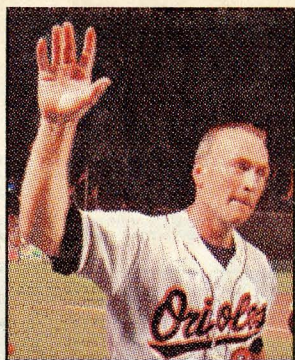


SPORTS

THE HIGHS, LOWS
OF SPORTS IN 1995

A look back at Cal Ripken, Deion Sanders and replacement baseball

► See Page B1

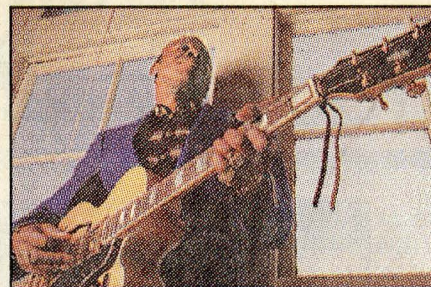


DATEBOOK

NEW YEAR'S EVE
— WHAT TO DO

Big Embarcadero party leads list of entertainment around the bay

► See Page D3

EX-DEAD
SET SUM

New releases and keep the party go

SPORTS
FINAL

San Francisco Chronicle

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER

★★★★★

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1995

22 Miles of Books to Move



PHOTOS BY LEA SUZUKI/THE CHRONICLE

Main S.F. library closes Sunday —
shift to new site to cost \$250,000

By Steve Rubenstein
Chronicle Staff Writer

San Francisco is moving 1.5 million books across the street, and it's going to be noisy.

"Very, very noisy," said the librarian in charge, mouthing the loathsome words as quietly as possible.

For three months, while the library moves into its new \$135 million digs, San Francisco will find itself with two enormous and elegant main libraries, both closed to the public. It cannot be helped, say the apologetic and apologetic librarians. There is no way to move 1.5 million books, 3 million photographs and 5 mil-

lion documents without making a racket and a mess.

The old Main Library will close at 5 p.m. on New Year's Eve, with little fanfare. The new Main Library will open April 16, with a lot of fanfare.

"Believe me, this is not a place you would want to be in for the next three months," said Kathryn Page, chief of the Main Library. "There is going to be a hubbub. Things will be pushed and pulled. Chairs and tables will be going in and out. There is going to be a lot of flapping around."

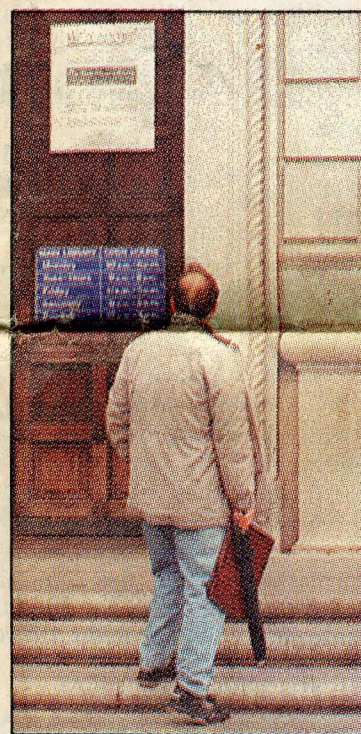
It's not just moving 9 million things, said Page, but moving

them in order. Order is almost as dear to a librarian as quiet. With 9 million chances to lose something or put it in the wrong place, three months does not seem like so long after all.

A precise, tightly choreographed set of maneuvers will be enacted inside the granite walls. Three dozen professional book movers, imported from Long Island, will descend on the 78-year-old building with a fleet of custom-built book-moving carts.

Working in teams of two and three, the movers will fill the carts — taking care that book 103.090 remains ahead of book

LIBRARY: Page A23 Col. 1



Above: Pauline Kerber and Anne Williamson came to the library one last time before it closes Sunday. At left: A visitor carefully perused the notice that the library is moving

Clinton
Vetoes
Defense
Measure

He says it's imperils arms

Associated Press

Washington

President Clinton vetoed a billion defense bill yesterday, rejecting its demand for a Star Wars anti-missile system would cost billions of dollars and jeopardize decades of arms control efforts.

The president also objected to what he called unfair provisions in the defense policy bill that would ban most abortions at overseas military hospitals and expel members who test positive for AIDS virus.

However, in casting the veto of his presidency, Clinton made sure that the new women of the nation's armies — including troops in Bosnia — receive most of the 2.4 percent raise they have been expecting, which was included in the bill.

He signed an executive order using existing authority to raise military pay by 2 percent effective Monday. And he asked Congress to quickly pass legislation bringing the total pay increase to 2.4 percent.

Overall, Clinton said t

DEFENSE: Page A23 Col. 1

LIBRARY: New Building Will Open in April

From Page 1

103.151 — and proceed to the downstairs loading dock for cleaning. Modified vacuum cleaners will blow decades of accumulated dust off each book.

