

SAN FRANCISCO

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VOL. VI NO. 57 SERVING THE HEART OF SAN FRANCISCO OCTOBER 1999

Haight library turns 90

BY JOHN GELUARDI

It was 10:40 a.m. and the manager of the Park Branch Library was intently searching through bookshelves in the Children's Section. The toddler's lapsed was about to begin and she was in a hurry.

"Ducks," she said. "I have to find more stories about ducks."

Besides being the branch manager, Anne Hyatt is also the children's librarian. After six years of being an adult librarian at the new Main Library, Hyatt became the manager of the Park Branch last March and now enjoys working with children.

"It was time for me to step back and focus on what's important," she said, "and what's important is teaching children to love literature."

The stately library, on Page Street between Cole and Shrader, is celebrating its 90th anniversary this month. It's the oldest library building in the city and its classic stone facade, spacious interior and large, arched windows suggest an era long past.

The anniversary celebration will be held on Saturday, Oct. 30, from noon to 3 p.m. In addition to food and beverages, there will be jugglers and unicyclists.

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OBSERVER / CHRISTINE JEGAN

Park Branch Library manager Anne Hyatt captures the attention of 17-month-old Lily Mansfield by reading from a children's book during the library's Thursday morning lapsit.

Jazz District's first nightclub to open on Fillmore Street

BY MICHAEL MARTIN

Despite yet another delay for the Fillmore Jazz District, there are signs the 5-year-old plan is still breathing.

Chuck Collins, the developer of the \$35 million Fillmore Renaissance Project (the anchor to the planned entertainment district) said he is "optimistic" he will secure funding by early November and be ready for customers by early 2001.

The 53,000-square-foot Renaissance site bounded by Eddy and Fillmore streets would include a 500-seat jazz club, an eight-screen theater and a 466-stall parking garage.

Groundbreaking for the Renaissance Project was scheduled for last May after Mayor Willie Brown said he reached an

agreement with AMC Theaters to open an eight-screen theater on the site. At a Sept. 1 meeting, however, Brown told the *Observer* AMC is now having second thoughts about the Jazz District.

Collins, nonetheless, assured the small gathering at the Sept. 9 meeting sponsored by the Redevelopment Agency that AMC executives "were still at the table."

Shirley Wysinger, a senior project manager for the Redevelopment Agency, also announced at the meeting that after further review by the Agency's staff, a controversial plan to build a 14-unit residential development in the middle of the planned Jazz District has not been approved.

Life on the Square: 35 years of cooperative living

A "radical" plan turns into a successful development

BY SANDY BUTLER

The early '60s were some of our best of times — and our worst of times. Two World Wars and Korea had made the world a smaller place, post-war programs had introduced many to the middle classes, and a wave of idealism was challenging generations of inequality, racism and worker exploitation.

In San Francisco, a radical plan was taking shape. Rumor has it that the idea first came into being at a poker game in a ship's hold on the dock. A group of longshoremen, unhappy about rising housing costs, thought that affordable housing might be a good investment for their pension fund. Thus the St. Francis Square

Cooperative Apartments community was born.

When the idea was brought to a meeting of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, President Harry Bridges and Secretary-Treasurer Lou Goldblatt immediately sought to make it a reality. A large section of the Western Addition had been razed to build new housing but was lying unused and unplanned. The ILWU prepared to create housing that went far beyond the goal of affordability. According to Bridges, in a 1960 column in *The Dispatcher*, "It would preserve the cross section of San Francisco's people, which was a sign of the Western Addition area. People of all races and backgrounds and of all occupations — including some of our own members — once lived here."

Intersection a laughing matter

The San Francisco Observer is proud to announce the first-ever winner of the "So You Think You're Funny Essay Contest." Contestants were asked to write a humorous, non-fiction essay about one of the neighborhoods the Observer covers. We were overwhelmed with the response and want to thank all those who entered. We had a tough time

deciding on a winner but finally chose Joe Todaro's witty essay about that planned accident of urban design known as the intersection of Market, Noe and 16th streets. For his winning essay, Joe will receive dinner for two at Leticia's on Market Street.

