



501(c)3 Organization

CAAAP Shot



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Panel pays tribute to works of VanDerZee



photo/Marian Jones

(l-r) Chris Griffin, Doug Griswold, Bob Black and Marian Jones (not pictured) gather final thoughts moments before CAAAP's panel discussion commences on the final day of the James VanDerZee exhibit at the Chicago Art Institute on April 25. See page 2-3 for more details.



photo/Terrence Blount

New officers sworn in

Michael Bracey (left foreground), outgoing president, swears in CAAAP's new officers for 2004-5 at the March general membership meeting. Pictured (l-r): Perry Slade, vice president; Jim Morris, president; Charisse Linder, secretary and James Watkins, treasurer.

Gone but not forgotten: James VanDerZee

Born in 1886, James VanDerZee was the "official photographer" of the Harlem Renaissance, a portion of history representing the discovery of self pride in African-American literary and musical creativity, where he also participated as a musician sitting in with the Fletcher Henderson band. VanDerZee turned 80 before the greatness of his work and its valuable collection of historic photographs of Harlem were selected for display in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibit, "Harlem On My Mind."

Opening his first photography studio on 135th Street, VanDerZee's business prospered as Harlem entrusted their visual records of weddings, social life, and deaths in his care. He created fully documented photographic records of three of the most remembered black messiahs—Daddy Grace, Father Divine, and the black consciousness movement of Marcus Garvey. VanDerZee captured beautiful



The late James VanDerZee (l) in his prime during the Harlem Renaissance and later (r) in his golden years.

black women and handsome black men and pretty black children, pleated and pressed in their Sunday best, who through his lens rose above the poverty of their daily existence to display their true gifts of promise.

Quarter II meeting 2004:

June 27
2-4 p.m., Sundays*
South Side Community Art Center*
3831 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL



*If meeting venue or date changes (advance notification of venue changes will be made via e-mail, regular mail and/or telephone)

VanDerZee exhibit a success at Art Institute

The Chicago Alliance of African-American Photographers played an integral role during the 4-month exhibit of the photographic collection of the legendary James VanDerZee, official photographer of the Harlem Renaissance, which concluded on April 25 at the Chicago Art Institute.

CAAAP was part of the Institute's artist lecture series: called Artist Connect. The Institute's Department of Museum Education chose CAAAP photographer and noted freelancer Martha Brock, to lecture on April 3. Brock discussed how VanDerZee's career impacted her career. Secondly, she presented in some of her varied works that shared a connection with that of VanDerZee in slide show format. After her presentation she fielded questions from the audience.



photo/Douglas Griswold

A member of the audience poses a question and comment to Martha Brock during her lecture at the Chicago Art Institute.

In addition, CAAAP conducted a panel discussion on VanDerZee's work on April 25, final showing of the collection. The panelist included Marian Jones, Bob Black, Chris Griffin, and Doug Griswold. Milbert O. Brown, Jr. (CAAAP Deputy Director) handled the moderator duties for the discussion. Brown presented two slide shows, one featuring a portion of the works of VanDerZee and another showing some VanDerZee's work side by

side with that of the panelist for intriguing comparison of eras. CAAAP's Rudy Hudson served as tour guide following the preceding.

CAAAP was also on hand when **Deborah Willis**, noted historian and author of several books on the history of black photographers, appeared at the Art Institute earlier this year at the Art Institute in conjunction with the exhibit. **(See top left photo page 3)**



photo/Terrence Blount

CAAAP's Martha Brock reacts to a comment during the question and answer session after her lecture on the works of James VanDerZee at the Chicago Art Institute.

Meeks is CAAAP's Photographer of Month for May

Martha Brock on Debra Meeks.

Debra Meek is a wonderful photographer, who always goes beyond the call of duty to help other photographer. Over the years, from getting help with structuring contracts to answering technical support questions, Meeks has been there. She has a way of getting the point across to enhance your abilities as a photographer. In reflecting, her approach to detail is first class, nothing gets pass Meeks. She is extremely accountable, dependable and an authentic team player. She is an asset to CAAAP, we should ask Meeks to conduct monthly seminars on the business side of photography. We should all sign-up.