"It's more economical to blow a book than suck a book," said Scott Miller, president of National Library Relocations. "Sucking takes longer. Physically, it's not as good for the book." Any old mover, said Miller, can move a desk. It takes an expert like himself to move a book.

"Desks don't get out of order," he said. "A desk is just one big thing, not a bunch of little things."

Miller does not know how many books he must move. He does not deal in books, he deals in feet of books. The San Francisco move involves 115,000 shelf feet of books, or 22 miles of books.

"I don't talk miles, it's too depressing," said Miller.

The easiest books to move are adult fiction. Their size is uniform and their weight is reasonable. Toughest are bound magazines, because they are so fat, and children's books, because they are so skinny.

"Children's books!" Miller grumbled. "Those special jackets make 'em slippery as all hell. And they're all different sizes. The Piggly Wigglys are different from the Dr. Seusses and the Winnie the Poohs. There's nothing easy about a kid's book."

The move itself, he said, will look like an assembly line.

"It's a round robin. Yank the books, load onto the cart, take them to the elevator, blow the books, shuttle them in the truck across the street, unload them in the new building. Back and forth, round and round, over and over. A constant circle."

Miller has moved college libraries at Stanford, the University of California at Santa Cruz and

UCLA, and public libraries in Vancouver, Providence and Charlotte. The San Francisco move is his biggest. The entire move will require 10,000 cartloads. It is no time for cardboard boxes, bane of the moving trade.

"I hate cardboard boxes, I just hate 'em," he said. "They rip, they tear, they're not good for the books. I'd rather rip out a window and lower a book cart to the ground than use cardboard boxes."

John Kenny, librarian in charge of periodicals, agreed that bound periodicals are among the heaviest, oldest and dustiest members of the collection. They are also terribly important, even the obscure ones that nobody checks out.

For months, librarians have been sketching, planning and plotting where to put all the books. Armed with tape measures, scores of volunteers have scrambled through the musty, dusty stacks.

Counting 115,000 feet of books kept librarians on their toes, although Kenny said one of his volunteers somehow neglected to count an entire "range" of bound periodicals in the basement — a wall of 256 shelves. That came to about 10,000 books. It was three months before the library discovered the error. Once more, Kenny took out his eraser and resketched the diagram.

The bound periodicals are especially tricky to move, he said, because they are currently shelved by call number in five different areas. In the new building, they will be shelved alphabetically and consolidated into one place.

That means, said Kenny, that he must affix thousands and thousands of small stickers and blue dots to the spines of the books before the movers arrive.

"You have to find stickers that have just the right stickiness," he said. "You don't want them falling

off by themselves, but you want them to come off when they're supposed to."

Marilyn Thieme, head of documents, said the library has learned from past moves. Years ago, when the library acquired cabinets of federal records, it hired a bargain basement moving company that hauled the cabinets upside down, dislodging all the microfiche cards. When the drawers were opened, recalled Thieme with a shudder, microfiche flew all over.

That will not happen this time, vow the librarians. No foul-ups. No cheaping out on bargain movers. The library, flush from its Proposition E ballot victory in 1994, is spending \$250,000 to hire Miller's outfit.

Some library patrons grumble when told that moving books across the street costs a quarter of a million bucks and will shut down the library for a quarter of 1996.

"Gimme a few boxes, I'll do it for nothing," said one reading room regular the other morning. "This is my home. When you try to read books in a bookstore, they tell you that the store isn't a library. Well, the library is a library, and three months is a long time."

To such forlorn folks, Page points out that all 26 branch libraries will remain open during the move and that main librarians will be available by telephone for reference questions.

A few municipal libraries did try to stay open during similar moves, said Page, with messy results. What happened in Denver and Los Angeles shall not happen in San Francisco, she vowed.

"Besides," she said, "the librarians are going to be raising their voices during the move. They may even shout to each other. You've got to talk to each other during something like this. We don't want patrons to be here while that kind of thing is going on."

LIBRARY TRANSITION

The old Main Library closes Sunday, December 31. The new Main Library opens Tuesday, April 16. During closure:

- All 26 branches will keep regular hours.
- Full telephone reference service will be available seven days a week; call (415) 557-4400.
- The interlibrary loan program will be in effect at all branches.
- The information desk in the front of the Main Library will be open to help patrons locate alternate library services.
- Financial newsletters will be relocated to West Portal Library.
- The children's bookmobile will be in front of the old Main Library from 4 to 6 p.m. Mondays and Fridays.

Materials checked out from the old Main Library before its closure remain due on their due dates; they may be returned to special bins in front of the old Main Library. Fines of 10 cents a day will accrue on overdue materials. Most books may be renewed up to three times by telephone by calling (415) 557-4511.

