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BROTHERMAN

REVIEWS

1995-1996

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# The Bonds they share

'Brotherman'  
examines the black  
male experience  
in this society

By ALY COLON  
Seattle Times staff reporter

Robert Allen stands before a towering portrait of Frederick Douglass. The painting of the famous 19th-century orator, author and former slave towers above the 20th-century editor, writer and professor.

In one image in the painting, Douglass, his arms outstretched, his lips parted, seems to be exhorting Allen. In another, Douglass appears to be casting a pensive, watchful eye over him.

His is a presence, and a literary legacy, Allen recognizes and relates to.

He pays tribute to Douglass, and others, in a massive, 922-page anthology titled "Brotherman" (\$19.95 One World/ Ballantine Books).

Subtitled "The Odyssey of Black Men in America," the book features a long, historical line of black male writers. It includes not only such established authors as W.E.B. Du Bois, James Baldwin and Richard Wright but more modern-day literary luminaries such as Charles Johnson, Nathan McCall and Ice T.

Allen talked about what prompted the anthology during a recent book tour that included Seattle.

"What this anthology does, and what previous anthologies didn't, is address what it means to be a black male in this society," said the 53-year-old Allen, who co-edited the book with Herb Boyd.

The title itself, "Brotherman," serves as a reminder of the bonds black men share. Used first as a special greeting between black men in the 1960s, "It proclaims: Our bloodlines and soulforce are the same and we have a common fate — what happens to one happens to all," the book's introduction says.

PLEASE SEE **Allen** ON F 5



ROD MAR / SEATTLE TIMES

Robert Allen is a co-editor of "Brotherman," an anthology of black men's writings. It's considered the first such collection of its kind. Allen stands before artwork of Frederick Douglass by local artist Eddie Ray Walker. Douglass' work is in the anthology.

## Excerpts from selections in 'Brotherman'

"Mr. Covey seemed to think he had me, and could do what he pleased; but at this moment — from whence came the spirit I don't know — I resolved to fight; and suiting my action to the resolution, I seized Covey hard by the throat; and as I did so, I rose. He held on to me, and I to him. My resistance was so entirely unexpected, that Covey seemed taken all aback. He trembled like a leaf. . . . The battle with Mr. Covey was the turning point in my career as a slave. It rekindled in me the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free . . ."

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

"The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass"

"Of all the things that drive men to sea, the most common disaster, I've come to learn, is women. In my case, it was a spirited Boston schoolteacher named Isadora Bailey who led me to become a cook aboard the Republic. Both Isadora and my creditors, I should add, who entered into a conspiracy, a trap, a scheme so cunning that my only choices were prison, a brief stay in the stony oubliette of the Spanish Calabozo (or a long one at the bottom of the Mississippi), or marriage, which was, for a man of my temperament, worse than imprisonment — especially if you knew Isadora. So I went to sea, sailing from Louisiana on April 14, 1830, hoping a quarter year aboard a slave clipper would give this relentless woman time to reconsider, and my bill collectors time to forget they'd ever heard the name Rutherford Calhoun. But what lay ahead in Africa, then later on the open, endless sea, was, as I shall tell you, far worse than the fortune I'd fled. . . ."

CHARLES JOHNSON  
"Middle Passage"

"Like James Baldwin, most of us want to know who is this man we call 'father'? Is he the man that he seems or is there something else about HIM that we don't know. We know that he had a life before we were born. But what kind of life?"

"Most of us will never ask. Partly because we put our fathers on such a distant pedestal that they become larger than life. But then we may not ask because we suspect that there are hidden compartments in their lives where painful secrets are buried deep and truths are blurred in the mists of time.

"Our fathers may have done things that they want to forget. We should not be surprised. As Oscar Wilde said, young men must commit terrible sins so that as old men they can have terrible regrets."

EARL OFARI HUTCHINSON  
"A Talk with My Father"

# The bonds they share: Book explores black male experience

Allen

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Allen, who edits *Black Scholar*, a journal of black studies and research, and teaches at the University of California at Berkeley, sees the anthology introducing readers to a sampling of literature, much of which they may not be familiar with. There are 150 pieces of fiction and nonfiction.

"We wanted people to see the diversity of experiences black men have. That there's no one black experience," Allen said.

He leans forward in his chair, and scans the shelves of the Douglass-Truth branch of the Seattle Public Library in the Central Area. Volumes of books by and about blacks line the southwest portion of the library, making up a special section devoted to African-American culture and history.

Like the Douglass-Truth Library, Allen views his book as a cultural resource for African Americans. He wanted African-American males to pick up the book and find their lives reflected there. He wanted a book that would affirm them.

Allen likes to note the anthology highlights the creativity of black men. Creativity is a hallmark of the African-American community, which shows itself in everything from writing to sports.

"They've shown a whole new way of handling (a ball). That's creativity," Allen said, noting the creativity section also includes the writings of musicians, from the likes of Duke Ellington to Ice T.

The book is divided into thematic sections, such as forefathers, fathers and sons, relationships, and troubleman, which highlight the passages of life that black men experience, Allen said. But within the sections there are universal themes to which anyone can relate. By looking deeply into the black male experiences, the authors emerge with threads and themes that connect us as human beings, he said.

Allen cited English literature, which he described as a narrow band of ethnic literature peculiar to the experiences of a people on a small island in the Atlantic, as an example of how human emotion transcends other differences.

Men and women of different races

have said they've read certain pieces in the anthology and been reminded of themselves, or their sons, he said, noting they connect their experiences with those involving conflict, generations and relationships. The book was proposed by two black women, their editor and literary agent.

While the works contained in the book share similarities, they also put generational changes in focus, Allen said. Confronting the anger of racism turned inward — toward family, friends and children — represents a new direction taken by some of the younger writers such as Nathan McCall, Allen said.

"That's not to say there's anything wrong with anger. But we can turn it inward and be destructive, or use it for change and creativity. We can use a sense of injustice as a driving force for creative expression."

In reviewing work included in the anthology, Allen said he found in himself an overwhelming compassion and love for these men. Some issues he thought only confronted modern-day black men also had been dealt with by great writers of the past.

"I felt compassion for black men. For all men. And I felt sadness. As men, we feel isolated and separated from others, unable to express our feelings. This book breaks this barrier," he said.

# NEWS

FOR A PEOPLE'S WORLD



Reporting for Social Change in Northern California

## Books: 'Brotherman'



photo by Janet Carter

Editor Robert Allen

*'It offers Black men a chance to claim all of who we are'*

SEE PAGE EIGHT



artwork by Ben Sakoguchi

Atomic oranges. From "Latent August: the Legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki," the exhibit produced by the National Japanese American Historical Society.

## JAPANESE AMERICANS CONFRONT THE NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST

### Keshite, Shimasen/Never again!

by Laura Wides

*"All I can see is dark cloud and like a sunrise color red!!...Make me feel like sky going to fall down or something...I never seen anything like it. Skeleton not so bad but the half burn body, that I can't stand... like a mummy. Somehow they try to grab something like this color sky... their eyes open."* —Michiko B., a survivor of Nagasaki, recalls the bombing.

By December, 1945 an estimated 210,000 people had perished as a result of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. By 1950, the death toll for the two cities had climbed to 340,000, according to the National Japanese American Historical Society. Until now, a combination of racism, Cold War mentality, and reticence in the Japanese-American community has muted discussion of the destructive impact of the bombings.

But a myriad of events marking the 50th anniversary of the nuclear holocaust signal a shift in community attitudes. In music, dance, art and archive, Japanese Americans are naming the horror and saying, as in the title of a percussion piece commissioned by the Asian Heritage Council, "Keshite, Shimasen!!/Never again!"

Reflections on Hiroshima and Nagasaki commenced in San Francisco at the Fourteenth Asian American Jazz Festival in June, and continued with other exhibits, lectures, concerts, films, and dance performances throughout the summer.

