
CULTURAL DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER

August 1993 Special Sample for Board Members

In Loving Memory of William Michael Stroud July 21, 1954 - June 30, 1993

by Jack Hircchman and other friends

The death of Bill Stroud on June 30, 1993 is a profound loss for the City of San Francisco in particular, the Bay Area in general, and the cause of liberty every where. Bill lived each day to the fullest-working, studying, creating, communicating, inspiring, loving, caring, and giving of himself to all who came in contact with him. For everyone that could reach him by phone, by fax, by mail, or by spirit, Bill was available.

He Died quite suddenly, after less than a week in the hospital, of both pneumonia and leukemia. The latter was diagnosed only after he had entered the hospital with pneumonia. An African-American poet, local, national and international cultural worker and activist, Bill had worked for the past eleven years at the Stanford Medical Center in Palo Alto in cardiovascular research. He obtained both his B.S. and M.S. at Stanford University and was intending to go back to school for his Ph.D.. He was fluent in Japanese and Portuguese.

Bill dedicated his life to community service at both the cultural and political levels. He was a co-founder and tireless board member of the Tenderloin's 509 Cultural; Center from 1987 to the present. The day he passed a letter arrived from Cuba confirming the show of Cuban artists that he had spearheaded and worked on for two years.

Bill was the chair of the Alliance for Cultural Democracy, past chair of Art Against Apartheid, and member of the Bay Area Anti-Apartheid Network. He was a member of the Bridge to Africa group, and virtually single handedly facilitated the sending of one hundred boxes of medical supplies to Somalia. Bill was a member of the Venceramos Brigade and US Hands Off Cuba, and collected thousands of dollars for medical aid that was sent to Cuba. He was also an early member of the San Francisco Arts Democratic Club.

He had been working with the Asian African American Round Table, a group dealing with Pacific Rim problems as well as new alliances with the African continent. He was a past co-chair of the Tenderloin's Crime Abatement meetings. He served as a historical consultant to Keith Grier's A Black Box Theater's production of Musa. He was fundraising to send Vukani Mawethu choir to South Africa.

Per wishes of his family and friends, the 509 Cultural Center is starting the William Stroud Fund. Donations may be made payable to:

509 Cultural Center
c/o William Stroud Fund
1007 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
415/ 255-5971

These donations will go directly towards publishing 24 Hours, by William Stroud. Condolences or correspondence may be sent to the 509 Cultural Center for forwarding to family members.

As a poet, Bill was a member of the International Black Artists and Writers, and was editing an anthology of African-American poetry from the Bay Area. Bill's poetry and writings have been published in numerous publications and anthologies world wide. Bill helped to organize and gave readings at hundreds of events over the years involving the multicultural communities in the Bay Area. At the time of his death, he was in the process of getting his own book of poetry, 24 Hours, published, and was working on an historical documentary on African American baseball leagues in Japan.

Additionally, Bill was a volunteer organizer for the Rainbow Coalition for Jesse Jackson's bid for the Presidency in 1984. And over the years, he acted as an advisor for a myriad of arts and community groups locally as well as internationally.

The activities described above ordinarily would inscribe the life of a man twice his age. Bill Stroud would have been 39 on July 21st of this sad year of 1993. He is survived by his mother Elizabeth and his brother Louis of Brooklyn, New York; his fiance Marilyn Williams and her daughter Julia; and all his loving friends. Poet, internationalist, community dynamo, and avid Giants fan, Bill was a man well worth your deepest thoughts, and in whose name our collective struggle to transform this society and the world shall certainly be galvanized.

Words about Bill, by Betty Kano

Who knew Bill? Everyone "knew" him because he was everywhere, did everything, contacted everyone and worked for such a long time on social justice issues affecting those at home and in many countries.

I knew Bill Stroud for ten years, loved him and worked with him on many projects, but I didn't really know him. I could not fully appreciate his accomplishments, or always understand his urgency. It has taken his death to get a glimpse of all that and feel all the more the dreadful loss of his passing. I didn't know the depth of his soul, the magnitude of his vision, the genius of his work. Only upon his leaving, as we attempt to piece together the reflection of his life among us into a new fabric that unites us, has it become clearer and clearer the scope of this humble and extraordinary man, Bill Stroud. The Alliance for Cultural Democracy is a national network of cultural workers which Bill has co-chaired for three years. Recently he took on its full chairing responsibilities because he believed in culture. He loved all the arts and moved through the world as a though art really mattered; he thought of culture as a force that could shape society and art as a force that could shape lives. He wanted ACD to become an organization that would provide a link in the support network every artist needs, especially those isolated by society, whether in an urban setting or a rural one. Bill heard the cries of this society, the anger and the hope the struggling, dying, these particular cries were the well-spring of a challenge to this racist, unjust society. For him these cries ignited profound love of humanity. These cries were necessary to make a change in understanding the world for all of us.

