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SUMMARY OF DEPLOYMENT TO THE CULTURAL RECOVERY CENTER,

Port-au-Prince, Haiti, July 4-10, 2010

“Behind the Mountain, there are more Mountains”....a Haitian proverb

Introduction and Travel Recommendations

I was the fourth American Institute for Conservation-Collections Emergency Response Team paintings conservator to be deployed to Port-au-Prince, Haiti. I was the first one, however, to work in the paintings conservation rooms within the Cultural Recovery Center (CRC) building. Susan Blakney had made an initial assessment during May, 2010. Vicki Lee was on-site for two deployments setting up the paper conservation rooms. Hitoshi Kimura worked from June 6-13 (see his report). Nick Dorman returned from deployment on July 2. I was deployed with AIC-CERT members Karen Pavelka and Bev Perkins.

I commend those who have volunteered to work at the CRC. The Haitian people are beautiful, strong, resilient, and very creative. They need help in every way imaginable including saving their cultural and artistic heritage. You cannot help but be moved by what you are about to see and experience. Upon arrival, your first impression will be that little has been accomplished since the earthquake. Damaged buildings, rubble, and tent camps are everywhere. What concerns me is that medical facilities are closing even though it is one of the greatest needs for Haiti. At the sixth month anniversary of the earthquake, Haiti is getting a little renewed press coverage. CNN had some stories this weekend including with Sean Penn the actor who set up a camp and remains in Haiti to help.

Some travel advice from my experience is to have a GSM cell phone which will work in Haiti. I have a CDMA Verizon phone. I was able to get a GSM loaner from Verizon for the cost of shipping (a little over \$10). I had a technician at a local Verizon store activate the phone and copy my contacts. He assured me that I was “good to go for Haiti” but the jerk was wrong. The phone would not pick up a signal upon arrival at PAP airport so I could not even re-program it. A Smithsonian employee had the same trouble. However, Cori Wegener of Blue Shield already had a Verizon Blackberry which could pick-up a GSM signal and hers worked. So, you can roam with a properly programmed Verizon GSM phone but be aware that it will cost \$2.89 per minute. My advice is to activate the phone at home because you may need to call in route. Once at the Miami airport, before departure to PAP, from a payphone (take some quarters) call 1-877-807-4646) and follow instructions for international activation. You will need your cell phone number (same as your original phone), last 4 digits of S.S. number, and the order number for your loan phone.

Karen Pavelka had a T-mobile phone for which she pays for minutes in advance. She could call within Haiti, but could not call home. iPhones may work, but check in advance. You may be able to reach home with Skype. The Internet wireless signal at the CRC office is best

first thing the morning before others take up band width. I understand from Eric that you can rent cell phones for international use but I did not investigate that option.

I bought a copy of Lonely Planet's guide (4th edition, 2008) to Dominican Republic & Haiti which I found at my AAA office. I took a mat knife a sliced off the Haiti section to reduce its size and weight. I found the information (all pre-earthquake, to be sure) to be very useful. There is a whole copy in the CRC office.

Please take the medical advice to be protected with Hepatitis A&B shots, typhoid, malaria, and tetanus. You must have a treatment medication for diarrhea such as Cipro. I did not have any food problems. I think Karen and Bev are okay. I ate very conservatively as did our team. We did not eat any seafood (especially the shrimp to which Hitoshi will attest) or raw fruits and vegetables. Le Plaza Hotel serves a fine buffet breakfast which includes various melon squares. We had no problems with the melons. We drank only bottled water. You can refill your plastic bottles at the CRC office which obtains good water in a larger container from Culligan. Haiti has a major environmental problem from discarded plastic water bottles. I attribute my good health to Prestige beer, three star Haitian rum, ham and cheese sandwiches, and spicy red beans and rice. The Haitians appreciate your buying their products. Some of the sandwiches did have lettuce and tomato but I seemed to survive. The ice might be okay at some restaurants if the water which has gone through reverse osmosis. I had my rum without ice (sans glas). It is very smooth and relieves the day's tensions and home sickness.

