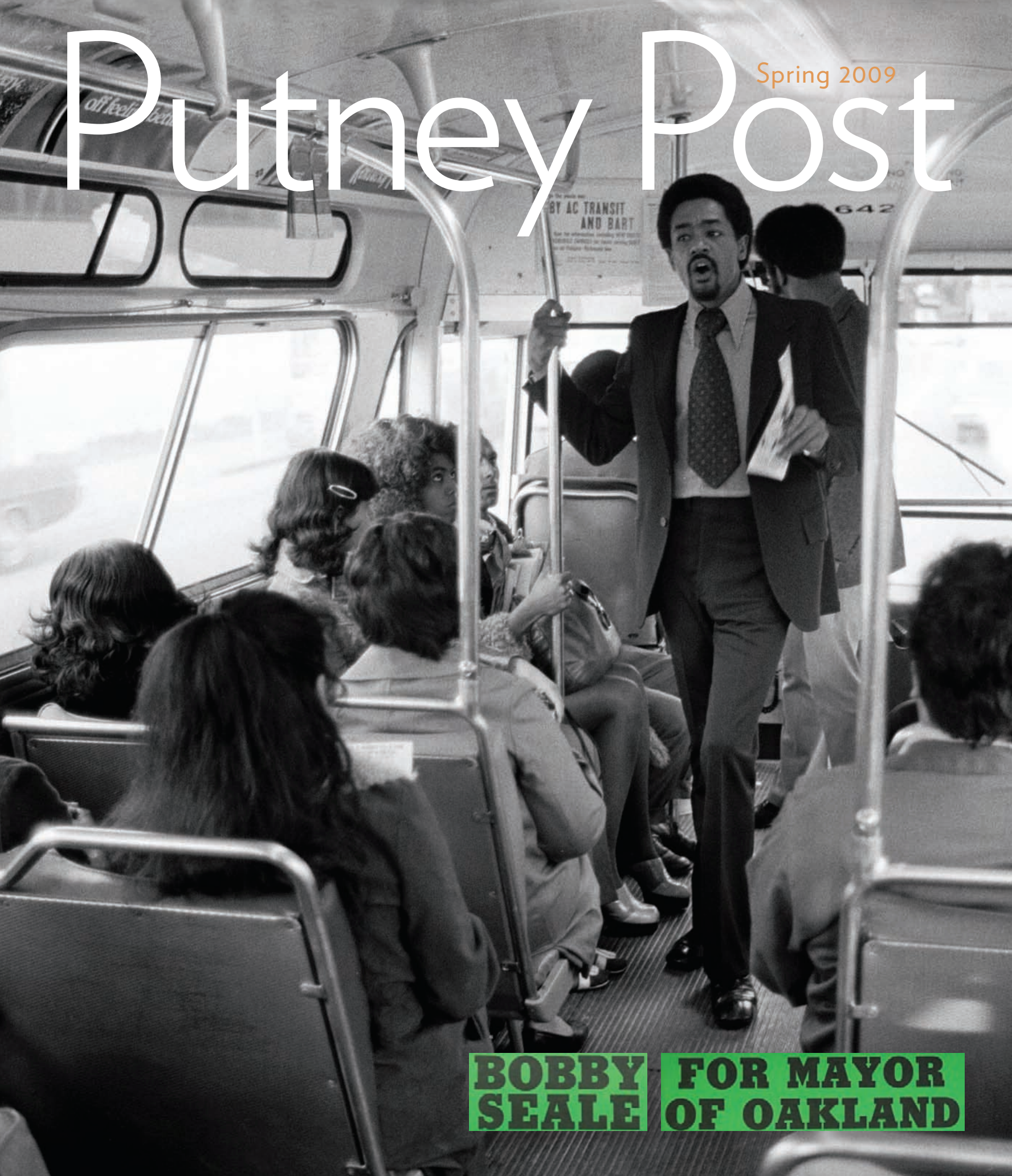


# Putney Post

Spring 2009



**BOBBY SEALE FOR MAYOR OF OAKLAND**

# Cover Artist: Stephen Shames '65

[stephenshames.com](http://stephenshames.com)

By Don Cuerdon

Cover artist Stephen Shames '65 creates award-winning photo essays on social issues for magazines, books, foundations, advocacy organizations, and museums. He is perhaps most famous for gaining the trust of the Black Panther Power Party and documenting their struggles for social justice for African Americans from 1967 to 1973. We met him on campus last winter when he visited with two boys representing LEAD Uganda, Katongole Godfrey and Kamoga Moses, to present his work, teach a few classes, and for the boys to open our eyes to the plight of Ugandans.