These events stand in sharp contrast to the controversy over the Smithsonian Institution's plan to display artifacts from

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## REGENTS NIX AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

### Good old boys bad old vote the work goes on

by Kelly Whalen

Between shouts of "No Retreat on Affirmative Action!," waves of silence engulfed the 1,000-plus demonstrators at the July 20 meeting of the University of California Regents. Gloom over the Regents' decision to scrap affirmative action at the nine UC campuses settled in their faces. But despite their discouragement, organizers and activists recognize the dirty politics behind the Regents' decision and fully intend to pursue their work.

The Regents attacked affirmative action in the UC system "to lend credence and validity to the movement toward doing away with affirmative action nationwide," said Hatem Bazian, an organizer of the July 20 demonstration, "and this is a movement the governor is leading."

Wilson, who is eyeing a 1996 run for president, "needs this kind of win in order to declare his candidacy," Bazian added. "Race is 'the issue' for 1996 and Wilson wants an edge on it."

Regent Ward Connerly "was the running dog in this whole ploy," said Abid Kureshi, a UC Santa Cruz staff person and member of the Santa Cruz Human Rights Campus Coalition. Connerly, author of the proposals abolishing the consideration of race and gender in admissions, hiring and contracting, was appointed to the Board of Regents by Wilson in 1993. "Who better but an African American to take leadership on this issue with Wilson," Kureshi added.

Connerly has been a major contributor to Wilson's campaigns, donating almost \$83,000 since 1990, according to major donor reports filed with the San Francisco Registrar of Voters. The reports also show a long trail of campaign contributions

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## Brief...News in Brief...News in Brief...News in Brief...News in Brief...News in

### HOMELESS CENTER HOMELESS

EUREKA—Since its landlords refused a lease renewal in March, the Mitchell-Redner Centers, Inc., a homeless service organization, has literally been on the street, "with no direction home/ like a complete unknown/ like a rolling stone," as Bob Dylan sang.

The center used to provide many basic needs for people without conventional housing: use of phones, mail services, a secure place to store belongings, laundry facilities, and a safe haven during the day with a place to sit, relax and have a cup of coffee, without being harassed on the streets.

Now staffers are trying to do what they can, but "it's extremely difficult to do effective counseling and referral out of the back of a pick-up truck with no phone and no privacy," said Thora Faigle, center assistant. "It is appalling that there is no drop in center or a safe haven for people down and out in Eureka." Mitchell-Redner was open to everyone who walked in the door, whereas other support services have constraints on who may use them.

Though Eureka has many vacant storefronts, the problem in finding a new site is fear that the center will attract homeless people. "Landlords are concerned not with the behavior necessarily, it's just with the image. It's how the homeless are perceived," said Kermit Thobaben, Mitchell-Redner Center director.

"If the city were into the community it would be there to help," said David Ball, now homeless. "Mitchell-Redner has helped me a lot since I first came up to the West Coast from Alabama."

The Eureka City Council approved a housing plan June 29 with a provision for a permanent homeless shelter. "This is the third attempt to reluctantly meet State homeless requirements," said homeless advocate Carla Borges. Communities with housing plans that receive state funds must designate areas for a permanent shelter. By twice rejecting shelter plans earlier this year, the Council prevented Eureka from receiving certain grants. The June 29 plan still has to be submitted to the State.

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# SF supes won't play ball with 3-strikes

by Donna Gouse

SAN FRANCISCO—The Board of Supervisors here talked tough to the tough-on-crime crew July 10, when it unanimously passed a resolution urging the District Attorney's office not to use the state's new "Three Strikes and You're Out" law against nonviolent offenders.

This vote was "definitely a 'strike' against injustice," said Joyce Miller of the Violence Prevention Coalition (VPC), which wrote the resolution. "Three Strikes is a racist law, and it's costly in terms of financial and human resources," she said.

The overwhelming majority of people prosecuted under Three Strikes are people of color charged with nonviolent crimes, San Francisco Public Defender Jeff Brown told some 25 people attending a June 27 Board of Supervisors committee hearing on the resolution. In San Francisco, as statewide, three out of four Three Strikes defendants are charged with nonviolent felonies, Brown said. African-Americans make up 11 percent of the City's population, but 68 percent of its second- and third-strike defendants are African-American, he added.

"What we're talking about here is legalized lynching," said Dorsey Nunn of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children.

Three Strikes, passed by the State Legislature in March 1994 and approved by the voters in a nearly identical ballot initiative, requires a sentence of 25 years to life for a third felony conviction, even if the felony is nonviolent.

"There is no question in my mind that [Three Strikes] is slowing the business of the courts," Brown said, citing the sharp increase in criminal caseloads caused by people opting for trial instead of pleading guilty. Before Three Strikes, 94 percent of the state's felony cases were resolved by plea bargaining; now only 14 percent of second-strike and six percent of third-strike defendants choose not to go to trial, according to a January 1995 report from the state Legislative Analyst's office.

The Supervisors' resolution urges the DA's office to exercise prosecutorial discretion and dismiss prior nonviolent felony convictions in cases where the "strike" is not a violent felony, and recommends that "scarce city and county funds should not be used" to charge strikes for nonviolent crimes. Sup. Terence Hallinan, who is running for District Attorney, sponsored the measure. It is strictly advisory, so its effectiveness will be up to the DA's office.

The Violence Prevention Coalition formed last summer

to fight Three Strikes along with Prop. 187, and is best known as the sponsor of the rally against those propositions which drew activists of all ages to Sacramento Aug. 22, 1994. Organizations with representatives in the Coalition include the Coalition for an African-American Community Agenda, Lesbian Avengers, CISPES, CRECE, the Committees of Correspondence, the Young Communist League, the San Francisco Green Party and the Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council.

Since the November 1994 election, the VPC has continued to advocate alternatives to scapegoating immigrants and the poor for the state's economic problems.

Coalition members hope the July 10 resolution will raise public awareness of the detrimental effects of Three Strikes, and that "other county boards of supervisors will now introduce similar resolutions," said Nunn. The VPC is also working with Supervisor Mabel Teng on a resolution against implementing Prop. 187 in San Francisco, which is set for a hearing July 25.

For info: VPC, (415) 648-8222. ■

Alan Weinerman contributed reporting to this story.

## ...Regents

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from other Regents. Glenn Campbell, of the Hoover Institute, gave Wilson \$14,000 in the last year alone. Stephen Nakashima and John Davies have each given at least \$20,000 since 1990. And Howard Leach, CEO of Cypress Farms, Inc., has contributed \$128,000 since 1992.

The deck was stacked before the meeting even occurred, Kureshi said. "The Regents are some of the wealthiest, most powerful business people in the state, sitting on an average of four major corporations' boards," he said. "Their commitment is to billions of dollars of assets, not to students and staff."

But "we've got to get over accepting the inevitability of this decision in order to stay mobilized and move forward," said Damion Tryon, UC Riverside junior and UC Student Association (UCSA) state affairs director at Riverside, who participated and helped with the demonstration.

Students from across the state represented the majority of the demonstrators at the Regents meeting. Organizing for affirmative action jumped off of mobilization around Prop. 187 last year, when UC and state university campuses formed coalitions of student, staff and faculty. Most of those coalitions took part in the July 20 demonstration, but the UC Student Association provided much of the leadership.

"This was by far our greatest effort," said Tryon, "with the most student and community involvement." Tryon and other UCSA representatives plan another statewide event on Indigenous Peoples Day, Oct. 12.

Organizers also plan to hold smaller scale efforts in the fall to strengthen support on their campuses. Diane Cameron, UC Santa Cruz sophomore and campus office director, said she is going to organize educational forums and programs as soon as school is back in session. "A lot of students are going to come back not knowing what has happened," she said. "It's important that we get the word across to them."

Ongoing student organizing is a positive counterweight to "the carefully orchestrated media blitz we're up against," said Jan Adams, Californians for Justice field organizer, "that gives people on our side the message that it is over."

