

OBSERVATIONS

FROM THE SIDELINES

by Kathryn Hall Bogle



No one wanted to go home. Nobody wanted to leave the first annual Portland Black Women's Gathering last Saturday afternoon at the Matt Dishman Community Center. The affair, a well planned celebration of "our being, our spirit, our survival," was a waking dream, alive and warm and in full flower of recognition of the sisterhood uniting the 300 women meeting together.

The dream belonged to Linda D. Williams of the *Oregonian* staff. It was brought to life by the help of Ivy Boslough, Geri Christian, Marveita Redding, Bobbie Nunn, Kay Toran, Phyllis Jackson, Chris Poole, Stephanie Michael, Avel L. Mayfield, Kathleen D. Saadat, Gloria Stewart and Linda Williams.

The committee members were aglow with the spirit of cooperation they found from women's organizations including Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, The Links, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta and the Black United Front. Commissioner Charles Jordan gave a donation from his own pocket as did several other individuals. Neighboring business people who also helped foot the bill by donating food for refreshment time were: Safeway, Thriftway, Popeye Chicken, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Corno's and La Panier Bakery.

Chris Poole, a media coordinator for Portland Public Schools, said no real agenda for the Gathering had been formalized. "We just let things happen," she said. "We lunched first and then, a little later, we had an open mike for women to introduce themselves if they wanted to, or they could tell about a business they operate or an organization to which they belonged. That got the women talking to each other, and that was our aim. There were no barriers for age, occupation or politics set for the woman-to-woman conversations and acquaintance."

The women did utilize the help of a dozen or more males. Some of the men entertained a score of children from toddler age up with toys, games and a film. Art Alexander, manager of Cablesystems Channel 22, and Gregory Gudger of Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, headed the cadre of male babysitters chosen from among their friends. St. Philip Episcopal Church provided the space for the children in the quarters of the Lee Owen Stone nursery school.

Stephanie Michael, president of the Black Women's Network and co-chair of the Gathering, advocates political awareness for black women. Michael recently headed a workshop on this topic inspired by the helplessness felt by women of the black community over the death of 17-year-old Trina Hunter. "Now," Michael said, "we have started to get things done."

A music program starred Mary Lockridge, blues singer; Marianne Mayfield, singer and bass player; Wanda Thompson and Sheila Wilcoxson, soloists; and the Love Congregation with Janice Scroggins at the piano. Ruby Burns, talented dancer, Lois Lewis and the Sojourner Truth Poets found an appreciative audience for their art. The "1984 Gathering" is already in the planning stages.

The sensitive and exquisite art of Shedrich Williams is revealed in the black and white photographs of his exhibit now on display at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center in a showing titled "Twenty-Year Retrospective."

Many visitors are returning to see the display more than once, for the impact of a particular picture may stay with them, haunting the mind for another study. Williams calls this exhibit "retrospective" and that it is. The breadth of the collection is rewarding to a number of tastes spreading as it does through twenty years of growth in the artist and of the man. The depth of the collection reaches deep — so deep that it catches the breath.

At the opening of the exhibit on May 1, the Firehouse was decked in several arrangements of the cool and regal calla lily — the flower that has become almost a trademark for this artist-photographer. The calla lily also appeared among his framed photographs in solitary splendor, or, in groupings. Williams loves people and they,



Black Women's Gathering organizers: Ivy Boslough, Geri Christian, Marveita Redding, Bobbie Nunn, Phyllis Jackson, Chris Poole, Avel Mayfield, Kathleen Saadat, Gloria Stewart, and Stephanie Michael and Linda Williams, co-chairs. (Not pictured: Kay Toran.)

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

too, appear in his photographs. There are pictures of precious childhood moments (nothing sad, nothing cutesy), tender and sweet. There are frilly dresses, nude bodies, the landscape, the sea and the sun, and there is "Omega Man" perhaps the most powerful statement of them all. People stand, rooted, before the simple majesty of this one.

Three or four hundred persons trooped through the Firehouse on opening day, sipped champagne and marveled at the patience of the man who could wait for the exact moment in time and place to capture the fleeting moment — perfect for all the tomorrows.