**STEPHEN SHAMES RELAXES WITH UGANDAN FRIENDS KATONGOLE GODFREY AND KAMOGA MOSES IN THE PUTNEY SCHOOL'S ADMISSION OFFICE.**

The Aperture Foundation published Stephen's "Outside the Dream," "Pursuing the Dream," and "The Black Panthers" photo collections as stand-alone issues known as monographs. Stephen wrote and directed three videos: *Friends of the Children*, *Children of Northern Uganda*, and *Our Students*. His images have been exhibited and are in the permanent collections of the International Center of Photography, the National Portrait Gallery, Museum of Photographic Arts, The Bancroft Library of the University of California, and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. He received awards from Kodak Crystal Eagle for Impact in Photojournalism, World Hunger Year, Leica, International Center of Photography, and Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Foundation. *Esquire* and *CBS Sunday Morning* profiled him. PBS named him among photographers whose work promotes social change. But he doesn't just document problems.

Stephen started LEAD Uganda, which locates forgotten children with innate talents and molds them into leaders. They do this by raising funds for and partnering with Concern For the Future, an indigenous Ugandan non-profit organization. LEAD Uganda finds bright, motivated AIDS orphans, child soldiers, sex slaves, children living in refugee camps, child laborers, and other vulnerable children in Uganda who want to go to college but can't because of poverty, AIDS, and war. LEAD Uganda pays their school fees and prepares them for

university by sending them to the best schools and providing them with everything they need to succeed.

As a result of Stephen's visit, Putney students have organized to fund a Ugandan student's education in Uganda for next year. For more information on Stephen and his foundation visit [www.leaduganda.org](http://www.leaduganda.org).

We chose Stephen's artful photos of Oakland, California's 1973 Black Panther Power Party mayoral candidate, Bobby Seale, for our cover images because they resonate with this issue's "Speaking Truth to Power" (page 20). Reviled by the FBI as terrorists in their time, the Black Panthers have not enjoyed the recent limelight focus of other African American civil rights pioneers, perhaps because the Panthers chose to wear uniforms and carry guns with their law books in addition to protesting. It's hard to say why exactly. Here's what Stephen has to say about that time in our history:

**Yes, the Panthers were revolutionaries.** But, they worked within the law. In 1967 and '68, they patrolled the streets with law books and guns (which were legal at the time). By 1972 they were involved in electoral politics. They were a political party—members of a movement—just like Obama, who was a community organizer—as were Bobby Seale and Huey Newton before him.

**The Panthers and the Black Power Movement—and before that, the Civil Rights**

**Movement—paved the way for Obama's victory.**

**In the '60s we worked outside "the system" in the narrow sense, but inside it in the larger sense that we demonstrated—which is what our constitution allows.** Our government attempted to stifle lawful protest. It was our government that worked outside "the system" by breaking the law and violating the constitution with an assassination campaign within the U.S.

**In other words, I do not accept the narrow definition of the system that excludes "the people."** We (the student movement), the Panthers, and the Civil Rights Movement exercised our lawful rights under our wonderful system of government.

**We were not outside the system. We ARE the system.**

**That's why Bobby ran for Mayor of Oakland.** He lost, but it was close. He was second out of nine candidates.

**That, in my opinion, is the point of the Obama movement.** His victory was an upset made possible by the 1960s, the emergence of a new generation sick of the 1960s cultural wars and bad governance.

**Obama is no outsider but he built a movement of ordinary people.** That movement elected him.

For more of Stephen's images and views visit [www.stephenshames.com](http://www.stephenshames.com).