

Haiti Update – Delugé Class & Graduation June 2019 Trip

Thursday, June 27, 2019

I was up about 6:00 am, and things were quiet from the ladies' bedroom. Valentine and I got through in the bathroom, and about that time there was a constant demand for our bathroom. Initially, they had been a little shy about traipsing through our bedroom to go to the bathroom, but by Thursday morning that shyness had disappeared. I think their shyness was they did not want to disturb us and our space, but their needs overcame that shyness. Helen's room was downstairs since she does not do stairs very well.

We were to furnish our own breakfast so that the kitchen staff would not have to get up early and prepare breakfast. I had some granola bars, and of course, coffee had been made by the time I got down to the coffeepot.

We were to leave at 7:00 am, but that morning, 7:00 am came at 7:20 am. We had three loaded vehicles. There were 5 ladies, 3 instructors, Rony (my babysitter), Noel for security, Lophane, and two drivers. With me, that is 14.

During the loading of the vehicles, Lophane came out with a broom, and I thought that was going to be added to the vehicles transporting us, but he used it for another purpose. The cord running through the edge of a tarp had been pulled out, and he tied the cord to the broom handle and pushed it back into place.

After about two and a half hours on the road with no problems, we passed the entrance to Decameron. In less than a half mile further, we turned off Route 1 at Delugé. The school was probably a half mile from Route 1. It was a very rough road with turns about every block, with most of it uphill. We parked and walked about 100 yards to the church where we would meet. We were there by 10 am.

The first thing to occur was VBS for about one hour. Apparently, 100 children were scheduled, but they had about 150 children. All were accommodated and had a good time.

I sat in the back of the room, and a female dog came in and looked around. She came over to me, and I petted her head with one finger for a while and then scratched her behind the ears. She stayed for about half an hour before she wandered off.

As soon as the children left, we set up and started the Disaster-Resistant Construction School. Sem, Nedjie, and Ronald shared the teaching duties. Chaudry had other commitments and could not come with us.

The first problem occurred when it was discovered that someone had forgotten to bring a computer to run the PowerPoint projector. Since I had mine, it was used. The PowerPoint files were on jump-sticks that I and each of the team had.



A generator in a separate building was fired up to provide the electricity we needed. Shortly all available outlets had cell phones plugged in for charging.

We ended up with 15 students. 3 of them were ladies. One of the men was the pastor of the church. There were lots of questions and lots of interest.

Lophane decided that I had not had enough breakfast, so he handed me a sandwich on a foot-long bun. My lunchroom was the classroom where the generator for running the projection equipment was located. About 15 minutes later the lunch for the students and the instructors arrived. After I finished eating, I rejoined them. The meals that I and the others from the US eat are fixed to a higher degree of sanitation, to keep us from getting stomach problems. The Haitians are resistant to some “bugs” that bother those who are not from Haiti.

As soon as the food containers were empty, the female dog and others were available to do the dishes (non-reusable Styrofoam containers.) During the afternoon, she came in and laid at my feet. Apparently, a little petting produced a friend.



We were discussing confined masonry construction, and the walls of the church were pointed out as one side being infill masonry construction and the other simple masonry construction next to concrete columns.

It was noted that the walls and the columns were not always parallel.

We discussed how both could fail in an earthquake or in a hurricane. One of the students stated that the structure was built with

columns and a roof with the idea that the wall would be woven mats (see the woven mats at the top of the photo). We did have more room and better ventilation than at Port-au-Prince.

In looking over the infill masonry wall, I noticed that there was some cord tied in a loop between two of the walls and encapsulating the column. The pieces of cord were about 5 feet above the dirt floor. I asked if the cord was being used to keep the walls from falling over. There was some lively discussion, and Nedjie pointed out that there had been a wedding there and the cords were used to hold bouquets of flowers. That made much more sense than that the cords were to hold the walls from falling over. The discussion stressed the need to tie wall panels and columns together.

Shortly after lunch, someone brought an electric fan. It was set up and pointed at me. I objected since I knew that others were hot. We ended up setting it to oscillate so that everyone could get a little use out of it.

After the class was over, we headed to Decameron. Since there was going to be a delay in getting into the rooms, we were told to go over to the restaurant, which is a

buffet, and have a snack. Nedjie was walking with me, and she asked if she could fill my plate for me. I said yes and did not have to worry about spilling anything as I filled my plate and carried it to the table. Did I say that I was hot and tired? When we sat down, the waiter brought us water and then the wine steward brought red wine. Nedjie indicted that I needed wine. He poured it, so I decided to have my one glass of alcoholic beverage per year with Nedjie and other team members. Lophane had to point out that he had never seen me drink except at communion. I explained why I am not a big drinker. I proposed a toast to Nedjie, my granddaughter, who is the most beautiful lady in the world except for my wife. She said something in Creole that I did not quite get all of, but the message was, "That is a lot of bullshit but keep it up."