We can do no more in Bill's memory and for the life of this planet than to hear and heed those cries of the disadvantaged, the disinherited and people struggling for justice.

Words about Bill, by
Michael Schwartz

Sometimes, but very rarely, people will come into your life...and touch your soul, and light up your imagination. You can tell by the way you understand the emotions behind the words. You can tell because they feel like siblings, you know, like you have known them forever. He had been talking to the Tides foundation. I was going to call him later that day, I was tired so we didn't talk long. We played phone tag all week. Then I caught wind that Bill was in the hospital, in critical condition, with pneumonia. That Friday he was moved to Stanford hospital. For some strange reason I just assumed he would be fine. We planned a special time to send him our love and strength, but of course I ended up praying for him all day and night. I felt so helpless. I wanted to be near him. On Wed. at 4am he passed on. I don't really understand.

What did Bill want us to do? He saw to it that there was health insurance and a computer network in place. He wanted us to create an unstoppable cultural tidal wave, that would forever smash the iron grip of injustice and greed. He wanted ACD to stand up for human rights, to take a powerful moral stand. Bill understood the vital role, the link that ACD MUST make. His vision was strong and clear, the power of the creative spirit to overcome anything. Can it really be that this man is gone, this man who kept ACD, and who knows how many other collectives, tied together. He let no obstacle stand in the way. He taught me that we can struggle with grace and pride. Bill would call me almost every weekend. We would talk for the longest time and always promise to see each other soon. We would dream, laugh and share stories. When I finished speaking with Bill I felt as though it all really meant something. Somehow our crazy, abstract dream of a truly democratic culture and society became real.

I feel like Bill is off traveling now, perhaps writing on some train, I can hear his laugh, see his smile. I have endless conversation, arguments...still. Yes still, very still...and always. Goodbye my brother...I love you.

Dear ACD Board and friends. This newsletter This example newsletter was produced in memorial to Bill. We hope that you enjoy it. The deadline for submissions to the next newsletter is on Sept 17., preferably on computer disk. Send all coorespondance to: CD Newsletter, POB 7591, Minneapolis, MN 55407 or you can fax us at 612-721-2160

Until Next time, Minneapolis ACD Office Collective

Tribute To Comrade William "Bill" Stroud; by Lindiwe Mabuza, Chief Representative ANC Mission to the United States

We are deeply saddened and shocked by the sudden death of Comrade Bill Stroud on June 30, 1993, from pneumonia and leukemia. His untimely death represents a profound loss to all freedom loving people throughout South Africa and the world. as a true pioneer in the struggle against apartheid, racism and injustice, he will be sorely missed by family, friends and colleagues and his many contributions for peace, justice and non-racial democracy will always stand as a testament of hope and inspiration to all his comrades and future of freedom fighters.

We will always remember the special character of comrade Bill. The city of San Francisco has lost a bridge builder. The Bay Area Anti-Apartheid Network has lost a soldier. Vukani Mawethu has lost a talented virtuoso. Poetry has lost a proficient lyricist. the world has lost a friend. Humanity has lost a shining example of selfless dedication and a courageous fighter.

He leaves for us a profound legacy that continues to replenish our resolve to realize the dawn of an imminent, free, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. Our victory will be your victory Comrade Bill and those who loved and admired your work.

Hamba Kahle Comrade Bill!

**Thoughts on Bill,
by Mat Schwartzman**

Bill was a character. A tireless organizer, diplomat, and bridge builder, he could talk your ear off about any one of a dozen different ACD projects he was working on, as well as tell you about a few projects you might be working on. His presence at a gathering--whether it was an informal discussion between three people, or a conference plenary of three hundred-- was always felt. It was just a matter of time before he spoke up, and when he did, those of us who knew him took a deep breath, because he was a passionate orator.

ACD stands for the Alliance for Cultural Democracy. We're a national organization of cultural workers: artists, educators and community organizers; committed to the arts and culture as an essential ingredient in our society reaching its potential as a full democracy. We provide a support and information network for artists working in grass roots communities; we organize to apply political pressure in cities and states where the arts are under fire; and we work to encourage

and demand peoples' active participation in shaping their own culture and cultural policy.... Bill Stroud was the Chair of our National Board, and his passing will be profoundly felt by all our members; his combination of vision, organizing skills, and sheer determination was unique.

While his commitment was to the organization overall, Bill did have some projects he was working on for ACD that were extra special to him. Since 1988, when he joined the National Board, he had worked to bring ACD into closer contact and collaboration with cultural workers in Cuba, Latin America, the Phillipines, Africa and the West Indies. He linked us up with an international arts computer network, Artswire. He waged what became a one man crusade to get healthcare for ACD members, insisting on the strategic impotence of us taking care of ourselves as we sought to take care of others within our communities. And he lectured us on the importance of shedding the martyred attitude common to activists, and instead treating ourselves as professionals in the best sense of the word: with respect, dignity and commitment to high standards.