Californians for Justice is engaged in its own effort to build a grass roots base to fight the so-called California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI), which would abolish

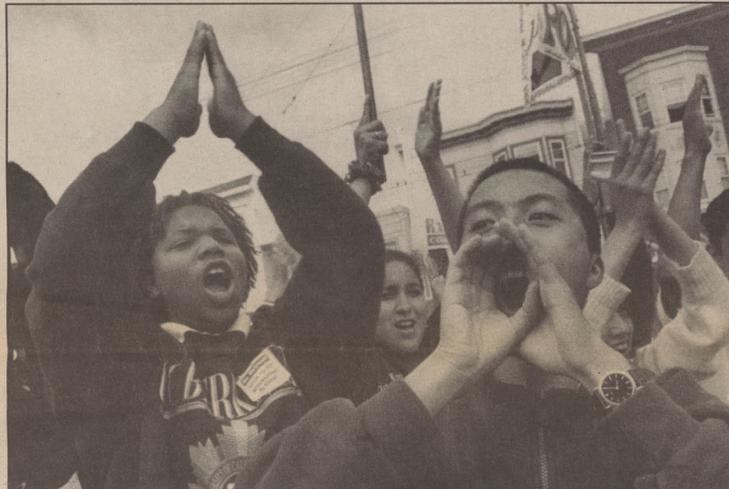


Photo by Rick Gerhart

Outside the July 20 UC Regents meeting at UC San Francisco's Laurel Heights campus, students denounce the decision to scrap affirmative action.

affirmative action statewide and is expected to appear on the Nov. 1996 ballot. For its Million Voices for Justice Campaign, the statewide group has collected 35,000 signatures in the last three months.

Adams said when approaching people for support, their most common reaction has been "didn't they already get rid of that?" She added, "Combatting this attitude and keeping the perspective that this was not a loss at the polls are our biggest challenges."

As student groups and Californians for Justice pound the pavement, the San Francisco-based Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights is considering legal challenges to Regent Connerly's proposals, according to Staff Attorney Ted Wang. "Since the policies are not effective until Jan. 1996 for hiring and contracting and Jan. 1997 for admissions, we have some time to carefully explore them and look into laws they may be in violation of," Wang said.

Other civil rights organizations, groups rooted in communities of color, women, and gays and lesbians are also strategizing. The Rainbow Coalition, Latino Issues Forum, Chinese for Affirmative Action, National Organization for Women, and the Prophetic Movement to Save Affirmative Action—a group of African-American ministers who've engaged in three acts of civil disobedience—were among the supporters at the Regents meeting.

"The Right wing has turned the affirmative action debate into one of race, but

we've let them," said Caryn Brooks, acting coordinator for East Bay/Oakland NOW. "Affirmative Action is absolutely about women, including white women, and their lives. Without affirmative action, women will be demoted and lose jobs."

So far NOW has met with other women's groups, held press conferences and educational meetings, and sent out mailings to members, but its next organizing phase is strengthening its base. "We're trying to identify those women who are likely to be supporters and bring them in," she said.

Before attempting to mobilize more women, women's groups need to make a class analysis, said Patti Chang, director of the SF Women's Foundation which funds programs for girls and low-income women in Central and Northern California.

White women are less organized on affirmative action than women of color, said Chang, but their vote is vital to overcome the attack. She has organized women's groups including NOW, Bay Area Career Women, and the League of Women Voters, to meet monthly for planning and strategy.

"We need to take a careful look at why aren't some white women already signed on and look at the economics of the problem," Chang said. "Is it because they are worried about their white male counterpart getting a job or is it more complicated than this? Exploring the answer will help us strategize."

Tomi Avicelli Mecca, who appeared

waving a neon-pink Queers for Affirmative Action sign at the July 20 demonstration, put on a rally in the Castro in June and is trying to put together a gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender coalition for affirmative action.

The June rally drew more than 150 people and was well received, said Miguel Vallejo of the Queer Coalition of Color, who also helped coordinate the event. "People on the street were generally very supportive and some even joined in," he said.

But Avicelli Mecca said convincing white gay men they have a stake in fighting for affirmative action will be a challenge. "We'll have to remind them

they can't gain what they want without the numbers and strength of people of color and women," he said, "[and stress] Wilson's role in this, who's been openly against gay rights and needle exchange."

He added that while affirmative action might not directly affect white gay men, "with immigrant, minority and women bashing, whose to say the Right won't introduce an Amendment Two [Colorado's initiative that banned state and local protections for queers] in SF next?"

Labor organizers are still trying to see how and where they fit into the defense of affirmative action, said Tim Sampson, secretary of the California Faculty Association and professor of social work at SF State. "Unions are looking at what kind of grass roots efforts they can do to reverse Republican gains and contest seriously for political power," said Sampson, "efforts like Labor Neighbor in SF," a neighborhood-based network of union activists which helped elect progressive city supervisors last fall.

Sampson stressed the need for long-term organizing along the lines of the Million Voices for Justice Campaign. "It's not about trying to rip and run on the issue, but building a network," he said. "Slower, steadier, more informed efforts will help us build a more lasting set of relationships" and durable vehicles for change. ■

For more info: UCSA (916) 828-3918 or Californians for Justice (510) 452-2728.

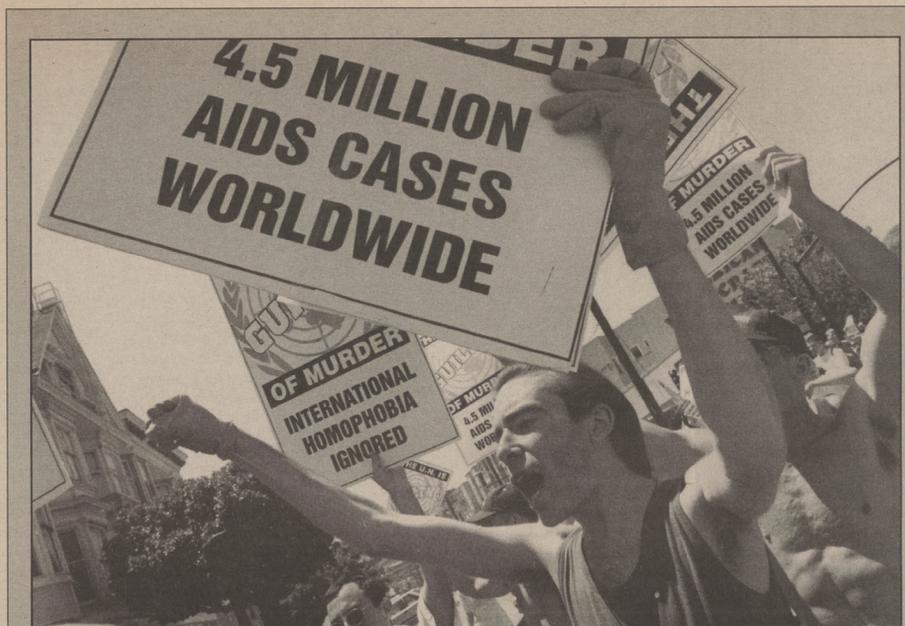


photo by Rick Gerhart

Some CRASHERS wore rubber gloves to their June 25 action, mocking the White House security guards who succumbed to AIDS-phobia, and donned gloves when a delegation of openly queer elected officials visited the President in June.

## CRASHing the UN's party

by Matt Westendorf

SAN FRANCISCO—One of the biggest parties of the year took place here in June—and as with most high-profile events, many were not invited. But that didn't stop CRASH, the Coalition Responding to AIDS and State Sanctioned Homophobia, which held true to its name and made its presence known at the United Nations' 50th Anniversary Celebration.

To raise public awareness about the UN's neglect of AIDS and queer-specific human rights violations throughout the world, CRASH, an ad hoc effort by activists from such groups as the Lesbian Avengers, ACT-UP, Food Not Bombs, and others, took to the streets June 25. Some 200-plus queers marched from the Castro district to UN Plaza and staged a "die-in" in the street, holding signs emblazoned with the slogan, "UN guilty of genocide. 4.5 million AIDS cases worldwide."