After the snack, we got our room assignments. Rony, Lophane, and I were on the 3rd floor. On the flight of stairs between the 2nd and the 3rd floors there is one step that is about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch greater than the others. First time coming down, I thought I was going to fall. After that, I hung on to the banister rather than just depend on my cane for support.

After I got to our room, I took a 2-hour nap while some of the others went swimming. I had not brought swimming trunks since that would have reduced the number of books I could bring by one.

After the nap and starting to work on class certificates, we went to supper. It was good, but not up to the standards that I had eaten there before. Possibly with the inflation in Haiti, Decameron is suffering financially.

Leaving the restaurant, I saw Ronald (one of the instructors), and he introduced me to a very refined lady. As we were talking, Rony and Nedjie came up. Rony was walking Nedjie to her room. I suspected she had had another glass of wine or two. (At Decameron, everything is included without any extra charges, so if one wants to have several drinks, one can.)

Shortly after getting to the room, Rony arrived. We talked a little, and then I got back to the computer to work on certificates. I got 10 of the 15 needed certificates for the Delugé class printed. Then the printer quit working. The ink cartridge was exhausted, and HP no longer makes that variety of ink cartridge. (On Friday Lophane got the certificates we needed to be printed for \$35.00. That was expensive, but it was needed.) Later I learned that Lophane had sent Rony and a driver with instructions on where to hunt for a place which could print the certificates, even if they had to go to Port-au-Prince. They only had to go halfway to Port-au-Prince.

Rony and I both went to bed at about the same time. Lophane came in later and during the night received a phone call and departed for a while. Apparently, he does not need as much sleep as I do.

Friday, June 28, 2019

During the Thursday afternoon session, Lophane had decided and announced that due to the heat, we needed to start the class at 8:00 am rather than later so we could end earlier. The restaurant opens at 7:00 am, so Rony and I were there to eat. For breakfast, there is various prepared food, but one can also have an omelet made to order or eggs cooked any way you like. I ordered an omelet. Behind me in line

was Gil Bailie. He was a friend that I had not yet met. He was getting eggs over easy. We got to talking, and I found that his group is looking at putting in a trade school in San Marc. The Mayor had already donated land for the school. When he found out what I did, he got interested. Soon I was meeting his team and answering lots of questions. Their website is – www.schoolsforHaiti.com.

In the process, I met Milka, the lady who manages their affairs in Haiti. She is from the US, studied at the University of Chicago, and her parents are Haitian. I also met his team of about 8 people. As we were talking, Nedjie came in, I introduced her, and she talked about our school. Lophane came in, and I introduced him. I stated that Lophane was the one who made the decision concerning what we did.

They have my contact information, and I promised to send Quality Concrete from Crap to anyone who sent me a mailing address. (I had a Haitian Creole copy to show them, but no English versions with me.) That evening I found I had one extra copy of the Haitian Creole version, and I left it with them the following morning.

Then I went and ate my cold omelet, but it was worth it. This delay resulted in us not getting to the church for the class at 8:00 am as planned, but closer to 9:00 am.

When we went to get into the vehicles, I noticed that someone had put out food for the local birds. There were two very large lizards eating it. They looked a lot like a 6-lined racerunner which we have in Texas but were closer to 18 inches long rather than the 9 or 10 inches for the Texas lizards. Then two gallinules came up to eat. I do not know if they scared the lizards away or my trying to get a photo did.

The class and my dog were waiting when we arrived.

Nedjie took the first class and Sem took the second class. Then Ronald took a class.

When talking about domes, one of the students asked if we could come in and build them 12 domes. I explained that to build domes, we needed donations; then I told the story of the meeting with Uganda officials.

Uganda officials were coming to talk about building 50,000 EcoShells over a 5-year period. That is a construction rate of about 200 homes per week. David South was to run the meeting, and he had asked me to be there for third world construction back-up. David and I met the afternoon before the meeting. That night he had a heart attack. His son asked me to run the meeting. The meeting started and was a very productive 3-hour meeting talking about the material, manpower, and other requirements to build EcoShell domes. Then the head man excused himself to make a phone call. Afterward, he stated that the Prime Minister loved what we were doing and gave his blessing. He then asked me when we could get started and how we were going to pay for those 50,000 domes. Just the material cost, at Haiti prices, would be 100 million dollars. Labor would increase that price tremendously.