In terms of the mosquitoes, I did take 98% DEET (which, I was warned, should be applied only to clothes and not your skin) and 34 % DEET for skin application. I did not use them very much. I also brought insect netting to tent my hotel bed which I did not use. I left the netting in the supply cupboard of the paintings lab for some else to use. I wish I had had some spray Off to use in the show tub of Le Plaza Hotel. The mosquitoes seem to hide in the drains waiting for you to show up. Karen said she had fewer mosquitoes in her upper floor room. I had no mosquitoes in my room for the last 3 nights at The Prince Hotel. I saw very few mosquitoes at the CRC. I bought some long sleeve Columbia brand nylon shirts at REI. I am glad I had them . They are comfortable, provide sun protection, and advanced evaporation. Supposedly they nylon shirts resist mosquito bites. The CRC does have some small lizards which can access the work areas under the doors. I adopted one small baby for a pet. Another did drop from the top of a door onto my neck when I entered. It was a very good morning wake up!

Other personal devices which I recommend include a wind-up or battery powered alarm clock. All electricity in Port-au-Prince comes from generators. The power goes out periodically so electric clocks are not dependable. Hotel wake up calls are not dependable either. I also recommend a flashlight for power outages at night. Nick Dorman recommended a large Stanley tripod flashlight to help with critical lighting during paintings treatments (the lighting in the painting space is not the best). I left my Stanley flashlight in the paintings supply closet with extra batteries in case someone needed it. I just replaced it online from Amazon.com. It would be good to take it back and forth between lab and hotel. A good sun hat and sunglasses are important to have. I expected torrential rains everyday during Haiti's rainy season. In fact, it will rain very hard for a brief time, usually at night. An umbrella and/or rain poncho are recommended, especially if it is raining after you leave the PAP baggage area and have to push your cart a long way over an outdoor rough surface to the security gate where you will be met by CRC staff. Please print off and take in your carryon luggage the Deployment Manual which Eric

and Aimee are developing (local addresses and telephone numbers may be critical). I hope they add my advice for Miami International and PAP airports departures and arrivals.

Before we left for Haiti, everyone said “bring plenty of cash.” So we asked, “how much is plenty?” I was deployed for 7 days. I took around \$500 in cash and had less than \$20 when I arrived back in Miami. Fortunately we were able to stay in hotels which took credit cards. For awhile we were concerned that we would be in a bed and breakfast which wanted \$150/day cash. I did pay for a lot of meals in cash. I left some cash with Mentor (a minister in his church) to give to his Church to help the people of Haiti. I also spent \$60 in cash as a tip to 3 fellows in red hats to push our way past a 100 yard line of people waiting to get into the American Airlines terminal for check in. Otherwise, I would have missed my Saturday morning flight even though I arrived 2 hours ahead of departure. Saturday may be a heavy travel day. I did not purchase any supplies with cash while in Haiti. Vickie Lee, I believe, did purchase a lot of supplies and brought much cash. We each took a lot of \$1, \$5, and \$10 bills. \$100 in \$1 bills is very bulky. I had cash in 4 places...a hip wallet, a neck pouch with passport under my shirt, a wallet on chain in a front pocket, and a waist security pouch under my pants. We were warned that a torn \$20 bill might be rejected. Smaller worn bills did not seem to be a problem. Be aware that you will be in a third world county having U.S. of A. prices.

I recommend bringing a laptop, a small point and shoot digital camera, and a USB drive. A laptop will be useful for creating records of treatment and personal emails. The CRC is supposed to have digital cameras for documenting treatments, but none were available. We used our own cameras under available light. I used post-it notes for labeling accession numbers and stages of treatment in the photograph. I wished I had had a light weight tripod for my camera. Hitoshi wished he had had a white-grey-black Qp card to include in the image. You will also want your own camera to record your experience. We heeded the advice that photographing people could be considered rude. I tried to photograph just my colleagues and the collapsed buildings which I saw on the drive to and from the CRC. To be sure, you are not going as tourists. Please do not ask or expect the CRC drivers to take you on tours. Our team did get to see the site of the destroyed Nader Museum on July 7 along with the members of the U.S. President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. It was an entourage of multiple vehicles and guards. The ruins of the Museum are on a hill overlooking Port-au-Prince. The site is surrounded by tent camps as far as the eye can see. It is not safe to go there so please do not ask. Instead look at this video <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/video/2010/feb/15/haiti-earthquake-art-collection>

You may have the opportunity to visit the site of the Episcopal Holy Trinity Church which contained important early Haitian murals. Some fragments are in the painting conservation lab.

Itinerary and Activities

July 4. Arrived at Miami International. Picked up luggage at baggage claim and called the Airport Holiday Inn for the free shuttle. Met with Karen Pavelka for dinner in the hotel restaurant to discuss the upcoming trip.