The UN's World Health Organization (WHO) has done an "abysmal job fighting AIDS internationally," said Michael Petrelis, a gay AIDS activist and organizer of the CRASH demonstration. Ruth Mota, a senior programs officer at the Santa Cruz-based International Health Programs (IHP), said since the beginning of the epidemic 22.2 million men, women and children have been infected with HIV and the epidemic is still expanding at "alarming rates" in many developing nations. "It is the job of the World Health Organization to contain epidemics such as AIDS, and it is not living up to that mandate," said Petrelis. "We want WHO to develop a worldwide plan to fight AIDS and force governments to cough up the funds to deal with it."

One way WHO can improve its approach to the AIDS epidemic, according to Petrelis, is by integrating the queer community's prevention/education expertise into UN HIV/AIDS policy. However, Petrelis said, queers have not had enough

input on global AIDS issues since the UN stripped the International Lesbian and Gay Assn. of its non-governmental organization (NGO) status last year. "The UN should grant [queer groups] NGO status again so we can, as constituents, participate in WHO discussions concerning AIDS," Petrelis said.

The action "was a great success in terms of getting people in the street and creating a dialogue about these issues," said Petrelis. "Our protest was included in Reuters, Associated Press, and San Francisco Examiner stories. We've got people asking why there were a bunch of pissed off queers in the street at UN 50."

Lack of representation within the UN sparked several other demonstrations during the UN 50 celebration, among them the June 20 picket of the meeting of former United States ambassadors to the UN called by the Coalition in Response to UN 50. Representatives from the East Timor Action Network (ETAN), CISPES, the United Farm Workers, Food Not Bombs, Lesbian Avengers and others formed the Coalition to draw attention to what they call the UN's inadequate response to human rights abuses; they cite examples from East Timor to El Salvador and the United States. The UN can't adequately address these abuses, said ETAN member Pam Sexton, because it is dominated by the five permanent members of the Security Council, who have veto power over the General Assembly—the United States, Great Britain, France, China, and Russia.

"The UN in its ideal form is something we would all support," said Sexton. "But in reality it is not able to meet its goals because it is not a democratic organization."

To correct this imbalance of power, the Coalition called for the elimination of the Security Council and the creation of more non-governmental organizations to act as alternative voices of balance within the UN. ■

## Hotel workers take their show on the road

by Betsy Kushner

S houts of "Who's in the streets? 2850! Who's in a fight? 2850! Who's gonna win? 2850!" echoed from Bodega Bay to Monterey on the July 4th weekend. With union drives underway at two of the six Western Lodging hotels in Northern California, and management retaliating viciously, HERE (Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union) Local 2850 mounted a caravan to picket all six establishments.

Late last year workers at Western Lodging's Lafayette Park Hotel, many of whom are immigrants, asked Local 2850's help in organizing. Management then fired three key union supporters and put others under surveillance, threatened workers with job losses and INS raids, and instituted a "no talking" policy. In a June ruling,

the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) found merit in the union's charges of labor law violations.

The traveling pickets targeted the Lafayette Park, but also put the heat on other hotels in the chain. The six-car caravan hit Bodega Bay Lodge first, then visited Napa County Lodge, where supporters treated tired caravaners to a picnic dinner of home-made tamales, beans and rice.

Next morning, local supporters cheered the caravan loudly as it motored through downtown Palo Alto with horns blasting, the cars and trucks splashed with red union flags and posters. After a picket at the Stanford Park, the caravan went on to Half Moon Bay Lodge. "The support of the community is crucial, and we were welcomed by community activists at every stop," said Local 2850 organizer Stephanie Ruby, who

went with the caravan. "We're all in the same struggle and that's what links us."

The caravan ended with a rally at the Monterey Plaza Hotel, where workers inspired by the Lafayette Park drive began their own in May. Management recently fired a worker-organizer and is putting workers through high-pressure meetings, alone and in groups. "These outrageous breaches of federal labor law and basic disregard for the rights of workers have got to stop," said Julius De Vera, president of HERE Local 483 in Monterey.

Weekly pickets continue at the Lafayette Park, often with special twists. The Aug. 4 action will hit the hotel's Duck Room restaurant. Participants are invited to come as their favorite Disney character, or bring their rubber ducks. For more info: Local 2850, (510) 893-3181 ext 116. ■

## Last stand for Headwaters?

by Bruce Haldane

HUMBOLDT COUNTY—Headwaters Forest still stands. But despite its defenders' best efforts in the courts and on the ground, the outlook for the world's largest privately-owned stand of old-growth redwoods remains gloomy.

Pacific Lumber/Maxxam (PL/M) now has open season and is cutting in the smaller, isolated groves of ancient trees scattered throughout the nearby Blanton and Yager Creek watershed areas.

As well, PL/M has a salvage exemption which allows it to build a road into the heart of Headwaters and take out up to 10 percent of the trees, those it designates as diseased, insect-infested or fire-damaged (redwoods are practically impervious to disease, insects and fire). After protests and publicity, the company backed off from cutting late last March, pledging not to start cutting until the official end of the marbled murrelet nesting season, Sept. 15. The endangered murrelet, a small seabird, nests only in the giant trees and its natural habitat—the ancient redwood forest—is fast disappearing.

"Yager and Blanton Creek are lost." That's the candid assessment of EPIC's Cecelia Lanman. EPIC (the Environmental Protection Information Center) lost a last-ditch appeal July 21 for a court-ordered stay of a timber harvest plan (THP) covering 225 acres in Yager Creek. That means that cutting on that and successive THPs can go on and there is slim hope that further litigation could stop it in time.

"We're fighting these things one THP or one area at a time," says Lanman, "when we ought to be able to establish something behind them all, something that encompasses the entire forest-use issue."

In the case *Marbled Murrelet v Pacific Lumber*, EPIC won a permanent injunction against cutting at nearby Owl Creek watershed. The February 1995 injunction should apply to Yager and Blanton as well, says Lanman, but the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Forestry (CDF) are proceeding with "business as usual" by not applying the Owl Creek reasoning to those similar areas.

The judge handling the case praised EPIC for its thoroughness and competence, reprimanded PL/M for its arrogance, and awarded EPIC \$1.1 million for legal fees and expenses. PL/M is appealing that decision.

But the court removed the USFWS and CDF from the case, which allows those agencies to sit back and do nothing as the giant trees fall. EPIC is appealing that removal, and also suing to stop any salvage logging in Headwaters.

The other arm of the forest defense is direct action on the ground. With cutting in Headwaters postponed, activists focused on Yager Creek. Ongoing blockades delayed the logging crews and led to the arrest of 13 protesters June 22.

After the Earth First! rendezvous, protesters blockaded three more gates July 5, according to forest activist Judi Bari. They held up scores of vehicles, leading to multiple arrests, then invaded the CDF offices in Fortuna with 150 people, bringing on a pepper spray assault by the cops, more arrests and a confrontation when, in response to rough treatment by police, demonstrators surrounded the paddy wagons. Direct actions, involving nonviolent civil disobedience, were continuing at press time.

The call is out for massive legal demonstrations beginning Sept. 15, with planning meetings scheduled for mid-August. Bari notes that "only with a truly huge turnout will we be able to save Headwaters." More info: Mendocino Environmental Center, (707) 468-1660. ■

# Last stand for Mumia?

"As South Africa assigns the death penalty to the garbage can of history, Philadelphia whets its racist appetite as it bays for more black blood...As South Africa takes a great leap forward, America embraces its second season of neo-apartheid, as racist demagogues run on raw hatred—the political flavor of the '90s," wrote Mumia Abu-Jamal, after learning July 12 that Judge Albert Sabo refused to recuse himself.

Sabo, who sentenced Abu-Jamal to death 13 years ago, now presides over his appeal for a new trial. The judge persists in efforts to "jam the defense in every possible way," says Abu-Jamal's attorney Leonard Weinglass. The Pennsylvania court has so far refused to rule on a stay of execution.