I turned to Nedjie and asked her to donate 100 million US dollars for the project. The class loved it.

Since we could not cover everything that the 8-day class covered, we gave them a good introduction and let them know what was available. Several expressed strong interest in attending the 8-day class.

While the class was going on, Lophane showed up with the 5 printed certificates we needed. We signed them, and then we took 15 copies of Kalite Beton Kaka and I autographed them. Ronald added the names of the students, and each of the instructors and Lophane also signed them. Nedjie suggested that we should add today's date and when we agreed, she added it to each copy.

The instructors, Lophane, and I were in front of the church. The instructors would hand out a certificate, and shake the student's hand. Then I would hand them their copy of the book, and Lophane and I would shake the student's hand. To keep the process moving, Lophane had a list of students in the same order as the certificates. As one student would come up to receive his certificate, Lophane would call out the name of the next person. That way there was a constant stream of people getting certificates and books.

There were three ladies in the class. Each of them kissed the cheek of each of the instructors. One of them kissed my cheek. This indicated to me that a little of the



distance between us was breaking down. I commented to Nedjie when group photos were being taken that with all the certificates I had given out, the lady was the first who responded with a kiss on the cheek and I wanted to thank her. Nedjie told her, and I got a great big smile and a "You are welcome."

Rony photographed the proceedings. As people were coming up, I saw them handing cell phones so they could

have photos of themselves getting their certificates.

We packed up to head back to Decameron. Most of the students shook my hand and told me how much they appreciated the training.

We got back and had lunch, then I took a nap. I woke to someone speaking. It was the lady who had come to clean the room, so I got up.

After the lady left, I started working on the Daily Updates.

At one point I went down to the bar to get a soda. On the way, I saw Helen, Candice, and Amy swimming. I thought of the story Amy had told of a parrot in a bathroom which wolf whistled whenever a lady came into the bathroom. I thought, "It is a good thing I cannot whistle anymore, or I would have been tempted to remind Amy of that story with a wolf whistle."

After supper, we had devotions which started at 8:45 in Helen's room. Afterward, Lophane told the story of the problems associated with getting the five certificates printed. I had given Rony the certificate paper and a jump-stick with the text for the five certificates. Since we had a problem in October 2018 getting an MS Word certificate printed by a company that had only Apple equipment, I had converted the certificates to Adobe PDF format. It was because of that problem that we bought the HP printer in October 2018.

There were no places in Delugé which could print the certificates. Going into San Marc was out of the question because of the unrest. Additionally, most businesses in San Marc were closed. Benjamin (one of our drivers) and Rony headed to Arcahaie to see if there were any print shops available that could print the certificates. Their instructions were that if there were not, they should head to Port-au-Prince to get them printed. There were not. As they were headed to Port-au-Prince, Lophane had located a print shop in Cabaret, called Rony and told him where it was, and Benjamin and Rony went there, got the 5 certificates printed for \$35.00 US, and came back well before time to pass out the certificates.

Lophane then told how Nedjie got her job. She had been job hunting for a year without success because there is an 80% unemployment rate in Haiti. She got an interview, took her two certificates, a diploma, and a copy of Kalite Beton Kaka. They looked at the certificates and studied the book and asked questions. She got a higher-rated job than she had been applying for. When she told her employer that she wanted to take off Thursday and Friday to go to Delugé to teach the disaster-resistant short course, she was told to go. With the teaching in Port-au-Prince, she could modify her schedule to spend some of her time teaching there. Apparently, her employer is very satisfied with her performance and with the disaster-resistant home construction school.

By that time, it was 10 pm. I went to bed.

Saturday, June 29, 2019

Since we did not need to get up before the crack of dawn to get the ladies to the airport, we all had a leisurely breakfast at Decameron. After loading up, we headed to Port-au-Prince without any incidents.

Candice, Amy, Helen, Lois, and Barbara were dropped off at the airport about noon. At some point during the week, I learned that Lois was also a lay delegate to

the LCMS convention in Tampa, FL, July 21 to 25, 2019. We, along with Helen, had the opportunity to discuss some of the issues. Lois had served as a delegate on two previous conventions.

All certificates for the Port-au-Prince class had been signed by 3 people - Lophane, an instructor, and me. When Lophane went over them, he noticed that some of the certificates had been printed on a lighter-weight certificate paper. (I had two partial packets of certificate paper from previous trips, and I was using them up.) He wanted me to reprint them on heavier-weight certificate paper. There were a couple of slight problems. The printer no longer had any ink; and when I opened my computer up to download the certificate files onto a jump stick, a notice showed up on the computer that it was infected by a deep virus, and the keyboard would not function. About that time Lophane learned that the locations he knew of which could print certificates were already closed for the day. We decided that we would give those certificates out, and let the students know that we would get them certificates on heavy certificate paper as soon as we could.

