

## **TIME FOR A HAITIAN SUMMIT HERE**

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CITY WEEKLY / LETTERS I would like to thank you for bringing Haitians' concerns to the wider public ("Pride and Prejudice," City Weekly, Dec. 14). The disturbances that the phrase "Kill all Haitians" in the video "Grand Theft Auto: Vice City" produced by Rockstar Games was well covered.

However, I am concerned about the last paragraphs of your piece, which announced the gala celebration of Haiti's independence on Jan. 1 with a suggested donation of \$65. As a Haitian who had been observing the degrading conditions of Haiti's social and political infrastructures and the fragmented Haitian diasporic community, particularly Boston, I believe all celebrations should be kept at a low profile. Reflections and community-building gatherings should instead be highlighted.

A topic such as "January 1, 2004, A Point of Departure" could be a framework for an interdisciplinary dialogue. A bilingual intergenerational community-building summit that could be the first in Haitian history might be the focus. I am proposing a summit with Creole and English sessions, not translations, as well as continuous community-building meetings throughout the year in various Haitian settings, such as churches, schools, and community agencies.

Miami had a community gathering last May. Atlanta is planning a national convention in June. Haitian students are planning a national conference in April. Haitian-American Family of Long Island is sponsoring a bicentennial reflection on Jan. 18, with a theme, "Haitian-Americans: A Crossroad Between Homeland and Home." The Catholic Community of New Jersey also called for a reflection day yesterday. What are we in Boston doing after the glamorous party in Lombardo's?

I would like to hope that the Haitian community of Boston will be the next diasporic community to gather its three generations.

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Malden

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