As Abu-Jamal's Aug. 17 execution date approaches, "the fax machines are constantly running out of paper" in Judge Sabo's office, said Eli Rosenblatt of the Prison Activist Resource Center. So many people are calling to support Mumia that the judges "can't keep enough people to staff the phones," Rosenblatt said.

Bay Area supporters kept up the street heat in July, with a July 3 march in San Francisco, a July 17 march from Oakland to Berkeley, and a July 22 "Jam for Mumia" in Oakland's Mosswood Park with several well-known performers, including jazz percussionist Babatundé and saxophonist Lewis Jordan.

An Aug. 3 labor rally has endorsements from several locals of the Service Employees Int'l. Union, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 2850 and Int'l. Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Local 10, among others. A caravan will leave San Francisco for Philadelphia Aug. 5, stopping along the way in Boulder,



Lena Strayhorn displays a bruise covering a third of her arm, inflicted during her detention after the July 3 demo. "I rolled my eyes, and this was my punishment," she said.

Chicago, and Ann Arbor. And a national day of action is scheduled Aug. 17.

At the July 3 torchlight march, San Francisco police clashed with protesters. After a few people in the 500-strong crowd set fires in two dumpsters near the Mission police station, officers trapped the crowd in an alley and arrested 279 people on felony arson and trespassing charges. KPFA radio reported that several neighborhood residents were caught in the sweep. Most protesters spent two nights in jail before the charges were dropped and they were released.

The rally scared the police, according to Anne King, who was arrested. "Not only are we speaking out about a man on death row who shouldn't be, but

about the entire system," she said.

While King and other activists were outraged by the mass arrests, the incident also reminded them of the need to provide their own security at demonstrations, and some of the problems that can arise if they don't. "A single woman with kids doesn't have any support," King said. "She might get arrested and who's going to watch her kids?" Rallies are key to raising consciousness, King concluded, but other courses of action must continue as well.

More info/updates: Prison Activist Resource Center, (510) 845-8813; Bay Area Network, (415) 648/4505; Partisan Defense Cttee., (510) 830-0852. —Laura Wides and Marcy Rein

## ...Hiroshima

continued from page one

bomb victims in its commemorative exhibit this year. Salvoes of letters from the Air Force and American Legion shot that idea down, and the director of the Air and Space Museum was forced to resign. All that remains is a display of the Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the bomb.

"I saw the changing of the Enola Gay exhibit as the enforcement of the political correctness of the right," U.C. Berkeley history professor Ronald Takaki told *Asian Week*. Takaki just published a new book, *Hiroshima*, which explores the politics of the bombing, with particular attention to the overt and more subtle racist assumptions which informed Truman's decision.

"Latent August," a multi-media exhibit mounted by the National Japanese American Historical Society, puts in what the Smithsonian left out: photographs, paintings, prints and personal recollections of bomb survivors, as well as Japanese-American soldiers who were in Japan at that time, in an effort to bring attention to one of the greatest acts of terror in modern times.

"We were lucky," said Rosalyn Tonai of the Historical Society. "The California Council on Humanities provided the grant for the showing. Several groups were afraid to fund our exhibit."

Though it does include graphic pictures and testimonies by survivors, the politics surrounding the decision to use the bomb remain peripheral to the exhibit, said local artist and teacher Betty Kano—reflecting both a general lack of discussion and the history of silence among Japanese-Americans.

Tonai believes the community remained silent in the past because "a large number of Japanese Americans fought in the war in Europe and had to prove their loyalty in blood...They didn't want to be seen as the bad guys." Many Japanese-Americans believed that the bomb saved their lives, she said.

"They wanted to be a part of the mainstream. They were afraid to point the finger," Kano agreed. She described this behavior as the "basic formula for internalized oppression." But Kano and other

Nisei, second-generation immigrants, believe such silence is no longer endemic to the Japanese-American population.

The successful passage in 1988 of the redress and reparations bill, which awarded \$20,000 to each survivor of the internment camps, may have paved the way for more willingness within the Japanese American community to examine the bombing, said Kano. The bill was "a direct event in order to be free of a tremendous guilt, something that convulsed a whole generation of the Nisei," she said.

Jenna Hotta, a programmer at KPFA radio, wants students and other youth to know "how much was initiated on a grassroots level," lest they believe that the government granted redress "out of the goodness of its heart." Recollecting the effort, Hotta said, "we had to take a lot of chances...Nisei spoke out for the first time. That's what created the movement."

According to Sox Kintashima of the National Coalition for Redress and Repa-

rations, supporters filed a total of three bills over a period of 10 years. She remembers the early days, when friends would wave as they passed her but refused to cross the street to sign her petitions for reparations, fearing their names would wind up in the immigration office.

Both Kintashima and Miya Masaoka, a local musician and composer, believe that this generation of Japanese-Americans knows much more about its history than they were taught. "We didn't learn about it in history books and we barely learned about it from relatives," said Masaoka.

In a series of pieces she performed at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in July, dancer-choreographer Judy Kajwara portrayed the Japanese-American community's search for self-identity, from innocence to enlightenment.

"The Nisei talk about being very innocent before the camps...not as rhetorical as my generation. My generation was a lot more angry," she said.

## Hands around the University Aug. 6

LIVERMORE—For the past 50 years, the University of California's Board of Regents has managed the Lawrence Livermore Lab here, recipient of billions of U.S. government dollars for weapons research. The Livermore and Los Alamos labs designed and tested atomic and hydrogen bombs, Mx, Cruise and Pershing missiles, according to the American Friends Service Ctte. (AFSC).

"The purpose of a university is for creating peace through education, not contributing to research of atomic bombs," says AFSC's Al Jones.

Faculty and students at all nine U.C. campuses voted to end the Regents' management of Livermore, says Jones. The Regents meet in October to decide on renewing the current contracts.

AFSC is one of several peace organizations protesting the Regents' continued involvement with Defense Dept. research. They will mark Aug. 6, the 50th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, with "Hands Around the University," a silent vigil around the campus from 3-5p.m. The Peace and Conflict Studies program at U.C. Berkeley, Circle of Concern, and Women for Peace are co-sponsors of the event. For info: (510) 238-8080.

The Aug. 6 Coalition Abolish Nuclear Weapons (AFSC, California Peace Action, Veterans for Peace, the Livermore Conversion Project, San Jose Peace Center, Western States Legal Fdn., Tri-Valley CARES and Sacramento-Yolo Peace Action) plans a rally and nonviolent direct action at Livermore Lab starting at 10a.m. on the 6th. For info: (510) 832-4347.

In Sonoma County, the Peace and Justice Center will sponsor "Out of the Ashes: Recommitment to Life," a commemoration of the bombings, from 7p.m. - 9p.m. Aug. 6 in Santa Rosa's Courthouse Square. For info: (707) 575-8902.

—Nader Khouri

# NORTHERN CALIFORNIA EXPOSURE

## ACTION ALERTS

### In August

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA—Emergency Actions to Stop Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal;** journalist & former Black Panther is scheduled for execution on 8/17 in Pennsylvania, sign on to one of two emergency action networks, national day of action scheduled for 8/17, also see 8/6 Caravan to Philadelphia listing for national mobilization on 8/17, write to Gov. Thomas Ridge for stay, Main Capitol Bldg., Room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120, or contact Gov. by phone (717) 787-2500, or FAX (717) 783-3369, or contact International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 19709, Phila., PA 19142, (215) 476-8812, local emergency networks: Equal Justice USA/Quikote Center (510) 848-6767 ext. 612, Partisan Defense Comm. (415) 391-3844, other local contacts: Bay Area Network for Mumia Abu-Jamal (415) 648-4505, Caravan for Justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal (510) 845-8813

**Wed. Aug. 2**  
**OAKLAND—Sane Alternatives Coalition Meeting;** join in planning how to counter the Republican's Contract On America w/ this East Bay coalition, Humanist Hall (Access), 390 27th St., 6-8pm, (510) 547-0226, (510) 272-6618