Honorable mention goes to Christopher Gil for his essay

MUNI(tion), which took good whack at the city's beloved Muni system. (Though we had not intended to have a second place winner, Christopher's essay was so inspiring we decided to throw in lunch for two at Rosamunde Sausage Grill in the Lower Haight). The winning essay is printed below. Enjoy!

Seeking help from above in freeway fight

BY MICHAEL MARTIN

Supporters of the plan to replace the elevated Central Freeway with a six-lane boulevard (Proposition I) appealed to a higher power to help them with their 10-year-old battle.

Emmitt Powell and the Gospel Elites delivered an inspiring set of songs during a noontime rally Sept. 18 to kick off the Yes On I and No On J campaign (Proposition J calls for retrofitting the quake-damaged structure).

"We wanted to make sure all of our bases are covered," said Robin Levitt, a Yes On I spokesperson and an organizer of the event which drew 300 people to John Muir School.

The Nov. 2 election should decide the Central Freeway issue once and for all. It will be the first time two competing measures, one calling for the Boulevard Plan and one for retrofitting the freeway, will be on the same ballot.

Last November Proposition E,



OBSERVER / CHRISTINE JEGAN

Barbara Jean Davis, Pinky Payne and Courtney Newsome (l to r) of Emmitt Powell and the Gospel Elites performed at the kick-off party for Yes on Proposition I Sept. 18 at John Muir School.

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Proposition G will force more disclosure from City Hall

BY OBSERVER STAFF

San Francisco voters will have a chance to make City Hall accountable for its actions by approving the Sunshine Ordinance Amendment (Proposition G) in November.

The proposition is designed to tighten the many loopholes in the city's 6-year-old Sunshine Ordinance. It seems to be in the nature of city officials to obfuscate and keep certain agendas and covert associations secret. A city government that keeps its actions hidden displays nothing less than contempt for the citizens who

provide the tax dollars that pay their salaries and fund projects that affect the quality of life in the city.

Proposition G will require enforceable disclosure of documents, records, calendars, contracts, correspondence, donations and social contracts by city officials with lobbyists or people doing business with the city.

Currently there is no means of enforcement and no penalties for violating public information laws.

With the passage of Proposition G the city attorney, district attorney and Ethics

Commission will be responsible for enforcing disclosure of all government documents. City officials who fail to comply with requests for information will be punished with "declarations of official misconduct" and possible removal from office.

Strengthening the Sunshine Ordinance by voting yes on Proposition G will help the citizens of San Francisco fully understand how their city government works, thereby allowing them to make informed decisions on the conduct and decisions of elected officials.

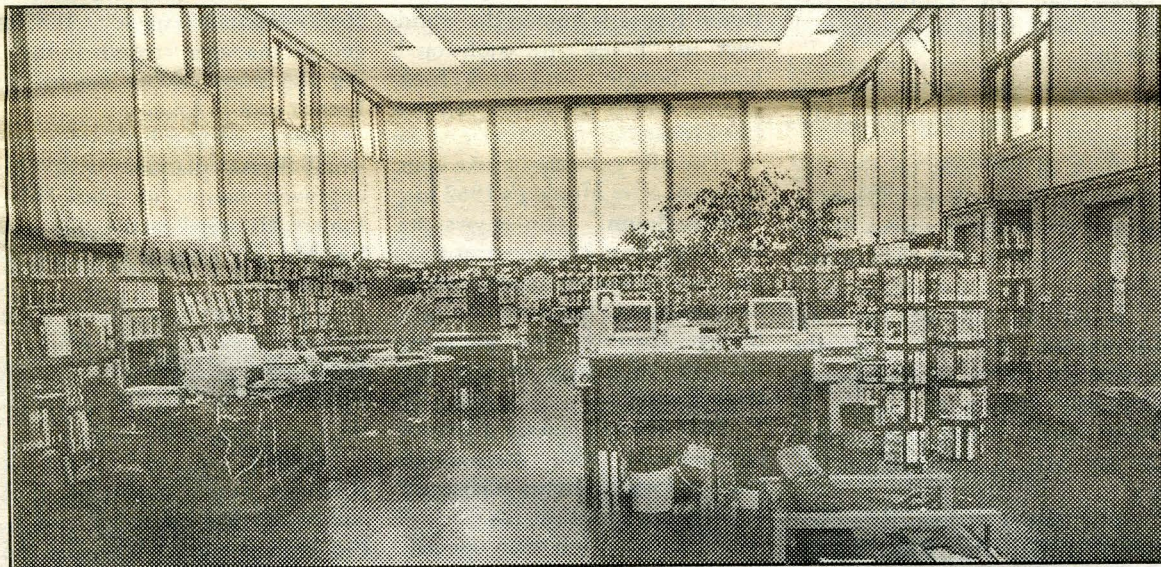
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some still living with their families, some having bought their own apartments in the Square to raise the next generation. Aliza Grant, a demure young black musician, was born here in 1971. A few years ago she and her brother, Jock, took over the apartment they were raised in. Living here "opened me more to people who didn't look like me," she said. "Growing up here and having a mixture of a lot of different people made it easier to be comfortable with all sorts of people now."

