

Ex-SNCC leader Rep. Lewis packs 'em in pitching civil rights graphic novel

By MARK HEDIN

THE OSCARS all but snubbed “Selma,” but one of the stars of its story, Atlanta Rep. John Lewis, “The Boy From Troy,” as he says Martin Luther King Jr. used to call him, drew an overflow crowd to the Main Library’s Koret Auditorium on the evening of Feb. 18.

Lewis, who turned 75 three days later, was in town to promote the second installment of “March,” an autobiographical graphic novel — comic book — that details his role in the civil rights movement, from lunch counter demonstrations in Nashville late in 1960 to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, in August 1963, and beyond.

He was the president of SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which was to the left of King’s pastor-led multitudes. SNCC had less patience. He preceded King to the podium at the March on Washington, after controversially toning down some aspects of his planned remarks. Since 1987, he has represented Georgia’s 5th Congressional District, including most

of Atlanta, in the House.

My Brother’s Keeper, the Western Addition youth choir, opened the program with “A Change Is Gonna Come” and “We Are the World.” Then spoken word artist Chinaka Hodge electrified the auditorium with her composition dedicated to Jordan Davis, 17 when shot dead in 2012 as he sat in his car with friends listening to music at a gas station in Florida.

Following brief remarks by Board of Supervisors President London Breed, who said that without his work, she “wouldn’t be here today,” Lewis took the stage.

He said he grew up in Alabama, working on the 100 acres that his sharecropping parents bought for \$300 and his family still owns. He had a talent for raising chickens, he said, but aspired to “preach the gospel.” On occasion, he and his siblings would corral the chickens, and he would preach to the flock as his siblings managed the perimeter.

“They never quite said ‘amen,’” he said, “but I’m convinced that some of those chickens that I preached to tended to listen to me much better than some of my colleagues listen to me to-

day in Congress.”

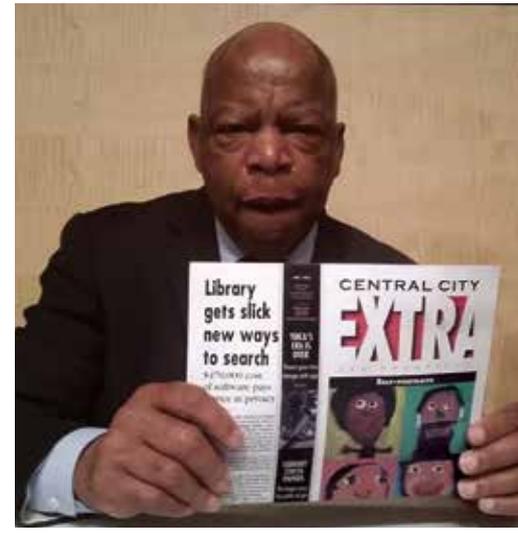
He recounted his first-ever meal at a Chinese restaurant, outside Washington, D.C., on the eve of the Freedom Rides, where his integrated group enjoyed their meal while acknowledging it might prove to be their last supper.

Sure enough, the group was attacked by Klan members in Rock Hill, S.C., and he was left lying in a pool of blood, Lewis recalled. Decades later, his attacker — never arrested — visited him at his D.C. office with his son in tow to apologize and ask for forgiveness, a tale of redemption of almost apocryphal proportions.

He recalled Lowndes County, between Selma and Montgomery in his home state of Alabama, whose population was 80% black, yet not even one black person who lived there was able to register to vote prior to the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

“The vote,” he said, “is precious, almost sacred. It’s the most powerful, nonviolent tool we have, and we must use it. We’ve made progress, but we’re not there yet.”

“I’m still hopeful,” he said. “In spite of being arrested and going to jail 40



MARK HEDIN

Atlanta Rep. John Lewis, with Martin Luther King on the Selma March, holds the February issue of *The Extra*.

times during the '60s and being arrested five times since I've been in Congress, I'm not going to turn back. And you must not give in. This city, this state, is known for leading the way.”

His legislative aide, Andrew Aydin, who wrote the text of “March,” followed Lewis to the stage. He was inspired to write the book, he said, after Lewis told him how a dime comic book, “Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story,” which King had helped edit, was a

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Hoodline, The Extra's online partner

CENTRAL CITY EXTRA has begun working closely with Hoodline, a network of neighborhood bloggers.

Hoodline cements its already significant Tenderloin coverage with stories from *The Extra*.

And *The Extra* gains a presence

online, sharing the digital stage with a new generation of journalists.

Old school meets new school.

It’s going to be fun learning from Eric Eldon, co-founder, Nuala Sawyer, district editor, and other members of the Hoodline team. Most intriguing is that

they are working on a tool that will digitally pry off the top of City Hall so we all can peer inside and review the vast reservoirs of data: Hoodbot, they call it, and it’s close to launch, Eldon says.

It’s an investigative tool that can release the profound potential of accessible public data such as zoning variances, city department budgets and much more, perhaps enabling one reporter to do the work of a four-member team in the newsroom of a metropolitan daily.

Hoodline hopes to hire local writ-

ers and partner with local publications so the city is filled with neighborhood bloggers who provide micro coverage — new businesses opening and old ones closing in their hood, local politics, major crimes and accidents, plus investigation pieces, tree plantings, candidates nights and so on.

All the stuff of a neighborhood’s life.

It’s a smart idea. Central City Extra is pleased to play a role. ■

— Geoff Link
Editor & Publisher



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The Knox



Bayanihan House

Please go to 241 6th Street, San Francisco, CA for applications

The TODCO Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Housing Waiting List is open for the Knox and the Bayanihan House. If your name is currently on any TODCO Housing Waiting List and you would like information on your current status, please call the TODCO Marketing Office at 415-957-0227 on Fridays' only.

Building	Size & Amenities	Max/Min Household Income Limits	Rent as of Feb. 1, 2015
The Knox SRO located at 241- 6th St. & Tehama is accepting applications and has an OPEN WAITLIST	SRO – 1 Person or Couple Room size: 10 ½ x 18 (Semi-Private) bathroom 7 x 7 Unit amenities: sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2-burner stove, closet, single bed Building amenities: small gym, library, private lounge, roof top garden, community kitchen, laundry facility, 24 hour staff & surveillance	1 person \$34,600/year 2 person \$39,520/year Minimum income of \$1,374/month	Move-in deposit \$687 Monthly rent \$687 plus utilities
Hotel Isabel located at 1095 Mission CLOSED WAITLIST	SRO – 1 Person Shared bathroom Unit amenities: sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2- burner stove, closet and single bed	1 person \$34,600/year No minimum income Closed	30% OF INCOME Requires a Certificate of Homelessness
Bayanihan House (Non-assisted units) located at 88 – 6th St. & Mission. OPEN WAITLIST	SRO – 1 Person or Couple Room single: 10½ x 12, shared bathroom Double occupancy: 12x12, shared bathroom Unit amenities: sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2-burner stove, closet, single bed Building amenities: community kitchen, 24 hour staff & surveillance, laundry facility	1 person \$30,275/year Couple \$34,580/year Minimum income of \$889.40/month	As of Jan. 1, 2015 Move-in deposit \$590 Monthly rent \$590 Utilities included

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