**OAKLAND—Film: Black Cinema...An Afrocentric View of the World;** enjoy complimentary gumbo w/ film, spr. Black Film-makers Hall of Fame, Geoffrey's Inner Circle, 410 14th St., 6-9pm, free, (510) 465-0804

**SAN FRANCISCO—Portraits of Anarchists:** Both Guards films, videos & exhibit on both the old school & new school of anarchism, hosted by visiting London photographer Casey Orr whose portraits will be on display, Artists' Television Access (Access), 922 Valencia St., 8:30pm, \$5, (415) 824-3890

**Aug. 4 to 6**  
**BERKELEY—Conference: Organizing Graduate Student Employees;** 4th conference of the coalition of Graduate Employee Unions focuses on the issues of organizing & diversity, spr. Association of Graduate Student Employees/UAW, fees: \$10 indiv., \$50 unrecognized groups, \$100 recognized groups, for info. (510) 233-7768

**PIERCY (Humboldt Cty.)—Reggae on the River;** Friday night, Saturday & Sunday live outdoor reggae concert extravaganza, limited on-site camping, benefit for the Mateo Community Center of Redway, French's Camp, on Hwy 101, gates open 8/4 at 8am

**Sat. Aug. 5**  
**MOUNT SHASTA—Music Festival for Peace;** day of heart-opening music w/ Bruce & Brian Bee Var, lasos, Michael Garrison, Robin Miller & others, plus multi-media experience, peace meditation, spr. Global Peace Foundation, Shastice Park, foot of Mt. Shasta, 9am, \$20, (415) 381-2644

**SAN FRANCISCO—Planning Meeting: Youth In Struggle '95;** join in planning western states conference for activists under 30 to be held 10/27-29, will seek to unite nonprofit, union, college, high school & community activists, Northern California Comm. of Correspondence office, 522 Valencia St., 11am-3pm, (415) 863-6637; westyouth@garnet.berkeley.edu

**Sun. Aug. 20**  
**SAN FRANCISCO—Mobilization for Health Care March, Rally and Concert;** all day event starts w/ march across the Golden Gate Bridge to call attention to the current health care crisis, rally w/ speakers including Rev. Jesse Jackson & concert at Fort Scott in the Presidio, many labor sprs. including SEIU Local 250 & CNA, gather 9am at Battery East parking lot off Lincoln Ave. for march across bridge, can also take 28 & 29 MUNI buses, rally & concert begin at noon, (510) 869-2252, for transportation from Sonoma County (707) 575-8902

### In August

**BAY AREA—S.F. Mime Troupe Free in the Parks: Coast City Confidential;** the nation's premiere multi-cultural comedy troupe is coming to a park near you, presenting a hard-boiled musical drama of political intrigue that dissects the Republican victory: who made it happen, who let it happen, who it happened to - and who didn't report it, shows in: Berkeley on 8/5&6 at Willard Park, Hillsides & Derby; S.F. on 8/12 at Precita Park, Folsom & Precita; S.F. on 8/13 Washington Sq. Park, Columbus & Union; Oakland on 8/26&27 at Mosswood Park, MacArthur & Broadway, for all listed shows music starts at 1:30pm, show at 2pm, free w/ don. req., (415) 285-1717

**SAN FRANCISCO—Filipino American Arts Exposition;** (8/2-9/4) a national packed full of films, workshops, fairs, & parades to foster a dynamic community culture among Filipino-Americans & to reach out to others. Center for the Arts at Yerba Buena Gardens, 701 Mission St., for info, on hours & \$ (415) 621-3223

**SAN FRANCISCO—Atomic Bomb Series at the Exploratorium;** (8/5-9/3) films, talks, performance art, exhibits in commemoration of 50 years since dropping the bomb, films *Nagasaki Journey* & *Bound by the Wind* includes talks by the film-makers, also "Day After Trinity" photo exhibit by Yosuke Yamahata, calligraphy performances by Kazuaki Tanahashi & much more, The Exploratorium, for program details, hours & \$ (415) 563-7337

**Tue. Aug. 1**  
**SAN FRANCISCO—Community Meeting on Women and AIDS;** monthly discussion focuses on int'l issues on women and HIV, spr. Women's AIDS Network, Lyon Martin Women's Health Services, 1748 Market St., 2nd Fl., 9am, (415) 621-4160

This is a calendar of events for political and social change in Northern California. Listings are free. Send your listing to NORTHERN CALIFORNIA EXPOSURE, 395 Merritt Ave., #304, Oakland, CA 94610 or call (510) 271-8030. The deadline for September events is August 15.

**Wed. Aug. 9**  
**SAN FRANCISCO—Honor the U.N. Declaration of an International Decade of Indigenous People;** sunrise ceremony to begin the day on which the U.N. General Assembly has resolved to encourage governments to honor indigenous people thru the coming decade, spr. Int'l Indian Treaty Council, leave Pier 41 5:30am on Red & White Fleet for 6:20am ceremony on Alcatraz Island, return by 9am, \$8, (415) 512-1501

**Thu. Aug. 10**  
**SAN FRANCISCO—Current Trends in Sexual Harassment Law;** brown bag lunch talk by attorney Barbara Bryant, spr. ELC Brown Bag Lunch Series, 1663 Mission St., 4th Fl. noon-1:30pm

**SAN FRANCISCO—Portraits of Anarchists:** Both Guards films, videos & exhibit on both the old school & new school of anarchism, hosted by visiting London photographer Casey Orr whose portraits will be on display, Artists' Television Access (Access), 922 Valencia St., 8:30pm, \$5, (415) 824-3890

**Aug. 4 to 6**  
**BERKELEY—Conference: Organizing Graduate Student Employees;** 4th conference of the coalition of Graduate Employee Unions focuses on the issues of organizing & diversity, spr. Association of Graduate Student Employees/UAW, fees: \$10 indiv., \$50 unrecognized groups, \$100 recognized groups, for info. (510) 233-7768

**PIERCY (Humboldt Cty.)—Reggae on the River;** Friday night, Saturday & Sunday live outdoor reggae concert extravaganza, limited on-site camping, benefit for the Mateo Community Center of Redway, French's Camp, on Hwy 101, gates open 8/4 at 8am

**Sat. Aug. 5**  
**MOUNT SHASTA—Music Festival for Peace;** day of heart-opening music w/ Bruce & Brian Bee Var, lasos, Michael Garrison, Robin Miller & others, plus multi-media experience, peace meditation, spr. Global Peace Foundation, Shastice Park, foot of Mt. Shasta, 9am, \$20, (415) 381-2644

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**BAY AREA—Caravan for Justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal;** join in caravan leaving Bay Area on its way to Philadelphia for nationwide mobilization to save the life Abu-Jamal on 8/17 the day he is scheduled for execution (see action alerts), for info. (510) 845-8813

**OAKLAND—Haitian Band on First West Coast Tour;** La Peña Cultural Center presents the roots music ensemble Boukan Genin singing about the everyday political & social problems Haitians face, Caribe Dance Center, 1408 Webster St., 9pm, call for \$ Slyvia (510) 849-2568 ext. 16 or Fernando ext. 17

**SAN FRANCISCO—Commemoration of Hiroshima Bombing;** this *Feast of the Transformation* service includes Anglican Bishop Joseph Noriaki Iida of Kyushu, Japan, witness to the bombing, plus dramatization of Thomas Merton's poem "Original Child Bomb, Points to be Scrawled on the Walls of a Cave", also music, procession after service to St. Mary's Cathedral for related event, spr. Peace & Justice Commission, Episcopal Diocese of CA, service at Grace Cathedral (Access), 1051 Taylor St., 3pm, (415) 589-5935

**SANTA ROSA—Hiroshima Vigil;** candlelight vigil & service marks the 50th anniversary of dropping the bomb, speakers include Rabbi Michael Robinson, spr. Sonoma City Peace & Justice Center, Courthouse Sq., 7-9pm, (707) 575-8902

