

BPP Legacy still alive in Bay Area

This has been a busy month for It's About Time BPP Alumni Committee. After getting over the flu and regaining some strength I hosted some students from NY. They were in California doing research on the Oakland Community School. They were told that Its About Time had an outstanding archive. They called me before they came out to California, and they drove up from Oakland for a day of research. As a bonus, I arranged for them to speak to Clark Bailey who was one of the Program Directors of the school, he lives in Sacramento.

On January 16th, I drove to Oakland and did a BPP Bus tour for about 20 students from the Twin Cities in Minn. They were Social Justice Students doing research in the Bay area. Each day they did some type of work with different Bay area organizations, like Critical Resistance and Prison Radio. Today it was the Black Panther Party History Tour.

We met at old Merritt College on MLK and from there I walked them over to "All Goods Bakery", which was the first BPP office. There is a display of BPP newspapers on the wall and a historical marker outside the Bakery. I then took them by Bobby Seale's house, which is across the street from Merritt College. We got back on the bus and I took them to 55th and Market streets where back in 1967, because the city of Oakland refused to put up a traffic light, two young boys were hit by cars at the busy intersection. The BPP sprung into action, by acting as armed crosswalk guards. The city of Oakland hurried up to put a light in and there is a historical marker there also. Our next stop was Bill Boyette's old liquor store where we had a picket line because he refused to donate to the community. It is located on 54th and Martin

Luther King Way.

The next stop was La Pena Culture Center at 3105 Shattuck St. I took them on a guided tour of the “Louder than Words” exhibit which I had just put up. When we left La Pena, I pointed out that across the street at 3106 was the National HQ’s of the BPP from 1968-1970. Some of the photos from the exhibit were taken in front of the office. I took them to a number of other BPP locations and I took them by the West Oakland Library which is across the street from Bobby Hutton Park. The library has a BPP exhibit that was provided by Its About Time. From there we went downtown to the Alameda County Law Offices to view Ilke Hartmann’s (a dear friend) BPP photo exhibit. This is across the street from the Alameda County Courthouse. I took them to Whole Foods for lunch. We continued on the tour after lunch. The students asked good



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questions on how we were able to carry out our ideals. I told them about the level of political education the BPP members were involved in and that we also believed in putting theory into social practice.

Friday January 18th was the official opening of “It’s About Time “Louder than Words” photo exhibit at La Pena. People started gathering for the exhibit early. We had to open the door at 5:30. We had a nice flow of people during the opening. I gave private tours and spoke about each Social Program at length. All the photos from the exhibit were about Social programs; like the Breakfast programs, Sickle cell Testing, Voter Registration, Bussing Program to Prisons, Free Medical Clinics, Free Ambulance Service, Free Food, and Shoe programs. I also pointed out each one of these programs were a part of the 10 point program, and each program pointed out contradictions with the system. The exhibit contains 22 photos. It’s About Time members Gail Shaw and Clark Bailey also attended.

A number of BPP member attended including Dr. Burt Small who was in charge of the George Jackson Medical Clinic back in the 1970 and now heads the Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic now. He did some of his poetry. Brother Steve Long and his wife, Emory Douglas came by as well as David Levinson, who was a member of the Berkeley NCCF, member of the Lumpen Band and also traveled to China with the BPP delegation in 1972. David parents were involved with the BPP, were founding members of the Huey P Newton Defense Committee, and helped put the Community Control of Police Petition on the ballot in 1971 in Berkeley. A number of students and members of Occupy came as well.

Because I live in Sacramento, which is 80 miles away, I stayed the night over Emory Douglas’s house in SF. Because I was going to be a speaker at another BPP Photo exhibit opening in SF saurday. The opening of

Pirkle Jones and Ruth Baruch Black Power/Flower Power exhibit, at the Harvey Milk Photo Center.

When I got over to Emory's pad he was watching a Sports program on TV about the 49ers, Randy Moss, whom I like. We watched the program and Emory made a prediction that the 49ers would beat the Atlanta Falcons. I asked Emory how the trip to Mexico went, he showed me photos of his visit, and he took his daughter and was there for two weeks doing different art programs. I posted some of the photos they took on my Facebook page (Billy X Jennings).

The next morning I got up early and headed to the Haight St, I had to stop by Bound Together Books to take care of some business. The book store was closed and so I decided to walk up the Haight which I hardly ever do, have coffee at Coffee to the People café and walked over to the Power to the People diner for a donut. Something's every change. My next stop was at the opening of Flower Power and Black Power the Photo work of Pirkle Jones and Ruth Marion Baruch. I was asked to speak at the opening along with actor Peter Coyote. Ruth and Pirkle took these photos in the summer of 1968 during the Free Huey Movement based in Oakland with rallies at the courthouse and Bobby Hutton Park.

The Harvey Milk Photo Center is a nice faculty, it's on the ground floor of the two story building, located in a very nice neighbor, and they had reserve parking for Pete Coyote and myself great, because a parking ticket in SF is no joke. Walking into the Photo center you're met with extra-large Black and white photos of BPP member from the 1960's. They photo were taken while I was a panther in training. I have worked with Pirkle on the 2006 Rank and File Photo exhibit at the Yuba W museum. That exhibit broke the museum all time attends record for

exhibit.

During reception Pete Coyote who was a member of the Diggers, a social organization that sprung up in the Haight during the late 1960's. They worked to start the Free clinic, feed people, baker bread and gave it away free. Peter told me back in the 1960's, one morning he answered the door one morning Huey Newton and Lil Bobby Hutton came knocking. They had found out that the Diggers had an electric monograph machine and wanted to run off copies of their newspaper which was Vol1Number 1 of the Black Panther party newspaper.

