

January 2014 Organizers Edge Newsletter



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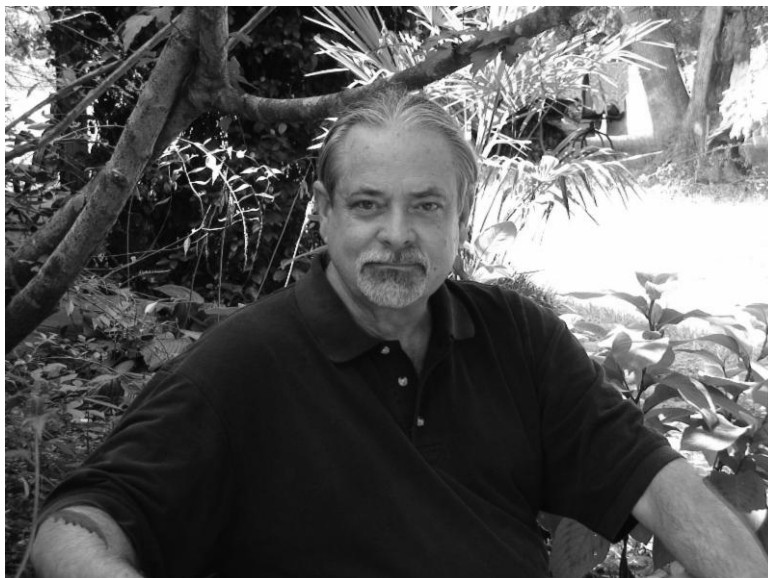
From: Michael Jacoby Brown
Follow the Money

How should we fund progressive community organizing? For many, this is hardly a question. They go to "the funders" - a shrinking number of liberal foundations, trying to fit their work into the (often changing) guidelines of these foundations, and competing with similar organizations going to the same small group of "funders." Then there are, foundation guidelines to find and follow, program officers to contact, letters of inquiry and proposals to write, site visits to endure. If funded, then there are forms to fill out, reports to write and more site visits to plan.

Other organizers in this E-News have commented on this subject, including James Mumm and Fred Azcarate. (See the Organizers Edge Archive for their writings) [Fred Azcarate](#) [James Mumm](#)

This pattern has resulted in the rise of fall of many community organizations. Is there another way? Brett Bursey of the South Carolina Progressive Network thinks so. This month this veteran organizer describes his organization and how it raises money. Could his way work for you?

Brett Bursey, Director, South Carolina Progressive Network
network@scpronet.com
[South Carolina Progressive Network](#)
[Brett Bursey, Biographical sketch](#)



Above: Top, Brett Bursey, Below: Bursey with South Carolina leader Modjeska Simkins (left) and Coretta Scott King at 1983 send off for 20th anniversary of March on Washington.

The South Carolina Progressive Network: Funding Decisions Early On Determine Its Future...

The South Carolina Progressive Network, goes back to discussions started in 1994 when the Christian Coalition took over the state. By then we had been doing social justice work as the Grass Roots Organizing Workshop (GROW), since 1974, so we had 20 years on the ground in SC

I was the SC "Traveler" for the Southern Student Organizing Committee in 1968 and '69 (SSOC was formed when the white people left SNCC in 1964), so when we formed the South Carolina Progressive network it was with a lot of organizing experience under our belt. We are revolutionaries. We take what we believe to heart and act on it. If you do that, you limit your 501(c) - 3 fund raising ability. At the outset we decided that we would not be grant driven and would not do things just to bring in money, or write

a proposals to fit someone else's idea of what needs to be done [Read on ...](#)

Three Good Books About The South

My colleague, Deborah Walker of Charlotte North Carolina, recommended two books to read, to learn about the South.

