

Eye on World & Local

HAITI'S NIGHTMARE

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Only two weeks into the New Year, Haiti experienced an earthquake that shook the capital of Port-au-Prince. January 12, 2010 Haiti was devastated by a magnitude 7.0 earthquake whose epicenter lies ten miles from the capital. The earthquake hit at exactly 4:53 pm at its epicenter. According to USGS, Haiti hasn't experienced an earthquake this strong since 1847. CNN reports that officials fear that more than 100,000 people in Haiti are either buried alive or dead. This number includes Haitians, U.S. citizens, and UN officials. The estimate changes as weeks pass and bodies are pulled from the rubble; some accounted for and others unclaimed.

Along with the buildings and other structures that were demolished by the quake, was the airport. Its inaccessibility made it difficult for food and medical supplies to be transported to Haiti. CNN.com states, "A U.S. aviation source said the control tower at the Port-au-Prince international airport collapsed, possibly hindering efforts to fly relief supplies into the country." Reports of people having to be operated on in unsanitary conditions filled the news and the search for people under the rubble was performed manually. When food did reach the island, it was delivered through aerial drops, but this proved unsafe as fights were reported at these drop sights. Transporting supplies by vehicle proved difficult as well because the debris from the quake delayed relief efforts.

When asked why the destruction in Port-au-Prince was so catastrophic Dr. Laura Guertin, Earth Science Professor at Penn State Brandywine, stated, "There are many reasons for the volume of destruction, but two reasons rise to the top of the list. The buildings are made of concrete; they are not made of the same quality of concrete as you may find in other regions of the world. In Haiti, the concrete has much more sand in its mixture, which does not make it as strong. Also, the build-



Debris on a hillside in Haiti. Photo courtesy of CNN.com.

ing codes in Haiti are not as strong as what you would find in a location like California. Buildings in Haiti have not been constructed to withstand an earthquake of a major magnitude. California would certainly struggle with a 7.0 earthquake, even with the better construction and building codes."

Unfortunately, the initial quake was not the end. The capital experienced aftershocks as the week progressed. Haiti has experienced up to 10 or more aftershocks, most ranging from 5.0 and higher in magnitude. The quakes occurring at unexpected times during the day would send people running through the streets to escape the danger

under their feet and over their heads. Dr. Guertin commented, "It is not uncommon for aftershocks to be of such a high magnitude, even close to the magnitude of the original earthquake. Aftershocks can last days to weeks to years to hundreds of years!"

Officials knowing the dangers of aftershocks and the longevity in nations such as Russia, Cuba, China, France, Spain, and the United States have committed to sending relief efforts and money to Haiti to help the people and the country. Barack Obama has developed a temporary amnesty to allow Haitians that were in the United States at the time of the earthquake to have temporary citizenship for eighteen months. During this time they can work and send money back home to help their families. Corporations such as American Red Cross and other nonprofit organizations are accepting donations nationwide. President Clinton expressed to the nation in a public address that sending money to organizations is more helpful than supplies. Three weeks past the earthquake, and a worldwide relief effort is still pouring billions of dollars into helping Haiti.

Young Designer Steps into the Spotlight

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Photo courtesy of Washingtonpost.com.

The mainstream fashion world is coming to PSU Brandywine's backyard. Katie Ermilio has made her way from interning at Vogue all the way to the mainstream fashion world. Ermilio grew up in Haverford, Pennsylvania dreaming about one day following in the footsteps of her father and becoming a fashion designer. Learning how to sew at a young age, Ermilio took advantage of the skill by creating her own wardrobe starting at the age of twelve. After years of making her own clothing, it deepened her love of designing further. Ermilio attended and recently graduated from New York University. While in New York, she interned with Vogue, Tracy Reese and then worked in the public relations department at Teen Vogue.

Learning the tricks of the trade from these outstanding references, she went on to put together a collection of her own. Katie uses beautiful patterns that are heavy on the detail along with simple lines that make for a timeless, yet relevant dress.

Ermilio was first noticed in a design contest held for the Washington Post. The contest allowed participants to design a gown for Michelle Obama to wear at the Inauguration. Katie Ermilio designed a long forest green evening

gown. Her dress was both feminine and showed the curves of the body, but was also business appropriate having a slight collar that did not dip too low. Ermilio's gown wound up being picked as the contest winner out of hundreds of choices. The inaugural gown Ermilio created was featured in the Washington Post along with other magazines and newspapers around the country.

Ermilio's style is very different from the current trends that are hitting the runway. They range from flowing girlie fabrics to feminine with structured lines. Katie's style is long in the making, after all her grandfather was Grace Kelly's personal designer. This family history is evident in the way Ermilio designs her clothing. Her meticulous attention to detail is what makes this fresh designer so unique in today's world of fashion.

What separates Katie Ermilio from most other designers, especially in today's world, is that she still does couture designing. Couture is clothing created for a certain person by a designer instead of designing a style of clothing and producing mass amounts of that clothing to sell in stores. Aside from creating a fashion line and producing replicas of a few pieces, she also does custom fitting. Couture designing has gone out of style, but Katie plans to continue customizing designs.

Because of her retro style, Katie has the potential to create something that is completely new to fashion. Mixing her past influences with her interesting new flare and attention to detail will make for an out of the ordinary clothing collection. With fashion on the rise in Philadelphia, Katie Ermilio is definitely choosing the right time to make her mark. There is a lot of promise shown from this young, highly talented designer. To see some of Katie's designs visit her website www.katieermilio.com.