**Fri. Aug. 11**  
**SAN FRANCISCO—Public Hearing: Women Health and the Environment;** expert & personal testimony on pesticides, radiation, organochlorines & breast cancer in Bay Area before a panel of local elected officials & representatives from government agencies, chaired by Bella Abzug, War Memorial Opera House, 401 Van Ness, Green Rm., 10am, for info, Women's Environment & Development Organization (510) 849-9343

**Sat. Aug. 12**  
**EMERYVILLE—Benefit Picnic for the Committees of Correspondence;** socialize w/ members of the Oakland Comm. of Correspondence, bring potluck side dish, main barbecue course provided, Emeryville Marina Park, end of Powell St., off exit from Route 80 West, 1-5pm, \$10 don., David (510) 653-0286

**Aug. 6 & 9**  
**PALO ALTO—Bell Tolling to Commemorate Hiroshima and Nagasaki Bombings;** bells will toll throughout the Peninsula at the time & date when the two bombs exploded, gather 8/6 at 8:15am to share tolling for Hiroshima bomb at location TBA & then carpool to Livermore Labs action; press conference at City Hall during tolling 8/9 at 11:02am for Nagasaki bomb, sprs. Physicians for Social Responsibility & Peninsula Comprehensive Test Ban Coalition, (415) 326-8837

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**RICHMOND—Community Conference: Cancer in Richmond;** informational & strategy workshops, plus reports on community campaigns, sprs. Women's Environment

& Development Organization & West County Toxics Coalition, Nevin Community Center, 598 Nevin, 9am, free or don., (510) 232-3427

**SAN FRANCISCO—Films & Videos: Living in the Mission: Diversity = Division;** Mission District film & video makers present works about their lives in the Mission, Artist Television Access (Access), 922 Valencia St., 8:30pm, \$5, (415) 824-3890

**Sun. Aug. 13**  
**SAN LORENZO—Report Back from Cuba;** Mary Ann Reno talks about her experience on recent Venceremos Brigade solidarity contingent, spr. Hayward Comm. of Correspondence, 15779 Villa Sorrento, 1:30pm, (510) 886-4026

**Aug. 24 to 27**  
**SAN FRANCISCO—African American Solo Performance Festival II;** 4 nights of shows featuring outstanding solo performances including 8/25 Felix Justice's tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King *Let Us Have Peace*, 8/26 an evening w/ actress Ruby Dee, plus much more. The New Performance Gallery, 3153 17th St., all shows 8pm, tickets \$10 except 8/26 \$50, for info. (415) 346-9344

**Thu. Aug. 24**  
**OAKLAND—Labor Studies Classes at Laney Begin;** semester of Laney College Labor Studies begins, classes on: grievances & arbitration; labor law; the American labor movement; organizing across borders; union organizing & more, adv. registration req., for info. (510) 464-3210

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**Sat. Aug. 26**  
**BERKELEY—Cajun Festival at the Farmers Market;** music by the California Cajun Orchestra, Motor Dude Zydeco, Tee Fee & more, plus food from New Orleans Catering & beer by Bison Brewery & Pacific Coast Brewery, annual celebration of twice weekly farmers markets spr. by the Ecology Center, at the Farmers Market, Center St. btw. Milvia & MLKing Way, 11am, free, (510) 548-3333

**BERKELEY—Performance: Indecent Exposure AIDS Benefit;** the U.C.'s live Rocky Horror Picture Show cast performs musical & dance numbers, benefit for East Bay AIDS organizations: Providence House, Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases & Pacific Center for Human Growth, UC Theater (Access), 2036 University Ave., 8pm, (510) 843-6267

**SAN FRANCISCO—Feminists Challenge the Blockade Against Cuba;** Yolanda Alaniz, Pastors for Peace caravanista speaks on leadership role of women in defending Cuban Revolution & movement to end U.S. embargo, Cuban buffet dinner precedes program, spr. Radical Women, Valencia Hall, 523-A Valencia St., 6:30pm buffet \$8, 8pm program \$3-5, (415) 864-1278

**Mon. Aug. 28**  
**BERKELEY—Wimmin's Poetry Reading;** monthly series providing a space for women to share & listen to poetry at the Long Haul Info Shop, 3124 Shattuck Ave., 7pm, free, (510) 601-5673

**SAN JOSE—Training for Affirmative Action Activists;** train to talk to public on issues, learn of Californians for Justice petition drive, spr. South Bay Coal. for Affirmative Action, SEIU Local 1877, 1010 Raffi Dr., 7pm, free, (408) 983-0645

**Wed. Aug. 30**  
**SAN FRANCISCO—Labor Studies Classes at SFSU Begin;** semester of Dept. of Labor Studies at S.F. State Univ. begins, classes in: intro. to labor studies; women & work; affirmative action; organizing in the workplace; plus free class for local unionists w/ Walter Johnson on current labor issues, adv. registration req, for info. (415) 338-2885

**Aug. 17 to 20**  
**MENDOCINO—Elderflower Womenspicnic Festival;** workshops, music, rituals, crafts for women & girls, tent & cabin camping, includes clean & sober area, Mendocino Woodlands camp, reg. fee \$150-195 for women, \$80-125 for girls, (916) 658-0697

**Aug. 18 & 19**  
**SAN FRANCISCO—Conference: Building a Bridge Between Nurses and Patients;** nurses, health care professionals & patients are invited to join nurses from the U.S., Canada & other countries in the fight to reclaim our role as patient advocates, keynote speech

by Ralph Nader, held in conjunction w/ 8/20 Mobilization for Health Care, spr. California Nurses Association, for info, on location & schedule (415) 864-4141 ext. 301

**Sun. Aug. 10**  
**SAN FRANCISCO—Readings for Cultural Activism;** Aurora Morales reads from her works in progress *Remedios* & *Madame Stories: Essays on Cultural Activism*, plus readings by Melanie DeMore, Starhawk, Gerry T., benefit for Inst. for Cultural Activism, Women's Bldg. (Access), 3543 18th St., 7-9pm, call for \$ (510) 540-1262

**Mon. Aug. 21**  
**SANTA ROSA—Death Penalty Vigil;** monthly vigil at Courthouse Sq. at 5pm, spr. ACLU, (707) 577-8761

**Tue. Aug. 22**  
**SAN FRANCISCO—Youth Issues and the Mayor's Race;** political analysts share their expertise at brown bag lunch; pollster & political analyst David Binder & campaign consultant Mary Hughes join children's advocates in discussing how to use the Mayor's race to highlight youth issues & get commitments from candidates, Coleman Advocates office, 2601 Mission St., #804, noon, (415) 641-4362

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**Aug. 24 to 27**

BOOKS:  
'BROTHERMAN'

## Redemption songs

**Brotherman: The Odyssey of Black Men in America—An Anthology.** Edited by Herb Boyd and Robert L. Allen. New York, Ballantine Books, 1995. 907 pp. \$35.00

Reviewed  
by Kevin Cartwright

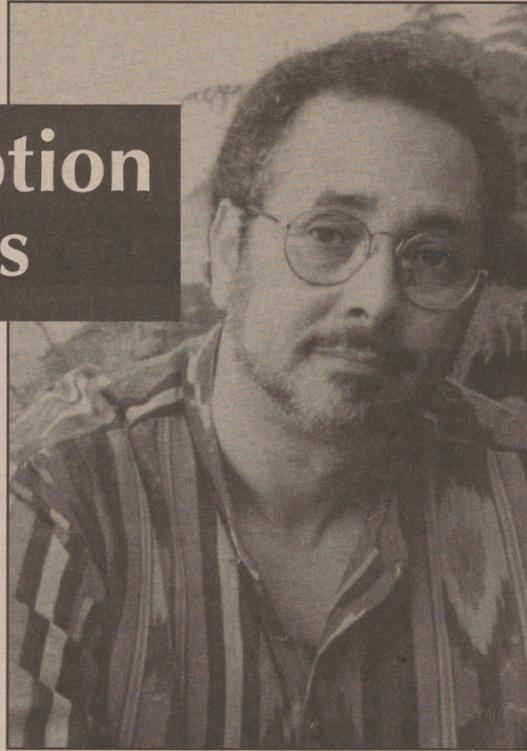


photo by Janet Carter

Robert Allen

The running joke in many African-American social circles these days is typically, "Brotherman, how does it feel to be the problem person?" Black people seem to have suddenly acquired the power and force to simultaneously undermine the American nation-state with welfare queens, take job opportunities away from white men and create such mass chaos for the social order that severe punitive measures replace common sense and communication. I'm sure most black people would say they never knew they held such sway with American society, considering the way black bodies parade through American popular culture as provocateurs of what ails the country most.