All books we planned to give out with the certificates had been stored at Lophane's house in Port-au-Prince. During the afternoon Sem and Nedjie came past to autograph them. Lophane and I autographed them. I wrote the student's name and the date in each one. Then I placed the books in a suitcase in the order in which they were to be given out. Prior to the printer running out of ink, I had printed out several lists of the order in which we would be giving out the certificates. Chaudry was not available to sign certificates on Saturday afternoon but had agreed to come early to church to autograph them. Actually, he came past the house on Sunday morning and signed them.

Since the computer had a virus, and since Norton said that I could download a special program to rid the computer of that virus, I did, but the program reported not finding anything. I shut the computer down with plans on taking it to John Spears when I was back in Texas on Tuesday morning.

The last time I had been on the internet was before we left for Delugé on Thursday morning. While on the trip north I did not try to get on the internet or connect with any public hotspots. The only attachments I opened were on my phone and only from people I was in regular contact with. I had no idea how I got the virus.

For the rest of the trip, I hunted and pecked on my cell phone and occasionally got a complete sentence written.

During the evening I heard some yelling and some shooting. Of course, I wondered if there was a street march coming near to where we were located. Things quieted down for a bit but then it started again. I decided not to go out on the porch and see what was going on. Lophane came in and said that Haiti and Canada were in a soccer playoff game and that was the cause of the excitement.

With the noise still going on, and with no air conditioning, I went to bed. The window and the door to the room were open to get any breeze there might be. When I woke up on Sunday morning, the door and window were closed and the air conditioner was on.

Sunday, June 30, 2019

Church started at 9 am since it was not a special service. We arrived at 9:05 and the church was nearly full. The only seats where we could all sit together was in the back. Yes, they are Lutheran, but there are fewer electric fans in back.

The sermon text was Rev. 3:11. *I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.*

Pastor Walter D. Clercius, the associate pastor, preached. No choir numbers, but 3 ladies led the singing. Since this was not a special service, there were no bulletins. Hymns, readings, confession, and creed were all projected. The projector was over to one side using the same short cord for the projector that was used last Sunday.

After the collection, Lophane and I were asked to come forward to make the presentations. I was expecting the presentation to be made after the benediction. Lophane pulled my suitcase full of books and certificates down the center aisle with me following 3 or 4 steps behind.

After we got to the front and Pastor Thomas and Pastor Clercius joined us, Lophane called each of the instructors up and talked about the qualifications of each.

To present the books and certificates, Lophane was to my left. He would call out a name; I would take their book out of the suitcase and hand it to Pastor Clercius. Lophane and I would shake hands with the student. Pastor C would present the book and shake hands. Then Pastor Thomas would congratulate them.

The instructors were lined up with the certificates and passed them out. As each student finished shaking hands, he/she would stand along the side wall of the church. I thought we would run out of side wall before we ran out of students. While this was going on, photos were being taken.

Then Lophane talked about how I was comfortably retired but came to Haiti with a concept to help Haiti and developed the school. Things got very deep. We had discussed how I wanted the focus on the students and the instructors, not on me. That was not happening.

I did not know it at the time, but the words, DISASTER-RESISTANT CONSTRUCTION TEAM were projected behind me. I was presented with a plate.

Then it was my turn to speak. I stated Lophane's words, while appreciated, stressed me and not the ones who deserved to be honored. I rolled my suit pants up and stated I was doing so to keep them from getting soaked because things were get-



ting so deep with the things Lophane had said. The congregation loved it. The pant legs would not stay rolled up.

I pointed out I had taught a few and had helped four to become instructors. They were teaching hundreds and would teach thousands. I called each by name and called them my grandchildren.

Then I talked about how the students had given their time to attend the school and would build better homes. As people saw the better homes being built, they would want better homes, and the work of the instructors and the students would have a substantial impact on Haiti. With the next disaster and each disaster following, numerous lives would be saved.

Finally, I shut up. The way the congregation reacted, they must have thought it was wonderful I had stopped talking.

We all returned to our seats, and the service continued. There was no communion with this service.

As the congregation departed, the instructors and students stayed for photos. That took "forever." The first photos were of the entire group.



Then several photos were taken of each graduate. Usually those photos were with me; with all of the instructors; with Lophane, all of the instructors, and me; or special groups.



