

Black Panther Party History Month 2011 Oakland California

Greetings everyone. After a few weeks of R&R, I'm back on the BPP Legacy trail. I would like to thank all the people who helped make this a very educational experience. I have gathered my photos and notes from events during BPP History Month, so here goes.

In Oakland, the Home of the BPP, there was a whole month of events highlighting the Party's history. It's About Time BPP alumni committee and the Commemorator Newspaper sponsored the events. I have to give all respect to Laney College BSU for all the help they provided. It's About Time put up Five Photo Exhibits around the city and sponsored a Film Festival at the main library in downtown Oakland.

Events were held at Laney College sponsored by the Laney College BSU. Merritt College, the college Huey Newton and Bobby Seale attended, held a photo exhibit in the Art Dept. Exhibits were held at W. Oakland Library and DeFremery Park (Bobby Hutton Park), W. Berkeley library also held an exhibit, as well as Rasputin Records in Berkeley (The largest record store in the Bay area).

The exhibits are a teaching tool that I have developed to educate people about the BPP. I have received great reviews about all of the exhibits. Thousands of people were able to view the history of the Party and its social programs. The exhibit at Merritt College is still up in building A across from the library. Judy Singer, one of the librarians, said the exhibit has educated and enlightened people to the history of the Panthers and how they helped change Oakland. She also said that books and information about the Party had greatly increased over the last month or so and now she is receiving phone calls from around the state about the exhibit. Every exhibit is different, I use photos, books, magazines from our archives and I have permission from Jeffrey Blankfort, Ilka Hartman, Steven Shames, Ducho Dennis, Emory Douglas, and Gayle Dickson to use their photos and artwork for any exhibit. Rasputin Records in Berkeley has been a long time supporter of the BPP. I have had a rotating photo exhibit in their windows for over 5 years. The record store is located a few blocks from the UC Berkeley campus. The record store is

half a block long and our exhibit is in the front window. On any given day, a few thousand people pass the exhibit. We also have the “All Power to the People” video showing on their big screen TV that faces the street and can be seen from your car as you pass by. I have been on Telegraph Ave. at night and seen people standing in front of the store watching the video.

On Friday, October 21st, we held a Meet and Greet @ Eastside Arts Alliance. Many Panthers and supporters attended. We had an Afro/Cuban band play (thanks to Emory Douglas) and a DJ spinning old school music (thanks to Clark Bailey) and a number of community people shared their talents and singing skills. We had a few spoken word artists as well. The Center was packed, and Donald Cox’ daughter and family came out to spend some time with Party members. Also in the house was Barbara Cox, wife to DC, who came out from Philly to attend the weekend celebrations. Many comrades attended the Meet and Greet from out of town. Fun was had by all.

Saturday morning was the official opening of the 45th yr celebration. The opening of the celebration was started by drumming from comrades Charles Brunson (Omawale) and wife Margo. Charles also did libations. Aaron Dixon from the Seattle chapter and Sister Tarika Lewis (one of the first Sisters to join the BPP) were the MC’s for the day. Steve McClutchen’s tribute to the fallen comrades of the BPP was a very moving reading. Elbert “Big Man” Howard, an original Panther, spoke on Huey P. Newton and his contributions to the struggle for freedom and the Black Community. Big Man also did an outstanding article on the Contributions of the BPP to the struggle which appeared in our program book.

We had the pleasure of entertainment by the one and only Phavia Kujichagulia, musician, artist, and Freedom fighter. We had many speakers on Saturday, like Dr Tolbert Small who spoke passionately about the history of the BPP and the medical care provided by the 11 free medical clinics the BPP operated. Brother Long John Washington spoke about Bunchy Carter and the Southern California chapter.

Bobby Seale, co founder of the BPP, was the keynote speaker. He gave a very good speech on meeting Huey, going to Merritt College and writing the 10

point program and platform.

Before we started our workshops, Congressperson Barbara Lee spoke and gave It's About Time a certificate from congress for our hard work in keeping the BPP legacy alive. It's About Time Committee gave out certificates also. Sister Sheba helped design the certificate that honors the Sisters in the BPP .We gave them to every Sister that was in the Party. We also give out a Cindy Smallwood community certificate for supporting the BPP legacy. Cindy's sister flew in from Las Vegas to attend the celebration. She was very glad that her little sister was remembered. We also give a special plate to Doctor Tolbert Small for all the great work he has done.

After the celebration at the Black Repertory Theater, we went back to the hotel changed clothes and drove over to Fillmore in SF for the SF8 celebration Party. The celebration was held at the Afro American Complex. Charges were dropped on members SF8. It was a usually warm night in SF, there was a full house, and they had a Children Band that was real good, good food, comrades, and good music.

Sunday the picnic at Bobby Hutton Park was nice, another nice day in the 70's. Music, speakers, comrades, can't, beat it.

I would like to thank all the comrades that attended. We had folks from Seattle, LA, New Orleans, Dallas, Houston, Detroit, Ohio, NY, Philly, and Chicago.