"Now what?" is the common refrain heard most as the predicament of blacks and, in this case, black men, has become the milieu for public spectatorship and consumption. And yet, this refrain is a valid one: what else must the American populace know about black men to cease utilizing them as slaves, victims, poster boys, criminals, or exotic others? What does one need to know about the Africanist presence in North America to understand how integral black men are to any fundamental notion of Americanism?

In his brilliant essay, "Reflecting Black," Michael Eric Dyson writes on the complexity of being black and male today: "The success of the American political, economic, and social infrastructure was predicated in large part upon the squelching of black life by white modes of cultural domination. The psychic, political, economic, and social costs of slavery, then, continue to be paid, but mostly by the descendants of the oppressed. The way in which young black men continue to pay is particularly unsettling." Dyson goes on to stress that the trendy nature of in-vogue activism does nothing to change how people resolve persistent issues: "As things stand, problems like poverty, racism, and sexism go in and out of style. Black men, with the exception of star athletes and famous entertainers, are out of style." Amen.

But out of this morass there rises the possibility of redemption, of claiming all of who we are.

"Brotherman: The Odyssey of Black Men in America—An Anthology," edited by Herb Boyd and Robert L. Allen, shows the way. It explores the full weight, depth, and dynamism of the black male experience in America. It is the most comprehensive anthology of black male writing to date, and by far the most significant in scope and spectrum. Boyd and Allen accomplish in this work something that rarely happens in art or life: black men allow themselves to simply be without being handled, filtered, or distorted by a

culture that depends on these manipulations to control them.

The collection includes slave narratives, memoirs, social histories, novels, short stories, and biographies. As Boyd and Allen point out in their introduction, "more than a mere charting of the Black man's travails and triumphs—his ceaseless struggle for manhood and dignity—the central purpose of this collection is to create a living mosaic of essays and stories in which Black men can view themselves, and be viewed without distortion."

"Brotherman," like its historical and literary predecessors "The New Negro" (Alain Locke, 1925) and "Breaking Ice" (Terry McMillan, 1988), gives ownership and validity to the voices and experiences of many who otherwise would be virtually ignored. It would not be gratuitous at all to suggest that "Brotherman" will rank as one of the most important works of this era, and will play a role like "A Bridge Called My Back" did for radical women's writing, or "Daughters of Africa" attempts to do with the writing of women in the African diaspora. I believe it will do more than both.

"Brotherman" encompasses a vast array of selections that run the gamut of topics, themes, and emotions. It grounds a diverse African-American experience into a broad human experience that helps us examine the complexity, commonality, development, and struggles black men have had to contend with since time immemorial. The collection of voices ranges from the masters (Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison) to the burgeoning (Kevin Powell, Nathan McCall, Damu Hakim); from the literary (Clarence Major, Henry Dumas, Alexs Pate) to the political (Dhruva Bin Wahad, Manning Marable, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X); the Afrocentric (Molefi Asante, John Henrik Clarke) to the new world Africanism of Cornel West.

Ultimately, the power of these voices refutes the many assumptions the dominant American culture has of black men.

One of the critical interventions Boyd and Allen accomplish with this anthology is to show how black men do, in fact, possess important non-market values: tenderness, compassion, joy, love, hope. These qualities are rarely attributed to black men as a whole. What one normally sees is the brooding, the missing, the drug selling, or the surviving black male who send people of all kinds scurrying for protection as if he were something akin to the Godzilla monster. So when one reads in "Brotherman" the many touching pieces on relationships, love, fathers, sons...one is forced to unscrew his head, empty out all the crap, and start anew.

Considering the times we live in, one wonders if a book of this stature will transcend the flavor-of-the-month treatment of public black culture and help make substantive changes in the perceptions and actions of those who insist on idealizing black people, specifically black men. Perhaps Kalamu Ya Salaam had the best answer in his essay, "What is Life," recalling the struggles of black

people in America: "Those of us who got to the mountaintop alive, we live to see what generations of African-American mountain climbers have seen as they attempted to scale the heights of America's oppressive power: another mountain. There's always another mountain." ■

*Boyd and Allen accomplish in this work something that rarely happens in art or life: black men allow themselves to simply be without being handled, filtered, or distorted.*

### YOUTH-PRODUCED POLITICAL TV? WHAT A

## Hellavision!

by Wendy Owen and Kirsten Cole

As neighbors drop by to borrow diapers and her child plays in front of her, Hellavision's camera focuses in on Lynda Wilson describing how proposed social service cuts will affect her already-tight budget. A San Francisco teenage mom, Wilson speaks of overcoming obstacles of poverty and single parenthood to raise a child. The program cuts to on-the-street interviews with Bay Area youth who are grappling with the question of what family means to them. Many speak of friends, some talk of a single parent, but all embrace a new, looser definition of family.

This program is the first in a series of cable access broadcasts by Hellavision, a video collaborative of young Bay Area organizers who want to provide an alternative to commercial media. They see Hellavision as an activist tool, giving youth a chance to speak for themselves and including people in national debates who might otherwise be overlooked by mainstream media. "The TV representation of young people is exclusively either cute characters on sitcoms or shadowy wrongdoers on the nightly news," says Sasha Magee, Hellavision's outreach coordinator. "This of course is even more true for people of color. We feel that it is time for a more realistic view of who young people are and what we do."

Hellavision brings together activists affiliated with a number of grassroots organizations in the Bay Area, including Empty the Shelters, Center for Third World Organizing, Applied Research Center, the Young Communist League, Coalition on Homelessness, La Raza Student Organization and the Violence Prevention Coalition. Though most of the people involved in producing the show are in their twenties, program organizers are involving younger participants through direct outreach to community organizations that serve teens.

In addition to diversifying the perspectives in the media, Hellavision involves young people in the production of each episode. Although several participants have professional video

experience, some picked up a video camera for the first time when they joined Hellavision. The project aims to include members of the community regardless of technical experience, allowing them to create a positive image of themselves on television. "The little positive coverage that does exist [on TV] is presented as an individual act, usually of the 'boy scout helps old lady across street' variety," says Magee.

Hellavision reflects the diverse experiences of youth in the Bay Area, emphasizing youth working together to effect social change. In addressing topics such as racism and gender inequality, Hellavision focuses on concrete responses to immediate issues. Upcoming episodes about racism will document student involvement in demonstrations and walkouts around Prop 187. One future show will explore the battle against the proposed curfew in San Francisco, and highlight the success of Oakland youth who defeated a similar proposal in their community.

"Getting people together to do video is a political act in and of itself," says participant Kane Ellen.

"Let's not forget what it takes for people to speak and have a voice. We're giving people the tools to speak and the opportunity to be heard. This gives them a sense of power they wouldn't otherwise have and pushes them to speak in other ways."

Hellavision airs one Thursday each month at 7:30p.m. on Cityvisions Cable 53, which goes out to 10,000 people. Upcoming broadcasts are slated for July 20 and Aug. 17. In addition, producers recently negotiated showings on Pinole Cable in Contra Costa County and plan to expand to other cable stations throughout Northern California. To make their programming accessible to a variety of audiences, they are exploring the possibilities of distributing tapes to interested community organizations, as well as scheduling showings at art spaces such as Artists' Television Access. ■

For tapes of past episodes or other info: Sasha Magee, (415) 647-0982 or e-mail at <sashax@sfbayguardian.com>

