

# ***Concrete & Building in Haiti***

## **Preparation for Building Homes for Jubilee**

As of July 11, 2015

By: Herb Nordmeyer

This is a very abbreviated report. During the last two weeks of June, I was in Haiti and returned to Texas very late on the evening of July 1, 2015. I was scheduled to head back to Haiti very early on July 10, 2015, so I had lots to do and very little time to do it. Getting a report written and submitted was one of those items that was mandatory, but did not get done, so I got up at 6:00 am on July 12, 2015, and started writing what I should have written when I was home.

My wife, Judy, proofs and drips blood (red ink) on everything I write. since she is not here to do it, you will have to endure my errors in writing and thinking which she would normally catch.

The goal of the trip was to install a slab for the first dome home in Jubilee during the first week. Then during the second week we would install an Airform on the slab and while waiting for each coat of stucco to cure, we would install a slab for the second slab.

I would be the crew chief for the first slab, and Orlando would be the crew chief for the second slab. I would be the crew chief for installing the first dome, and Orlando, if we felt competent that he could handle being the crew chief for the second dome, after I had departed, would, with oversight from Lophane Laurent, would be the crew chief for the second dome.

Kevin Honeyager came with me from SHLC. John Rougeux and Helen Roenfeldt from Mission:Haiti accompanied me for the entire trip. Oz Hefner and Mike Early from either North or South Carolina joined us for the second week.

Kevin and I left San Antonio with two checked bags each. One was a box containing a large blower, the other three were plastic shipping containers which just barely fit within the airlines guidelines for size and each was loaded, based on my bathroom scale, to 49.5 pounds. Thankfully my bathroom scale was accurate.

We met Helen and John in Ft Lauderdale and spent the night. The next morning we flew to Port-au-Prince where we cleared immigration without a problem, but as we were exiting customs, John, who was pushing the cart with the blower on it got pulled aside for special inspection. John was the last in line and we did not know what happened to him since we had already passed out the exit door and we were not allowed to go back in. In time, John joined us, we loaded our gear in vehicles driven by Lophane and Benjamin, and headed to Gonaives.

The first several days went as planned and we got the slab poured for the first dome home. By that time it was time to pick up Oz and Mike at the airport, so we took off a day to do that and give the slab time to cure. We left instructions to wet the

slab down several times per day. When we got back, The slab was wet as we wanted it to be, so we removed the forms and started to install the Airform.

To take weight off the people attaching the Airform, we installed a piece of 3/4" galvanized pipe into the coupling for the center pivot and slipped a piece of 3 inch PVC pipe, with a cap on it over the 3/4" galvanized pipe. This provided a support which would not damage the Airform. With the Airform spread out over the slab, several of us slipped under it to go to work. I started off positioning the Airform and clamp angle while Mike Early drilled and inserted Tapcon anchors. After 15 minutes Mike took my place and Olando took Mike's place. This type of switching took place until the Airform was installed around 3/4 of the slab. At that point Mike approached me (I had found a shady spot that was as cool as I could find) and wanted to know what should be done with the rest of the Airform. When he did not like my answer, he showed me the problem. After measuring the Airform, we found we had a 30-foot Airform and we were trying to install it on a 20-foot slab.

We removed the Airform and stored it. We contacted Monolithic and they proceeded to manufacture a 20-foot Airform and tell us that the 30-foot Airform could be used for building classrooms and other things. Our first use of the 30-foot Airform will be to build a dormitory for the Faith Lutheran Church Girls' Orphanage.

We proceeded to install the second slab. Olando was in charge and I was available for oversight and to answer his questions. He did an excellent job.

By the time we got through with the second slab, it was time to head to Port-au-Prince and home.

In the process we learned several things.

One, bending 1/2 inch CDX plywood takes time. Bending 1/4" Luan plywood is much easier. It does not need to be soaked before it is bent.

To ease the process of bending the CDX, we drilled holes in each end and used a rope to keep it under tension.

While the 1/2 inch CDX should have a life of 5 slabs, the amount of work involved is greater then with the 1/4" Luan. The 1/4" Luan will have a life of one use or maybe two uses.

When using Luan plywood, it is necessary to place the plywood on the side of the stakes where pressure is applied (Makes sense, but we did not always uses sense.).

Rather than butt jointing the form boards and using a scab to the outside, we found that lapping the form boards by about 2 inches was quicker and made a tighter joint even though it left a vertical indentation in the concrete.

The marking arm we developed works very well.

The crew quickly understood the concepts we were teaching.

The word "sand" refers to a substance we would call base material in the US and contains nearly 30% clay. It is commonly screened and the fines are used for masonry sand and for stucco sand. The resulting product starts eroding within a couple of years.

Black River Sand contains some gravel, but when screened with a 4 mesh screen works well as a mortar sand or a stucco sand.

An appropriate gravel for concrete with about 1 inch minus rock is available if requested. If you ask for "gravel" a 4" minus product is delivered.

Aggregates are delivered by the truckload.

On June 30, 2015, I received more of the translation of *Kay pou Jubilee*. Rather than translating specific parts, it was combined into one document and saved as a docx file. Many of the corrections we had made over the previous months were not included in this “complete” document. The docx system adds numerous hidden formatting items which cause problems with developing an Adobe file which we use for Print on Demand printing. This required extra work getting it prepared to use.

The only parts which need to be translated now are some addition we made after the original book was submitted to the translator.

We got a draft prepared which still has some English in it and which still has considerable formatting problems. On the July trip, we hope to get all of the issues resolved so we can proceed with publication.

By the time I was to head back to Haiti, I had not accomplished much of what I intended to do, but I did get all of the weeds mowed in the yard, some which were well over 18 inches high, so Judy did not need to mow them.

On July 10, I departed from San Antonio on American Airlines. Most of the rest of the SHLC team took a bus to Austin and flew to Ft Lauderdale. Eva had gone to Port-au-Prince a week previous to work in a hospital. I met the SHLC team, Helen, John, and Scott Conover at Ft. Lauderdale, spent the night. When the team was making arrangements for travel, it looked like I would be going a week early. Now it looks like I may be returning a week later than the team.

Up to this point I thought the Airform would reach Haiti at or before we did. Others were in charge of taking care of that, so I did not waste my time worrying. I was informed that it had been “lost” and had finally been found in Miami and would arrive in Port-au-Prince at about the time we arrived.

We left the motel for the airport at 4:00 am. Arrived in Port-au-Prince 30 minutes behind schedule, met everyone, collected our bags and made it through immigration and customs without a problem. The Airform was not waiting for us. After some checking it was determined that it was still at the Miami airport. We headed to Gonaives and arrived about 2:30.

After a late lunch and a nap, it was time for supper.

Sunday we attended church in Jubilee and later went to the Faith Lutheran Church Orphanage to visit with the children.

Sunday evening we discussed our option for the week if the Airform did not arrive in Port-au-Prince. If it arrived on Monday morning, we would not know whether the Airform arrived or not until about 10:00 am. For Monday morning a portion of the crew would go to the building supply store and then cut form boards and stakes for the next two slabs.

On Monday morning Pastor Benoit came past and we planned our activities for the week if the Airform failed to arrive. He wants us to pour Slab No. 3.

A few minutes ago I learned that the Airform made it to San Palo, Brazil. The latest word is it will be shipped back to Miami and put on the next plane to Haiti.

As a child, I watched **The Perils of Pauline** at the movie theater. I think that I will change my name to Pauline. You will need to wait for the next installment to find out if the Airform arrived.