alien, school is scarcely an option, you cannot file taxes and employment is limited.

"Because that’s how you want it, but because doors are slamming in your face—or never even open at all," said Patrick. "For us it is almost unbearable to live here."

Dormercant, who left Haiti in 2003, graduated from U quam University in Canada with a degree in computer science. Shortly after he moved to Massachusetts where he started his own computer service company, I T T P L A G.

"I love my job, but I wanted to pursue my dreams," said Dormercant. "For as long as I can remember I have always loved art and aspired to be an actor and filmmaker."

After attending classes at New York Film Academy and Boston University, Dormercant worked on a nearly two-year journey to produce San Papyen. Nearly 100 men and women auditioned for a role in the film, but Dormercant says the diverse cast seemed to come together on its own.

"These people just fit these roles perfectly. I was looking for well known leaders among the Haitian community because I knew they could breathe life into these characters."

Between contacting immigration offices and researching individual cases, Hans says his goal was to illuminate "ignored" stories.

"I chose to focus on this issue because it is something we all relate to," said Patrick. "We all face the same struggles no matter what nationality. It’s a hot topic, one that needs to be discussed. Hopefully this is something the community can appreciate and learn from."

Along with special guest speaker, State Rep. Linda Dorcena Forry, the premiere event— to be held in the U Mass-Boston science building’s second floor from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. — will feature local artists such as Barbara Cau see, Kewold Elisey, Ariole Grandchamps, Eugene Simeon and ADF Productions. San Papyen will also be screened in Canada, Haiti, Georgia and New York. Dormercant said.

Tickets ($25 per person) are available beginning on Dec. 1 at the following locations: Privilege Restaurant in Mat tapan, Thelmaque Laundry on Blue Hill Ave., Team Venus Production on Morton Street and Las Vegas Restaurant at Hyde Park. For more information on San Papyen and additional ticket locations call Hans Patrick at 617-848-9017 or visit www. sanpapye.com.

Patrick is also the founder of Motion Picture Association of Haiti—a community website where actors and filmmakers (or those interested) can create their own websites in order to network and promote their work. For more information visit www.mpahaiti.org

Hans Patrick Dormercant produced and directed the film, “San Papyen”, which will debut at U Mass-Boston on Dec. 16. Photo courtesy Hans Patrick Dormercant

**By Pete Stidman**

**News Editor**

A center founded to help writers out of their back phase is touting for well-crafted memoirs of Mattapann’s olden days. The catch is, they’re after the stories that haven’t been written yet.

Seniors in Mattappen may have already seen literature promoting Grub Street Inc.’s Memoir Project from the city of Boston’s Elderly Com mission. Participants would take an eight-week class to learn the rudiments of memoir writing, produce a series of books collecting the works. Grub Street and the city published the first such collection earlier this year, Born Before Plastic, with se nior memoirs from the North End, Roxbury and South Boston.

“We get seniors that think they don’t have any good stories to tell, but within a week we’re rocking with their stories,” said Michelle Seaton, who teaches some of the classes.

“There’s stories about the depression, stories from men who’ve gone to war and come home, family crises... They’re just incredible stories.”

“Finding two bottles of bootleg whiskey under the driver’s seat, the policeman escorted Ed die to the stable with the team, confiscating his peddler’s and teamster’s licenses,” wrote Mary Dorian of South Boston in Born Before Plastic.

“My memory includes the quarrels that ensued, the ‘How could you’ and ‘You must have known better’ and ‘What are we going to do now?’”

Other memoirs include a pioneering woman entering the male-domi nated world of barbers and a father breaking out a secret cauldron of wine in a North End basement to welcome his sons home from World War II.

The book is being distributed to local Boston book stores.

Grub Street Inc. is a writing center downtown Boston that teaches the craft and business of the written word.

To sign up for the Memo ir Project call Kaysea Cole at 617-635-3344

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In Mattapan, prescription for health center is new building

By Martine Louis

The Mattapan Community Health Center hopes to construct a new, three-story facility in place of its present building at 1425 Blue Hill Avenue. The organization met with neighborhood merchants last month about its plans and has embarked on an ambitious capital campaign to raise the $18-20 million needed to fund the project.

The center, founded in 1972 by local resident and nurse Edna Smith, was first located further up Blue Hill Ave. It moved into its present location in 1980. Today, MCHC serves 7,000 patients annually, but boasts a limited 13,000 square foot space.