As St. Francis Square matured, it was so much a part of the world that it could not help being affected by it. The values of the Reagan era may have had an effect, or it might have been that people became so comfortable their passion turned into complacency. Involvement began to ebb, eroding the strong sense of community that everyone held dear. It is not gone, by any means, but it has decreased significantly. "People are different than they were — too self-centered," Tsukahara said. Mattingly agrees. "The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War provided energy

for yesterday's struggles — today it's all about credit ratings," she said.

Economically, the Square has succeeded far beyond anyone's expectations. But, the Square's success is also its failure; many of those who moved into the Square initially could not afford to do so now. Presently, there is a six-year waiting list and no more applications are being taken. Could another Square be built today? "I don't know how you could do it," Maguire said, "but it's the kind of thing that needs to be done."



OBSERVER / CHRISTINE JEGAN

The Park Branch Library on Page Street with its serene atmosphere is perfect for quiet reading.

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Also, in keeping with the anniversary theme, the art studio group, Two of Hearts, will help participants make Edwardian hats from butcher paper. Mayor Willie Brown is scheduled to stop by and announce a new program called "Books for Branches," which will raise funds for city libraries.

The official opening of the library was on Oct. 29, 1909. The building is 100 feet deep and 40 feet wide but the large windows and 23-foot-high ceilings, give an impression of vastness and grandeur.

"I love this building," said Hyatt, who described herself as an Edwardian at heart. "There's a serenity here that's hard to find in other libraries. It's old fashioned."

Hyatt said the branch has dutifully served the community for 90 years — except for a brief period after the Loma Prieta earthquake and for 17 months in the early '90s for seismic upgrading.

"It's a traditional neighborhood library, we have everything from voter registration forms to information about neighborhood

groups to car repair manuals," she said.

The toddlers and their moms began to arrive. The group gathered on a bright, blue and green carpet and Hyatt began reading from a picture book and the toddler's restless attention settled on the colorful illustrations and Hyatt's animated reading.

Debbie Mansfield and her 17-month-old daughter, Lily attend the lapsit on a regular basis. Mansfield said her daughter has shown a voracious appetite for books since they started participating in the lapsits.

"It's really great and Anne's great," Mansfield said. "It's a great thing for Lily. We check out as many as 10 books a week."

The branch has more than 21,000 volumes and a small collection of videos, Books on Tape and CDs. There is also an extensive collection of newspaper clippings that is a good source for researching the history of the Haight Ashbury.

The librarians schedule adult programs every few months that usually have an emphasis on literary readings. There are also programs for adults from special

schools and group homes.

The Meeting Room in the basement is heavily used by neighborhood groups and the Booksmith bookstore often has authors speak to audiences. Luminaries such as Peter Coyote, who was a Haight Ashbury resident during the '60s, recently spoke about his autobiography "Sleeping Where I Fall." Upcoming authors include filmmaker Wes Craven, pop star Joe Jackson and actress Gloria Stewart, who played the elderly version of Rose in the movie "Titanic."

Steve Abrush, 38, goes to the library as much as four times a week. He enjoys relaxing and reading periodicals. "They have a good selection of magazines, it's quiet and the staff is very helpful," he said.

For 90 years the Park Branch Library has been a great place to go for the usual library services. It's also a place to go if you want to get away from the stress of modern city life, crack a book and travel back to a simpler time.

"It's a sanctuary," Hyatt said. "Where else can you go that's this quiet and relaxed?"

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