July 5. Karen and I arrived at Miami International 3 hours before departure based on advice from the hotel staff. We had ample time, arriving at our gate within 45 minutes after departure from the hotel in the free shuttle which departs on the half hour. Our departure time on

American Airlines was scheduled for 9:40 a.m. The flight arrived roughly on time scheduled for 10:55 a.m. (Haiti is one hour behind EST because they do not use daylight savings). There was a problem with our pick-up at PAP (refer to my outline for entering PAP) so we did not arrive at the CRC until the afternoon. The ride from the airport to the CRC was our first exposure to Port-au-Prince and memorable. We met the rest of the staff and Alan Tomlinson, a documentary filmmaker, who was hired to produce a video for Smithsonian Television. Stephanie Hornbeck (Chief Conservator at CRC), Corine Wegener (a curator at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and president of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield), Karen and I were driven to Petit Creux Restaurant in Petionville for a late lunch.



1. One of many tent camps



2. The security gate to the CRC compound

After lunch, we started to set up the work areas and reviewed examination reports prepared by our predecessors for proposed treatments. We had no rooms on arrival, but fortunately Mentor was able to reserve 3 cancelled rooms at Le Plaza Hotel for Cori, Karen, and me.

July 6. Packed bags, checked out, and had a good breakfast at Le Plaza restaurant (air conditioned). We were at the CRC with all of our luggage by 8:00 a.m. Started treatments. Bev Perkins was late in arriving at CRC because her plane had been delayed on the tarmac in Miami. The AA website showed the plane arriving on time so the CRC staff was concerned. Lunch was ordered and delivered. The protein bars recommended by others are useful here because lunch can be slow to arrive. I preferred the raisins and walnuts which I also brought. We continued treatments in the afternoon. Mentor was able to get more cancelled rooms at Le Plaza. So, after checking in again, we had refreshments at the bar and some dinner later.

July 7. Packed bags again, checked out, and had another good breakfast. We were at the CRC again with all our luggage by 8:00 a.m. Had lunch delivered. Continued treatments and set up for the PCAH tours scheduled for Thursday morning. We made a short visit to the Episcopal Holy Trinity Church to view the damaged murals. Stephanie returned to the CRC with some mural fragments which were wet. Later Mentor drove us to The Prince Hotel where he was able to secure rooms for Karen, Bev, and I for three nights. We unpacked and changed into business clothes. Mentor picked us up around 6 p.m. As we were leaving the hotel parking lot, he observed vans going by containing part of the PCAH group. We followed them to their destination which was the site of the ruins of the Nader Museum (Musée d'Art Nader). It was a

very memorable and emotional experience. Next we followed the vans to the Hotel Kinam. We double parked on the street outside the hotel waiting for the entire PCAH delegation to board the buses. This seemed to take forever. Many panhandlers (old women and children) approached the car for money. (Note that Corine, a military veteran of Iraq, recommends not giving money to people. U.S. soldiers in Iraq were ordered to stop tossing candy to children from trucks because some of the kids were run over and killed. The beggars in Port-au-Prince, usually old women and children, will hang onto the door handles of the car as it pulls away.) Finally, we followed the vans for a very long time up a hill (mountain?) to the Haitian President's temporary residence (the Palace had been destroyed by the earthquake) for a reception. At 800 meters above sea level, the air was very pleasant. After a security check, we met the President and our hostess, Madame Preval (a graduate of George Washington University). The U.S. Ambassador to Haiti, Secretary of the Smithsonian, Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture of the Smithsonian, and Acting Director of IMLS were in attendance.



3. At the Holy Trinity Church



4. At the site of the Nader Museum

After the reception, our car delivered people to their various accommodations. We got lost trying to find Stephanie's bed and breakfast house in a dark, rainy neighborhood. Sleep came quickly once we arrived at The Prince.

July 8. Another early arrival at CRC. We made final preparations for the PCAH and Haitian officials. Upon their arrival, everyone initially met under a tent in the courtyard of the CRC. After introductions there were many speeches. A nice lunch was served out of doors. The following tours of the conservation spaces went very well. Karen, Bev, and I presented the recovery project, AIC-CERT, and professional conservation very well, I believe. Marsha Semmel, Acting Director of IMLS, was very proud that her agency had funded the training for AIC-CERT. There was also a press conference and Haitian news crews visited the conservation spaces. Mr. Georges Nader, Jr., also visited the painting area and seemed pleased with the treatments that Hitoshi, Nick, and I had performed on his paintings. Richard Kurin, Under Secretary, had hand carried a stereo-microscope in a piece of luggage. I assembled the

microscope in the paintings lab for examination of the mural fragments. We returned to The Prince Hotel. I watched Channel 8 TV (poor reception with a rabbit-ear antenna). The Wednesday night reception at the President's residence and the Thursday afternoon meeting at CRC received coverage.