But he was more than just a combination of important projects. Bill was also an incredible wealth of information and ideas, capable of spanning centuries of history and the globe in contextualizing the most mundane conversation within the broadest possible sweep of revolutionary cultural struggle. He was a taskmaker, taking every decision---no matter how insignificant---as an indicator of our commitment and vision as an organization, and daring us all to do the same. You could disagree with him, love him, hate him, think he was off the wall, whatever---but you couldn't ignore him. His words, his sheer determination, and his plain decency demand your attention. After all is said and done, it won't be the work, but the example he set that will most affect us all in ACD. After years of struggle by Bill and the rest of us, we're in a surprising position: "Cultural Democracy" is becoming a cliché, one of those terms, like "multiculturalism", carefully dropped by arts organizations, funding agencies and the government in describing and justifying their work; we must rethink and re-examine our ideas and strategies in an effort to stay ahead of the curve. This is just the kind of debate Bill would wade into with discussions without him from now on, but he'll be there nonetheless. Through his words---but more importantly, through his life---Bill has taught us about the need to stay clear, to stay honest, and to navigate by the farthest point on the horizon. We'll miss him.

Blips and Clips from our mail box

DISMANTLING INVISIBILITY: Asian and Pacific Islanders Artists Respond to the AIDS Crisis, Nov 6-Dec 18 at A space (Suite 301 The Orient Building 183 Bathurst Street, Toronto Ontario, CANADA M5T 2R7, 416-364-3227 DisMantaling Invisibility is an international group exhibition of works in video, music and visual art. The exhibition will reveal how AIDS, a complex and multi layered issue, needs to be investigated from culturally diverse points of view. The timing of the exhibition is intended to commemorate 'Day Without Art' on Dec. 1. The show is curated for A Space by Martin Jung, Kyo Maclear and Scott Marsden.

October 8-10" **A CALL TO THE DESERT**" is being put out from Western Shoshone Spiritual leader Corbin Harney. The Alliance for Atomic Veterans, American Peace Test, and the Nevada Desert Experience, in conjunction with Stop Testing forever, is coordinating groups and individuals interested in coming to the Nevada Nuclear Test Site to celebrate, mourn, and look to the future. Contact: American Peace Test, P.O. Box 26725, Las Vegas, NV 89126 (702) 386-9834

The seventh edition of the *Human Rights Organizations & Periodicals Directory* from Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute contains up to date, concise descriptions of 1000+ U.S. organizations and publications that work for human rights and peace regionally, nationally, and internationally. The book is over 250 pages including: an Alphabetical Guide, Federal Agencies Guide, Subject Index, Intern Opportunity Index, Periodicals Index and Geographical Index. Meiklejohn Institute provides this link up resource to help people find information or assistance on issues and problems affecting the public welfare. It gives job-seekers and networkers vital resources in an easy to use format. The Directory sells to organizations and libraries for \$44.95, or to individuals for \$39.95 (Subtract \$4 without looseleaf binder)+ \$6 shipping/handling, and 8.25% tax in California. Send your check to MCLI, Box 673, Berkeley, CA 94701-0673. Phone (510)848-0599, Fax: 848-6008

Violence, Nonviolence, and the 20th Century is a special issue of *Peacework*.

Introduction by Howard Zinn, 21st century preview by Renae Scott, Plus articles on how US social justice and peace movements respond to the challenges of each decade by Gerald Gill, Marjorie True, Harriet Hyman Alonso, David McReynolds, Marjorie Swann, Greg Williams, Pat Farren, Betty Zisk, Melissa Everett, Joseph Gerson; 24 pages; \$1.50 (2-9 copies/\$1 each; ten or more / .75 each) from *Peacework*, American Friends Service Committee, 2161 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140

Guerrilla Girls have devoted the premier issue of their new quarterly, *Hot Flashes*, to an examination of the U.S. newspaper of record, The New York Times. And what a record it is! Future issues will explore the national picture, multiculturalism and social class in the artworld. Ideas, articles and comments are welcome. SUBSCRIPTIONS (4 issues) are \$9. for women and people of color, \$12 for white males. Write; Hot Flashes c/o GUERRILLA GIRLS 532 LaGuadia Pl. #237, New York, NY 10012

ACD
P.O. Box 7591
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Rest a spell
Sip cool lemonade by the tree
People don't cotton to
Political conversation
With conviviality.
We've meet before
We'll meet again
Please leave your message
And I'll get back
Together with you
Again

William M. Stroud