

METROPOLITAN

Shange discusses new novel

by Lanita Duke

Grassroot News, N.W. — The tradition of oral history in Afro-American culture was celebrated Monday evening at the Black Educational Center as Portland welcomed poet and playwright Ntozake Shange with open arms and hearts.

Ms. Shange is on an 18-cities tour to promote her first novel, *Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo*. "It took me until I was 28 years old to go back to where my family was only two generations removed from to start this novel. When I got to South Carolina I was totally freaked out because I expected to see black people walking around there still slaves. They weren't. It was emotionally traumatic. It's sort of like having a baby. It's not quite bad but it's very strange."

Ntozake Shange read excerpts from her new novel to her one hundred fans at the B.E.C. One character in her novel is a woman, Mrs. Yancy, who does day work. She is seen by her neighbors bringing home china, silverware and dishes. Indigo's doll asks Mrs. Yancy if it was true what people said about her getting all this finery. "No, it's not true. All I do is go around the house cleaning, waxing and dusting. And if I come across something I have a yen for I sy to the Missus, 'I sure do like that!' And then I stare at her with my eyes going down in a crooked direction. I look at what it was I wanted and I look back at the white lady. I tell my soul to get all in the thing I want. And the next thing you know the white lady can't think of any reason why she should have whatever it is. And she turns around and asks me, don't I want it. And of course I want it because I've put my soul off in it and I need my soul when I come back around here to



my house."

In this technological age Ms. Shange says the people will have to find poets and poetry in homes and at poetry bars. "I happen to like technology and media. The only thing we can do about it is change what's on there. I have a little more respect for human beings because if you write what people can feel it doesn't matter if people watch tele-

vision all their lives. The only thing that matters is what people feel. They feel things that are close to their lives. If a jackass watched T.V. all the time, he would still know what pain is, and joy."

Ntozake Shange received national acclaim and criticism with *For Colored Girls who consider suicide when the rainbow is enuf*. "I think the strength of the

people lies within the people. To understand the powers of oneself, cultural unity is the first step." She doesn't think *For Colored Girls*... polarized black women against black men. "I don't think 20 poems polarized 20 million people." How does she explain the criticism? "It came from people who represent the patriarch. And I'm here to see the patriarch dead and buried in my lifetime."

Indian commission seeks input

The Commission on Indian Services will host a series of regional meetings to report on the Commission's activities; identify key issues and concerns of Indian people; and discuss bill drafts developed by the interim task force on historical preservation relating to the protection of archeological sites.

Needs identified by the Commission through regional meetings held in 1978 include:

1) Communication needs: needs for improved communication, coordination and/or cooperation between state programs and Indian groups;

2) Program needs: needs for new or improved services;

3) Standards needs: needs for new or improved operating standards of programs and services;

4) Legislative needs: need for legislation.

Priorities established for the 1979-81 biennium are:

1) Child welfare: state policies specific to the Indian Child Welfare Act; outreach, training; acquisition of resources.

2) Education: basic education, Indian culture in curriculum.

3) State agency liaison and cooperation: particularly the Departments of Human Resources and Education.

Drafts of new bills to protect archeological sites will be discussed. LC 306 allows a tax exemption to property owners who protect archeological sites; LC 369 revises the permit procedure for archeological excavation and includes the Indian community in the process; LC 370 makes it a violation of law to excavate on state land, harm archeological sites or objects, sell or purchase archeological objects found in Oregon. "Sacred objects" must be returned to the appropriate tribe.

For additional information on the meetings or to submit written comments call: From Portland, 229-5700, ext 5481; from Eugene/Springfield 686-7500 ext 5481; from Salem, 378-5481; from all other areas of the state, call 1-800-452-7813 ext. 5481.



Clay Myers, Oregon State Treasurer, will speak to the International Forum of the World Affairs Council at 5:30 pm on Thursday, October 7, at the Bank of California Cafeteria on the subject, "South Africa: Is there hope the glacier of apartheid is melting?" Wine, cheese and cider will be served. Admission is \$2 for members and \$3 for non-members.

Myers recently visited South Africa, a trip that was opposed by Oregon citizens who are active in the divestment movement. Myers opposes divestment.



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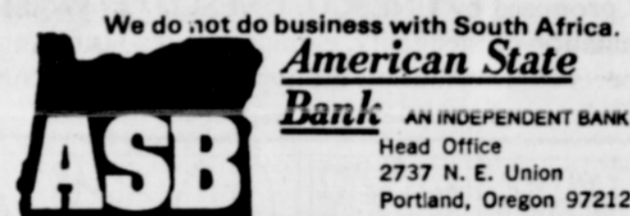
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Contrary to popular opinion, the Mason-Dixon Line, which divides Pennsylvania and Maryland, did NOT separate the North from the South. Both Pennsylvania and Maryland fought on the side of the North in the Civil War.

Julius Caesar's real first name was Gaius; Julius was his middle name.

London, England, is farther north than any city in the U.S. except those in Alaska.



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