5. The PCAH meeting under a tent



6. Press coverage in the painting lab

July 9. Cori and Mentor arrived at the hotel as we were eating breakfast. Everyone was anxious to hear comments on the previous day. While driving to the CRC, Mentor found a radio station that was making positive comments about Thursday's meeting. The staff at CRC was in good spirits following a tense week of preparations. Alan Tomlinson returned to the CRC and shot video of me examining the mural fragments under the new stereo-microscope. We had a late lunch at the Petit Creux Restaurant in Petionville to celebrate the week. After lunch, Carmalita Douby, Curator at CRC, took us to a near-by gallery to satisfy my request to help Haitian artists. We were not permitted to stop on the street to buy from artists displaying their work. We all bought generously which helped the gallery have a very profitable day. I completed my records of treatment and digital images which were transferred to the Chief Conservator and the Curator.



7. Raking light before treatment



8. After treatment

July 10. I returned to the U.S. this day to attend my mother's funeral. All of us checked out and left the hotel at 7 a.m. because Karen and Bev wanted to return to Le Plaza Hotel. They rode with me to the airport. We could not believe the line of people outside the American Airlines

terminal. Three fellows in red hats, after a promise of a generous tip (\$60), pushed me and my luggage past some very angry and frustrated people. I did make my flight. After a drive to Ohio on Sunday, I attended the funeral on Monday. Karen and Bev spent the weekend in the hotel. CRC staff does not work on the weekends. It would be good to have some books to read for the weekend. Le Plaza has a pool for swimming. If the cable is working, they also have CNN in English on television. Karen and Bev departed on Wednesday and arrived safely home.

Some Thoughts for the Next Painting Conservators

To maximize the efficiency of your deployment, I will offer some thoughts. The painting conservation rooms are on the top floor of the CRC. It is a very handsome, sturdy, 3 story building. There is no elevator. All electricity comes from generators. There air conditioning never went out. I was surprised to measure the temperature and relative humidity on the third floor to be constant 75 degrees F. and 38 % R.H. There is a large treatment room with a built in cupboard for supplies. There are two smaller rooms with lockable doors. I used one for treatments because it had a large board room table. The other room was used a storage. I left a plan for assembling a wooden storage bin which is much needed, I believe. Work tables for the larger room did not arrive until the morning of the tour. You will probably want to work on those tables in the larger room where the light is better. Each treatment lab has two bathrooms. You may want to bring some soap and toilette paper from the hotel. The objects lab is on the same level. The paper lab and offices are on the second level. There are some offices and eating area on the ground floor.

There is now a stereo-microscope in the large room. I found a Sealector type tacking iron in the cupboard. I heard after my return that there may be some smaller tacking irons in one of the other labs. There is no spray booth nor vacuum heat table. I left some small hand tools, palette knife, cotton, and supplies including some prepared edge lining strips. I wish I had had a staple gun for re-tensioning some paintings on canvas. Hopefully, one will be there soon. Fortunately I brought some carpet tacks. After rummaging in rubble outside for a piece of pipe to use as a hammer, the landlord loaned me an old claw hammer with a pipe handle. There are small sets of Holbein watercolors and gouache. I found them difficult to use for in-painting. Nick wisely brought a palette of Gamblin conservation colors from home which returned with him.

I am guessing your main treatments will include aqueous surface cleaning, consolidation of paint cleavage, dent reduction, and tear mending. Unless you hear differently, I would bring the tools and materials you prefer to use for these operations. There was a little Flugger and Poly-fix putty when I left to use for filling. I earlier mentioned the in-painting materials. Most of the paintings I saw have never been varnished so should probably stay that way. The solvents in the cupboard included acetone, alcohol (a curious Haitian liquid which smells like rum), and paint thinner (much like a slow evaporating odorless thinner). I do not know what other solvents may be available in the local paint stores. I did not see any BEVA 371. Aquazol 200 may be useful for consolidation. Hitoshi said he left some in solution but it was not in paintings lab. I did make up a solution of PVA-AYAA in the Haitian alcohol but had to add a little acetone to get the resin to go into solution. So have a productive and safe deployment.

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