The Warmth of Other Suns, by Isabel Wilkerson, and ***Blood Done Sign My Name***, by Timothy B. Tyson

The Warmth of Other Suns combines the best of history and sociology with the intimate details of psychology and personal narrative. It describes in gruesome details of the caste system and the violence experienced by Black people in the South. It also follows the lives of three different people who left the South as part of the Great Migration. Wilkerson captures through extensive interviews and personal connection the intimate lives of these three people. What is so extraordinary about this book is the combination of personal psychology with the general social, economic and political conditions of their lives -- specifically the racism and violence they experienced. Most books describe one or the other: the personal or the political/ institutional. The beauty and importance of this book is that it succeeds in combining both, and does justice to both. It shows how *both* the larger forces of politics, economics and institutionalized racism of our times *and* individual personality and personal decisions affect people in the most intimate way.

Blood Done Sign My Name is a personal memoir by the son of a white, Southern liberal Methodist minister caught up in the racism of North Carolina during the 1960's and 70's. It centers around the murder of a young Black man, the acquittal of his murderers in court, and the author's journey to try to make some sense of racism, his heritage of liberal white ministers, and the complex relationships between Black and White people in the struggle for freedom of Black people in the USA. Nothing is sugar-coated here. There are no simple answers. But real history, real struggle, both political and personal. An important book for anyone, especially a Northerner like me, trying to understand "the South."

Somerset Homecoming: Recovering a Lost Heritage

by Dorothy Spruill Redford, with Michael D'Orso, Introduction by Alex Haley, is the story of a Black woman researching her heritage and ancestors back to slavery, and eventually, after years of work, organizing a "home-coming" of her far-flung relations at a massive reunion in eastern North Carolina. The book starts off slowly, with the author, on a personal journey to better understand herself, beginning to discover her roots, learning how to research genealogy. Slowly it builds as she organizes a massive gathering at an old Plantation, bringing thousands from all over the country, all related to her and wanting to learn more about their ancestors and heritage. Redford's work, a labor of love, doing all the work as a volunteer, is inspiring. Her passion to understand herself and her roots changes her life and the lives of so many around her. My thanks to Valerie Batts, of [Visions-Inc.](#) who grew up in eastern North Carolina, for lending me her copy of this book.

We want to hear from you, your reactions, ideas, what is at the edge YOUR "envelope." Just go to...

<http://michaeljacobybrown.com/contact/>

Who else you will hear from.....

We are just starting, but so far you can expect to hear what the following people are thinking:

[George Luse](#) of the Mass Teachers Assn,

[Scott Reed](#) with the PICO Network, ,

[Cathy Howell](#), in Oregon and El Salvador, formerly with the AFL-CIO,

[Ceasar McDowell](#) of the Interaction Institute for Social Justice,

[Diana Bell](#) of Community and Labor United,

[David Hernandez](#) of the California Education Assn,

[Linda Honold](#), of Wisconsin Voices

[Attica Scott](#), now an elected official in Louisville, KY, formerly with Jobs with Justice,

[Quinn Rallings](#) in Alabama with the PICO Network,

[Bob Van Meter](#) with the Local Initiative Support Corporation in Boston,

[Walter Davis](#), in Tennessee, of the National Organizers Alliance,

[Deb Askenase](#), of Community Organizing 2.0,

[Cherie Andes](#), of the Industrial Areas Foundation,

[Avi Green](#), with MassVote,

[Deb Fastino](#), of the Coalition for Social Justice in New Bedford, MA,

[Rebecca Gutman](#), with SEIU-1199,

[Tim Dean](#), of SEIU-1199,

[Claudia Horwitz](#), of Stone Circles in North Carolina,

[Mary Ochs](#), long time organizer in Los Angeles

and others, hopefully, including YOU

Other Useful Links

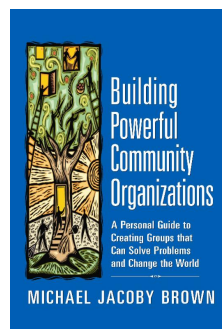
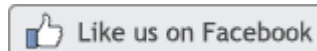
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