“That’s not nearly enough to meet the needs of our growing community,” said Dr. Azzie Young, president and CEO of the health center, who explained the current facility cannot accommodate much needed additional staffing.

With the goal to present the community with an updated three-story health center by 2010, MCHC purchased additional land in 1989 and is now working to rebuild their facility at current site. Young says the health center is currently looking for a raise in 2009 of $18-20 million for the period of construction.

With the support of partnering hospitals—Boston Medical Center and Brigham and Women’s—the health center is in a predevelopment phase of acquiring architects and real estate teams. That process, which began in 2005, is “85 percent done” according to Dr. Young.

Construction, set to begin in 2009, will cost an estimated $18-20 million dollars.

“MCHC has the support of our city and state, but we need our community,” said Young. “We have to pull together and demonstrate a collective response for those who are less fortunate.”

Preparing to launch a capital campaign early next year, Young has collaborated with neighborhood association and faith-based organization in order to promote awareness. On Oct. 25, Young met with business leaders in Mattapan to discuss fundraising strategies.

Edward Jay, Jr., owner of the Mattapan Car Wash and Quick Lube, says the immediate community is the place to start.

“The health center plays a major role in the community, therefore, we need to generate as much support as we can to keep their services alive,” said Jay, who also serves as secretary for the Mattapan Board of Trade. “Residents and merchants are very excited about this project, but we cannot finance it internally amongst ourselves. If we can present a solidarity we can motivate the larger corporations to join our cause,” Jay said.

Young says MCHC is committed to making a difference and has the potential to do a lot more if not for their lack of space. Diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol and cancer are highly common amongst Mattapan residents and those of surrounding neighborhoods. “Mattapan has some startling health problems and we want to lead the charge in providing a solution,” said Young. “One of our biggest missions is early detection and intervention and with more space we hope to provide on-site mammography breast cancer screening, behavioral health and social wellness programs, a teen clinic and eye-care services. If we expand our facility we can expand our services and better address the many health care needs of our neighbors.”
Spotlight On:
System Band

BY STEVE DESROSIERS
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

System Band was cradled by one of Haiti’s most accomplished and sophisticated pop bands. Its founding members were the core contributors of the legendary Haitian band, Les Freres DeJean.

System lead singer Isnard Douby and Fred DeJean grew up as friends in the middle class Haitian neighborhood of Petion-Ville where both attended the Lycee Petion alongside other ambitious young musicians, like Herman Nau, who would go on to modernize popular Haitian music. At the Lycee, these men — who grew up listening and emulating a rich mix of native music, American swing and jazz — received a well-rounded musical education.

In pre-Duvalier Haiti, the island's working and middle class schools gave students a basic but rigorous education in the fundamentals of music. Many students of the era learned not only how to read and write music but also gained a firm command of the French and Spanish languages. This education gave the musicians of that generation a wide-eyed sophistication that shone through their compositions.

The early DeJean formation included the likes of guitarist Reginald Benjamin, talented self-taught artists like drummer Ernest Ramponneau hailing from the impoverished streets of Port-au-Prince’s Bel Air neighborhood where artists like Coupe Cloue would eventually emerge. The brothers Fred, Camille, Andre and Philip DeJean led the ensemble alongside stalwarts like singer Yvon Louissaint, Hughes Isaac and the gifted rhythm guitarist Durcys Dubuisson. These men would forge a hard won place for themselves in America.

DeJean’s success led to its eventual establishment of the vocalists all but gave System the advantages of Dejean’s releases and unleashed a more pronounced and untamed horn section to boot. The DeJean precision and some of its exactitude was missing but the melodic progressions of the vocalists all but gave System the advantages of DeJean’s difficult musical journey.

By the time of the release of their first album, “Bam Passe”, the band was renamed “System Band” and boasted of guitarist Reginald Benjamin, chorus Lesly Douby, bassist Ernest Vincent, drummer Ernest Ramponneau, and a new rhythm guitarist Ronald Smith among others. The album “Bam Passe” (Let me through) with its nods to American Jazz standards had all the fire of Dejean’s releases and continued to release albums and, under Isnard Douby’s command, remains one of the tightest live acts around.