Lucky people were the visitors who gained entry to the little auditorium of the Firehouse to hear Shedrich Williams talk informally of his art. "The photographs we create," he said, "directly relate to intensify changes of our space and time related expressions; space-time changes we cannot explore, but only accept. . . . We begin a space for deeper principle and perception — deeper understanding of knowledge. . . . The full essence of space/time can never be revealed. The moment we spend in this space will never pass again. We can only stop it for a brief moment by using the elements of our cameras and the inner light of our creativity and the fullness of our minds."

Shedrich Williams studied with William Grand, Josepha Haverman and Wynn Bullock whose concepts of "time and space" influenced Williams' search for images of distinct nature. He finished his formal education at Portland State University.

Williams has presented over 200 one-man shows and numerous portfolios, and fans of his art are collectors in many parts of the country. Many of his photographs are in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Art Museum in New York City, the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in N.Y. City and the Portland Art Museum.

On opening day, Williams called several names of people present in the auditorium who had touched his life in the years of his photography and gave each of them a treasure of his art to keep. Williams instructs

others in his style of photography and several of his students assisted him in conducting the exhibit. He is a Members Gallery artist.

Present at the Retrospective Opening were Williams' wife, Jennifer, and their eleven-year-old daughter, Coco.

The Retrospective exhibit will be on display at the Firehouse through the month of May.

The 30 years of Greta Rogers' association with the St. Vincent de Paul Child Development Center were celebrated on Tuesday, May 3, with a luncheon at John's Meat Market. About 40 friends, co-workers, and representatives of community agencies were on hand to congratulate Rogers and to extend best wishes to her as she continues in her daily duties at the Center — for this was no retirement party.

Tom Tyson, director of the



R. M. Ramsey Schadewitz congratulates Greta Rogers on her 30 years of service. Looking on are: Maude Banks Young, Tom Tyson and Richard Ross. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

center, referred to Rogers as a "foundation" of the agency, tracing and linking Rogers' service back to the days of Dr. De Norval Unthank's participation and that of Charles Roger, one of the "founding fathers" along with Fr.

Schmidt. "Rogers holds a positive spirit for every person she meets," Tyson said. "She accomplishes much with a smile."

Rogers received numerous gifts and greetings to mark her 30 years of faithful service. Greetings from Mayor Frank Ivancie were brought by Mrs. Ivancie and a telegram was there from President Reagan; David Parradine of the United Way spoke in behalf of his agency; there were a dozen members present of The Daughters of The King, an Episcopal Order for Women; congratulations came from Emanuel Hospital who cited Rogers for the 1500 hours of volunteer help she has given to Emanuel patient care. Richard Ross of KATU-TV acted as master of ceremonies.

In her acceptance remarks, Rogers with a smile and only a hint of a tear, reaffirmed her pleasure in receiving the children of some of "her" children she cared for in the early years of her work at the "Blessed Martin Day Nursery" as it was known at that time. Rogers recalled the happy times of the past and said she looks forward to continuing service "into the future."

Attention bridge players. The Holiday Inn-Coliseum is to be the site of the American Bridge Association Spring Tournament on Saturday and Sunday, May 14 and 15. The play, open to the public, is under the sponsorship of the Portland Unit of the Northwestern Bridge Association of the American Bridge Association.

Saturday's play will feature a two-session Swiss team play beginning at 12:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. with one session of open play at 1:00 p.m. Novice game is to be at 7:00 p.m. On Sunday there will be one session of open play and one novice session starting at 12:30 p.m. The Royales, Club Finesse, the Pacesetters and the Men's Group will be participating.

There is to be a charge. Wilson Smith has details. Call at 284-1516.

Michelle Henry-Davis, and Laura Gillespi, both of Grants Pass, Oregon, made a special trip to Portland to attend the

Black Women's Gathering over the weekend. Gillespi, an industrial relations representative is the daughter of Beth Britton of this city. Davis is writer of books for children.

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Coco Williams and her father, Shedrich, at his photo exhibition. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

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