With most of the photos where I was included, Nedjie was beside me holding the plate that I had been given. Usually she was holding it in front of me. I suspect she had something to do with my receiving the plate.



In one photo it looked like I was asleep. As much as had happened during the previous two weeks, maybe I was.

Then everyone wanted to thank me. Regularly the term “Grandpapa” was used. Nedjie was the last. She used the term “Granpapa” many times during that thank you. Granpapa is a term which I love for the people in Haiti to use when referring to me. It indicates that many of the barriers which often tend to develop when a “blan” (white person) attempts to teach Haitians are being discarded.

Not much was accomplished during the afternoon but a bunch of naps.

Haiti beat Canada 3 to 2 on Saturday night. That was all the noise I heard that at first I thought might be marchers in the street. Haiti was happy and forgot their differences for a while.

Assignments

The graduates will go out and apply what they have learned and make Haiti a better place to live.

The instructors will work on developing more places to teach. The Pastor at Port-au-Paix has requested we come. There are enough requests in Port-au-Prince to hold the course twice.

Lophane will work with Gil Bailie and his team, as well as helping the instructors arrange for more classes.

I will go home and see if we can raise more money to take what we were doing and spread it around the world wherever it is needed.

Monday, July 1, 2019

Again, I went to bed with the window and door open so I could have a cooling breeze. When I texted Judy, auto-correct changed it to “a cooking breeze.” Apparently, the angel was back, since I woke up with the door and window closed and the air conditioner and ceiling fan running. We have electricity.

We had breakfast at 7 am and planned on leaving at 8:00 am in the event there were any delays due to protests. My plane was to leave at 12:40 pm, and JetBlue recommended getting to the airport 3 hours early. Since it was a 20-minute drive, we theoretically needed to leave by 9:20 am. As we were finishing breakfast, Lophane got a phone call and said, “We need to leave now.” I went to get my bag, and we departed. Rather than take the main roads, we took back streets, gravel streets, and dirt streets.

During the ride, JetBlue texted that there was a one-hour delay in departure time.

Made it to the airport. Stood in line for an hour before I got checked in. The man in front of me had a child who kept getting away and running. His bag was overweight. The desk agent held his child while he removed some things from his bag to get the bag within the weight allowance.

Got through security and to the gate. The flight was delayed yet again. If the flight departing Ft. Lauderdale was not delayed, there would not be time to go through Immigration and Customs. So, I talked to an agent. She said she could re-book me for the same flight on Tuesday and that JetBlue would pay for my hotel in Port-au-Prince, or I could fly to Ft. Lauderdale, and if I missed my flight, spend the night in Ft. Lauderdale. I opted to get to Ft. Lauderdale.

According to the reader board at the gate, the plane was scheduled to depart at 2:20 pm. At about 2:20 pm, the plane arrived at the gate.

We took off at about 3:20 and landed at Ft Lauderdale at 4:31 pm (different time zone). I was safe in the US and did not have to worry about protests in the streets.

Using Global Entry, I was through Immigration in about 2 minutes. It took about 10 minutes to collect my bag and was waved through customs. It was necessary to recheck my bag with a JetBlue agent. There were several people in line, and the agent was not present. I got in line. Soon there were 50 or so people behind me. The agent arrived, and since I did not have a special tag (none of those behind me had one either), he hollered at me and sent me to the end of the line. This did not give me a happy feeling. When I got to the head of the line once again, he said there was not time to get my bag checked and I should head to Terminal 3 (next terminal over) and see a ticket agent. I started, and as I approached the exit to Terminal 4, a baggage cart hit me from behind and knocked me down. First responders were there before I could get up, and we had an argument as to whether I was going to allow them to transport me to the hospital. I won.

As I started out again, one of the first responders stated he would walk beside me to ensure I was OK. I thanked him. We got out the door of the terminal, and after having walked about 20 steps, I was hit by another cart. The first responder caught me just before I hit the sidewalk. We had another argument.

I missed the plane. After well over an hour's wait, a JetBlue agent recommended a motel for me to stay in, but stated that JetBlue would not pay the motel bill because the delay was caused by weather. This was the first I had heard about the weather. The agent said, "That is what the computer says, and weather delays are not our fault."

I took a shuttle to the motel and spent the night.

Tuesday & Wednesday, July 2 & 3, 2019

Arrived home at 11:00 pm on July 2, 2019. Over 24 hours behind schedule.

Judy examined me for black and blue marks and determined that I would live.

The keyboard on my computer worked, and a complete virus scan determined that it was not infected with a virus.