The end of the ‘90s also marked the end of System’s fine creative streak. The albums that followed monumen
tal albums like “Kote’m Ye La” were marred by attempts to adjust new trends in music and the changing tastes of a younger concert going public. The band was also not immune to internal strife as key musicians like Ernest Vincent and Ronald Smith left the group for other musical ventures. System continues to release albums and, under Isnard Douby’s command, remains one of the tightest live acts around.

The Reporter Thanks:
Patrick St. Germain of International Perfumes and Patrick St. Germain of International Perfumes and

Discount for availing the CDs for review. All releases are available at 860 Morton Street Dorchester, MA (617) 825-6151.

Back issues and information about the reporters can be found by visiting www.BostonHaitian.com.

Spotlight On:
System Band
Season’s Greetings

to all of our neighbors in the community
from the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority

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CONVENTION CENTER OF THE YEAR
What’s for Breakfast?

By Marie Ruth Auguste Special to the Reporter

What do you eat for breakfast or do you even eat breakfast? Recently I was having an e-mail discussion with a reader of Ruth’s Recipes about breakfast being the most important meal of the day. We both agreed that eating breakfast is smart, but making a healthy choice always presents the challenge of time.

I’m sure many of you can relate to this. Some days you’re so busy and pressed for time that you simply skip breakfast, period. Other days you buy your breakfast on the go, usually when you get your morning coffee.

The fact is mornings are busy, but if you continue to skip that first meal or rely on those coffee shop bagels, donuts and muffins, you’re setting your self up to feel tired or hungry before noon. Additionally, you’re prepping yourself for some weight gain that you’ll have to deal with one day or another.

Personally, I will never forget gaining those 35 unwanted pounds a few years ago. When I sat and thought about it I realized that there was a major shift in my diet. I was eating a bagel, cream-cheese and jelly every morning. Not to mention the coffee loaded with cream and sugar to go with it.

You see, in addition to being high in calories, muffins, donuts, bagels and other refined carbohydrates are digested relatively fast. This loads your body with blood sugar (glucose) which subsequently triggers a surge of insulin to lower your blood sugar, all of this leads to a drop in energy.

You get where this is going: Before you know it you need a pick-me-up and this goes back and forth all day long. The point is, eating a healthy breakfast is a good and needed habit. This will improve your metabolism (which is helpful in weight management) and you’ll feel great all morning long.

So, this is the part where people like my brother, while enjoying that second donut of the morning, say things like, “Who has time to make a healthy breakfast?”

Maybe you’re thinking the same thing, but no worries. I have the perfect tip to help you have a healthy breakfast in no time. This is tasty and will give you lasting energy.

Note: To maximize time in the morning, boil a large pot of steel cut oatmeal on Sunday evening (like double the servings). In the morning simply microwave the amount that you want to eat for a minute or so then pop it in your blender and add the other ingredients (milk, sugar etc.) Serve warm though I eat this at room temperature on the go and it’s still delicious. Steel cut oats take much longer to cook than rolled oats but the extra time is worth the benefits including the fact that there is way more fiber in steel cut oats. Again, because extra time is needed it helps to cook a large batch that will last a few days.

Some refer to this style of oatmeal as “Irish oats” to me it tastes like “Labouyi Flé” which was one of my favorites growing up. Enjoy!!

The following are some known benefits to eating oatmeal: Oats can help lower bad cholesterol a.k.a LDL. Oat protein and natural anti-oxidants promote heart health. Oatmeal provides sustained energy through the morning, this will prevent you from wanting that donut or the extra cream/sugar loaded coffee. Additionally, the healthy doses of fiber found in oatmeal (coupled with the flaxseed meal for lubrication-part of my recipe) promote regularity. You’ll notice that going to the bathroom will become a regular part or your daily routine. That is great news for your colon. Yeah!

You can find organic steel cut oats at food stores such as Trader Joe’s and Whole Foods. Steel cut oats are usually more expensive than the popular rolled oats such as the brand but the extra fiber is worth the extra $$ plus a little bit goes a long way.

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**The best Oatmeal (Labouyi Awvan)**

- Make sure to pre-heat your oven to 350 F.

- Combine water, cinnamon stick, salt and bring to a boil on high heat, slowly stir in the steel cut oats and cover and cook uncovered for 45 minutes stirring (with a wooden spoon) periodically to prevent sticking, mix well and place in blender. Add milk, honey or sugar, vanilla, salt, and reduce heat to medium low to bring to a simmer. This will make creamier and more delicious than the regular oatmeal.

