

Nightstand

Good Reads and Good Deeds

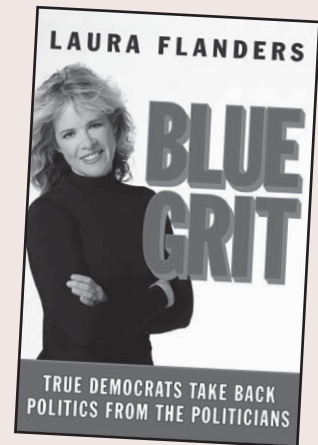
BLUE GRIT

True Democrats Take Back Politics from the Politicians

By Laura Flanders

Penguin Press, New York, 2007, 227 pages, \$24.95, Hardcover

Laura Flanders, host of Air America's RadioNation, tries to correct the myths that the Democratic Leadership Council and the media continue to spin about Americans and their political values: that they continue to become more conservative and the party must follow even at the cost of its traditional constituencies. In her latest book, BLUE GRIT, Flanders spent the 12 months leading up to the 2006 election on the road, observing Democratic politics at ground zero. What she observed was a new wave of grassroots activism challenging the leadership of the party Bill Clinton built, reaching out to new voters, taking on the Right, and—as 2006 showed—winning.



Flanders found what we in the West already know: progressive grassroots organizers, usually with few resources, are winning local and state campaigns by talking about the issues that are important to voters, building and mobilizing their base and challenging the Right rather than trying to emulate them. These victories are not the result of a quick-fix formula. During her trip out West, Flanders met the folks on the ground who had put in decades of work, organizing communities and building long-term leadership.

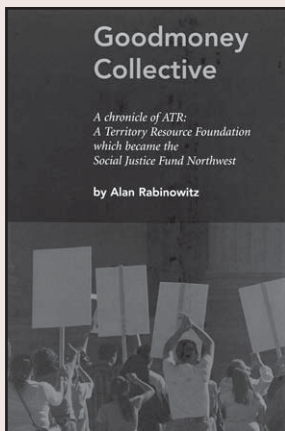
Flanders' focus is progressive Democratic electoral politics, a perspective she admits to at the opening of BLUE GRIT. For those who see little difference between Ds and Rs or see electoral politics as a distraction from real political work, BLUE GRIT is still a worthwhile read. While some of Flanders' findings are nothing new to many hardworking progressives, her book still contains important lessons and reminders of where the power rests for creating lasting progressive social change. The people she profiles, many of whom will be familiar to Western States Center allies, provide inspiration for carrying out the work—often in isolation or with few resources—of making our society a more just and equitable place.

GOODMONEY COLLECTIVE

A chronicle of ATR: A Territory Resource Foundation

By Alan Rabinowitz

PHAR/Publishing House of Alan Rabinowitz, Seattle, WA, 2007, 80 pages, \$15.00, Hardcover



GOODMONEY COLLECTIVE by Alan Rabinowitz, a former treasurer and pioneer member of A Territory Resource Foundation—now the Social Justice Fund Northwest—tells the story of that foundation as part of the social change philanthropy movement and ways in which ATR took a different path. Rabinowitz recounts the coming together of young adults in the region mentored by visionary philanthropist David Hunter and inspired by the seminal *Robin Hood Was Right: A Guide for Giving Your Money for Social Change* (Vanguard Public Foundation, 1977). In a series of convenings in which the philosophy and the mechanics of social change philanthropy were discussed, argued and thrashed out, this group coalesced in 1978 to become ATR.

GOODMONEY COLLECTIVE is more than just an insider's view of the world of foundations. Rabinowitz' story is also a story about a generation of people who wanted to use the privilege they enjoyed to bring about social change and the philosophical journey they made to achieve that end. In that respect, it also becomes a larger story of what it means to be a progressive in today's progressive movement.