Kenneth Muhammad on Debra Meeks:

I love Debra Meeks and we have been friends for a long

time. We were classmates at Calumet H.S. and she has all ways been a straight shooter, and a loyal friend. If you talk to any photographer in the business, they know her work ethics and respect her for it. She has unselfishly shared her time and techniques on being successful in this business. We are so bless to have her as a member of CAAAP, because she is a true sister. One never gets calls from Debra asking for your help. She is just the kind of a person, that doesn't ask of you anything but to be the best you can be. She's a real photographer's photographer; in the spirit of Gordon Parks and John White. Debra Meeks is more than "the photographer of the month," she is "the photographer of the year" in my book.



photo/Michael Bracey

Famed historian, author and Smithsonian photography curator, Deborah Willis (second fm. left) poses for a picture with CAAAP members during her appearance at the Art Institute during the debut of the James VanDerZee exhibit there. Willis also co-authored a book with VanDerZee.



photo/Douglas Griswold

Linda Steele (left), community relations director for the Chicago Art Institute, presents patron Mattie Dunbar with a James VanDerZee gift set. Dunbar, as it turns out, had arguably the best seat in the auditorium for the Martha Brock lecture. Good fortune followed because the winning ticket was taped beneath her seat.



Donna Mussenden VanDerZee, wife of the great James VanDerZee, visits with CAAAP members at the SouthSide Community Arts Center during her stay in Chicago in conjunction with the opening of the husband's Harlem Renaissance collection at the Chicago Art Institute. Mussenden continues to promote the works of VanDerZee who was not truly recognized for his greatness until 1969. Pictured (l-r) Bobby Sengstacke, Kenneth Muhammad, Ken Simmons, Mussenden, Milbert O. Brown, Jr., James Holly, Toya Werner-Martin and Jim Morris.

Photo veterans honored

Congratulations to members **Bob Crooms, John Gunn, Hank Martin** and **Eric Werner** for their Lifetime Achievement Awards in photography. Eric Werner's son Toussaint, accepted on his behalf. CAAAP Vice President Perry Slade presented each of the photographers with a special plaque following CAAAP's panel discussion on the exhibit of James VanDerZee at the Chicago Art Institute on April 25, 2004.



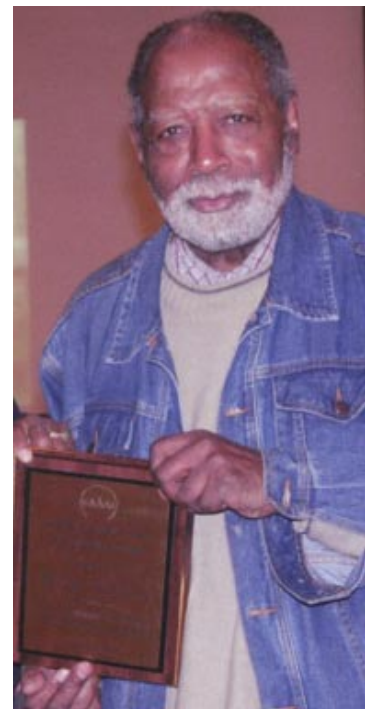
photos/Bill Scott



John Gunn



Bob Croom



Hank Martin



CAAAP Photographic Tidbits

From the desk of the President...



Jim and Ramona

The word “busy” is too tame to describe the pace of events in today's world. There are the home jobs—organize the basement, clean up for the get together, decide what to wear for the retirement party tonight, weed the flower bed, help my wife hang the curtains, shop for mother's day dinner which I plan to cook, answer my e-mail, either exercise or accept more aches, pains and pounds, etc. etc. etc.

And then there are the commitments I've made.....Read the Biographies of 42 ministers so we can pick a new church pastor, write an agenda for the next CAAAP meeting, call the members who don't have e-mail, write an article for the newsletter, work on a cover for my family reunion etc. etc. etc.

And then there is the minor matter of trying to find balance in the effort to earn a living while simultaneously having a life that's more than a series of ups and downs. Mixed in with all this there is **Photography**.

After a fulfilling fine art photographic experience that began with assessing the movement of background clouds and noting how they softened the sun's light on my architectural subject, I sat in my car and reflected on a few thoughts I'd like to share.

For the sake of our attitude and our sanity we cannot neglect our passion. There will always be crabgrass on the lawn of life and in order to view the beauty we must make the time to seek it.

I close by quoting from Edward Steichen, *Time*, April 7, 1961.

“Photography records the gamut of feelings written on the human face, the beauty of the earth and skies that man has inherited, and the wealth and confusion man has created. It is a major force for explaining man to man.”

(This, is the first in a series of Photographic Tidbits from the Desk of the President)

Celebrating Sisterhood



Today's Black Woman recently honored Shoshana Johnson, U.S. Army Specialist, who was wounded and captured during an ambush while deployed in Iraq. Her rescue made worldwide news and put her in hero status. CAAAP's Charisse Linder poses with Johnson at the event.



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