- In the morning simply microwave the amount that you want to eat for a minute or so then pop it in your blender and add the other ingredients (milk, sugar etc.) Serve warm though I eat this at room temperature on the go and it’s still delicious. Steel cut oats are usually more expensive than the popular rolled oats such as the brand but the extra fiber is worth the extra $$ plus a little bit goes a long way.

Marie Ruth Auguste

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**Marie Ruth Auguste**
**Immigration News**

Florida immigration agency ordered to shut down

**TALLAHASSEE, Florida** - A Naples, Florida-based organization that claimed it could help illegal immigrants obtain permanent residency in Canada will shut down and refund all fees paid.

**Florida state Attorney General Bill McCollum has announced.**

The Jerusalem Haitian Community Center made "flawed and potentially deceptive" claims in its immigrant assistance, McCollum's office said in a statement.

Calls to the Jerusalem Haitian Community Center went unanswered.

Investigators believe about 450 people, mainly Haitian immigrants, paid the center "donations" of up to $400 each over the last two or three years for help in securing Canadian residency. Up to $170,000 was believed to have been collected.

McCollum's office said the center has already refunded about $32,000 to its clients. It has been ordered to return the rest within two years, to dissolve within four months and to reimburse the state for the costs of its investigation.

"While the state Attorney General's Office cannot enforce federal immigration law in this case, my office can investigate potentially misleading or deceptive practices," McCollum said, "and I believe this organization was engaging in questionable practices."

The Florida organization assisted hundreds of immigrants in making their way from Florida to Canada in recent months at a time when U.S. authorities are stepping up sweeps at workplaces for illegal immigrants. In Canada, they presented themselves as refugees seeking asylum and many of them are awaiting hearings.

Authorities in Windsor, Ontario, have complained of difficulties paying for the costs of social services if the arrivals continued.

Canadian immigrant rights advocates expressed concern that the outcome of such immigrants being granted asylum was poor.

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**Immigration Question & Answer**

**Just Starting Work? Meet the I-9 Form**

**Q.**

I was just hired by a local company and I have been asked to fill out a Form I-9. What is the purpose of this form, and does the federal government get a copy?

**A.**

Federal law requires US employers to verify the employment eligibility and identity of their employees. Employees are required to retain an Employment Eligibility Verification form, Form I-9, for their employees, including US citizens. The employer fills out Part 1 of the form with personal information. The employer must verify employment eligibility and identity. Both employers and employees can be subject to federal prosecution for false statements or the use of false documents in connection with the I-9 form.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has just announced changes in the list of documents that are acceptable proof of both employment eligibility and identity. Those who lack the documents listed must prove identity with one approved document (such as a driver’s license) and employment eligibility with another (such as a U.S. birth certificate). The full list of acceptable documents is provided on a chart that comes with Form I-9, which you can find online at uscis.gov/files/forms/i-9.pdf.

Only the version of the I-9 form dated June 5, 2007, is valid for use with employees hired after Nov. 7, 2007 (with a 30-day transitional grace period). The new form will be announced by USCIS in the Federal Register.

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That’s Ambassador Wyclef to you...

Wyclef Jean was issued a red diplomatic passport as goodwill ambassador on October 18 by President Rene Preval. The official honored were presented to him by his uncle Raymond Joseph, Haiti’s ambassador to the United States, during a ceremony at theabled SOB’s restaurant in New York City.

‘Clef, who is the spokesperson for the Voila telephone company—formerly known as Comcel—was feted at the event by VIPs, including the founder and CEO of Voila,. Also in attendance was the Haitian consul from Chicago, music mogul Russell Simmons, and Miami City’s Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones along with a number of some well noted Haitian media personalities such as Elizabeth Guerin, President of Imaginart Media Inc., marketing company whose firm jointly works with Voila on numerous projects. The lead singer of Carimi, Richard Cave was also spotted as Daniel Beaubrun of Lataye along with DJ Nicky Mix.

"If it were not for hip hop I would not be standing here tonight," Jean told the crowd. “I promise never to make you ashamed,” he said after joking that New York police should now take notice: he’s officially a diplomat. "Life has changed for the rapper," he said. “Memoirs of an Immigrant”, Jean’s latest album, was scheduled to drop on December 4. The surprise instead was Jean being honored with the deserving red passport given to very few. Still many of Jean’s guest received a sample of the upcoming Wyclef Jean Carnival Vol. II CD.

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