

## BILLIE ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

### A LON-N-NG OPEN LETTER OF THANKS

N'YORK CITY:--"Dear Co-Conspirators, I am just getting over the shock and daze of the utter surprise of the master bash thrown to Hi'lite my 80th. B'day at the Uganda House on East 45th. St., which was sponsored by my wife Beryl and loads of co-conspirators totally without my knowledge. How could two hundred of my closest friends clam up on me like that? I must be getting old. I am still fazed by the whole thing. This fella, Sir Jimmy Randolph, conning me into a jive meeting with, "Dick, I have some VIPs I want you to meet. I have an appointment with them about 5:30 p.m. near the UN on 45th St. I will pick you up about five. I'm rushing so I will have to tell you about it on the way." Well, a guy like Sir Jimmy Randolph, who commutes between Vegas, Aruba, Caracas and Lord knows where on Cabaret gigs, doesn't have much time for details, so natch I was willing and ready. I was picked up on time, which is unusual, as performers and musicians are usually late. Sure enough in the shadow of the U.N. he takes me to this Uganda House. I recognized this pad as a hangout of Ambassadors, and I am still thinking that Sir James is going to introduce me to some heavy people. After all, he knew I spent a lot of time in Africa and Southeast Asia for the State Dept's Cultural Exchange Program and am hip on Africa and the Far East.

Well!!! When he opened the door and pushed me in, the voices of a lot of people started pouring out, with Cab Calloway, leading the singing, "Happy Birthday, Dick Campbell." My 80-yr. old heart skipped more beats than I could calculate. There I was in slacks and a Trinidad Tobago shirt and all these people all dolled out like for a cocktail party, which it was. All I could say was, "This is ridiculous!" But there I was kissing everybody who would kiss me. I

was touched!!!

When you think about the guests who were there, it boggles the mind. For a change, old friends met to enjoy. My wife tells me that the ringleaders in this luscious skulduggery were Ossie Davis and Rubby Dee, who also thrilled the audience with their special artistry, poetry and reading, all dedicated to the b'day lad: Elaine Parker, who got the Boro-prexy, Manhattan's Andrew Stein, to issue a "Dick Campbell Day" proclamation, and presented it to me. Sir James paraphrased the Sinatra theme singing it, "You Did It Your Way." He also shared emcee chores with Ossie Davis and presented me with a scroll of his own design. Cliff Clemmons, board chairman Sickle Cell Disease Foundation, got all my Alpha Phi Alpha Bros. there. Also Col. Jimmie Little, who took my spouse by the hand and opened many a door for her. Fred O'Neal, prexy of the AAAA who checked and double-checked to make sure it all came together. Gerri Major, who kept "Ma Bell" busy offering sage advice as to what and how to do it. Rose Morgan, who was so supportive throughout the entire affair; Bill Richardson Schieffelin & Co., was commander-in-chief of the "spirits" supply and engineer-in-charge of special details. He was so outstanding, the committee gave him a plaque. And that was before anybody got drunk. Lofton Mitchell, who authored the B'way hit "Bubblin' Brown Sugar," an is now preparing a musical on the life of Ethel Waters; Cab Calloway, and Nuffie of course, who entertained everybody before I arrived, encored with his immortal version of "Minnie the Moocher." He was properly dressed to song escort her in his white tails and tie trade mark which brought the house down. Then there was Honi Coles, the old Tony Award Winner this season from the B'way hit, "My One and Only". Lionel, "of which there is

no whicher, Hampton, just back from musically storming Europe, with glamorous model par excellence Audry Smaltz; Jimmy Daniels, Theodora Roach and Allan McMillan, the only person there older than me.

Mollie Moon, who knows everybody and everything also knows how to clam up. A few days before the surprise pawty we were together at George and "Tommy" Norford's to discuss the theme for the Beaux Arts Ball '84. She played to real cool and dropped neary a hint. Ben Wright and wife Jean, hunchos of BMI's Monitor mag., Dr. Al Oliver, an old friend from my Operation Crossroads Africa days; Dorothy Height, who flew in from a trip south just to be there; "Rumps" and Ada Jones, Alvin Wilks, Flo Dixon, Nat'l Urban League Guild and Ivy Jackman of the Harold Jackman Memorial comm. along with Raoul Abdul, who will be giving the org.'s 20th annual dinner in late Sept. at Columbia U.'s Faculty House. For the 20th consecutive yr., I will handle the emcee chores. Also my old friend Judge Bruce Wright. Did you see him in Bill Miles PBS series, "A Different Drummer--Black in the Military?" He was fantastic! Bill Miles was there with Bill Greaves, another top film-maker. Gosh! Everybody I ever knew seemed to be there, including Bill Booth, former judge, who's back at his law trade and prexy of the powerful 100-Black Men and member of the Sickle Cell board; Wm. H. White, Vivian Robinson, founder and mainstay of AUDELCO, the org. which is doing so much to bring recognition to blacks in the performing arts; Lois Alexander Lane, founder of the Harlem Institute of Fashion, Frances Lee, former spouse of the late Canada Lee.

Also involved in this clever plot were Ron Campbell Cyril & Dolores Poindexter, Jimmie Clemmons, Lillian Bartok, Nora Davis Day, Vicki Bourme-Vanneck, of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, Ann Kheel, Rosetta LeNoire,



SAHARA ROCK STARS -- Rock stars Cool & the Gang star in the Congo Showroom of the Sahara Hotel and Casino, August 16-21. Call 737-2424 for further information and showroom reservations.

Dr. Mike Holloman, my man for all seasons, Frances & Howard Reckling, Guichard and Willa Parris, Mary Richardson, Joe Bostic, Mildred Clinton, glamorous TV/movie gal,

who went all over Africa with Cozy Cole and me in '62/63 and so many others who made this trip through 80 summers so worthy and meaningful. I hope that all of you will live to ex-

perience the same joy that was mine. This is Dick Campbell, who STAYED LOOSE and thanks Billy Rowe for the use of the space...Billy Rowe is a syndicated columnist.

## CONGO SHOWROOM

Cocktail Shows 8 pm and midnight

**KC**  
and the  
**Sunshine  
Band**

**Billy  
Preston**

"The Fifth Beatle"

August 2 - 14

Reservations: 737-2424

# SAHARA

Hotel and Casino