

Hill Schools Celebrate Graduation

By Ruth Passen

The month of June marked a milestone in the lives of children graduating from one school in preparation for their next step up in the educational ladder.

The elementary school and middle school ceremonies on Potrero Hill followed one another in a two-day period, June 11 - 12, with some families attending back to back graduations in the community.

Audiences at the Daniel Webster and Starr King Elementary School exercises were welcomed in a language span that could rival a United Nations assemblage. Parents, faculty and friends were greeted by the fifth grade graduates in English, Samoan, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, Arabic, Tagalog, Cambodian and Laotian.

In comparison to the pre-teenagers leaving elementary schools, the 14 year old graduates who will begin high school in the fall looked every bit as grown up as they felt they were - proud and happy to be on their way.

A number of students will go on to Lowell High School, and Roberto Apodaca said, "I'm excited and nervous about going to high school because I will be meeting new friends again." Feeling a little sad about leaving the Middle School and friends he's made from other neighborhoods of the city, Apodaca continued, "But its a real privilege to go to Lowell for the education it will offer me."

Leaving the Middle School brought some philosophical musings from student Mary Cabezus: "This year school has been great. The school has changed for better, not for worse." And Apodaca added that "things stayed the same - it was

good, but when graduation came that was the best."

The Daniel Webster School boasted a special award for teacher Jacqueline Dolan, recipient of the Christa McAuliffe Science Teacher Award, from the San Francisco Center for Public Education's Outstanding Teacher Awards Program. This year's theme, "Teachers Who Inspire," was awarded Dolan at a June 5 ceremony held at the University of San Francisco. Donors to that program include Wells Fargo, McKesson Corp, IBM, Touche Ross & Co., and the Potrero Boosters and Merchants Assn.

Shortly after the graduations, new Superintendent of Schools Ramon Cortines met with parents, members of the Potrero Hill Middle School faculty and representatives of the Friends of Potrero Hill Schools in an informal session.

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Bob Hayes photo

A Recorder Ensemble entertained at the Starr King Elementary School graduation ceremonies in June. The young musicians were taught by David Krinitsky, the school's music teacher.



Academic achievement awards were given to those students who earned 3.5 grade averages during their three years at Potrero Hill Middle School. Teacher Joe Marshall (left) handed the students their awards.

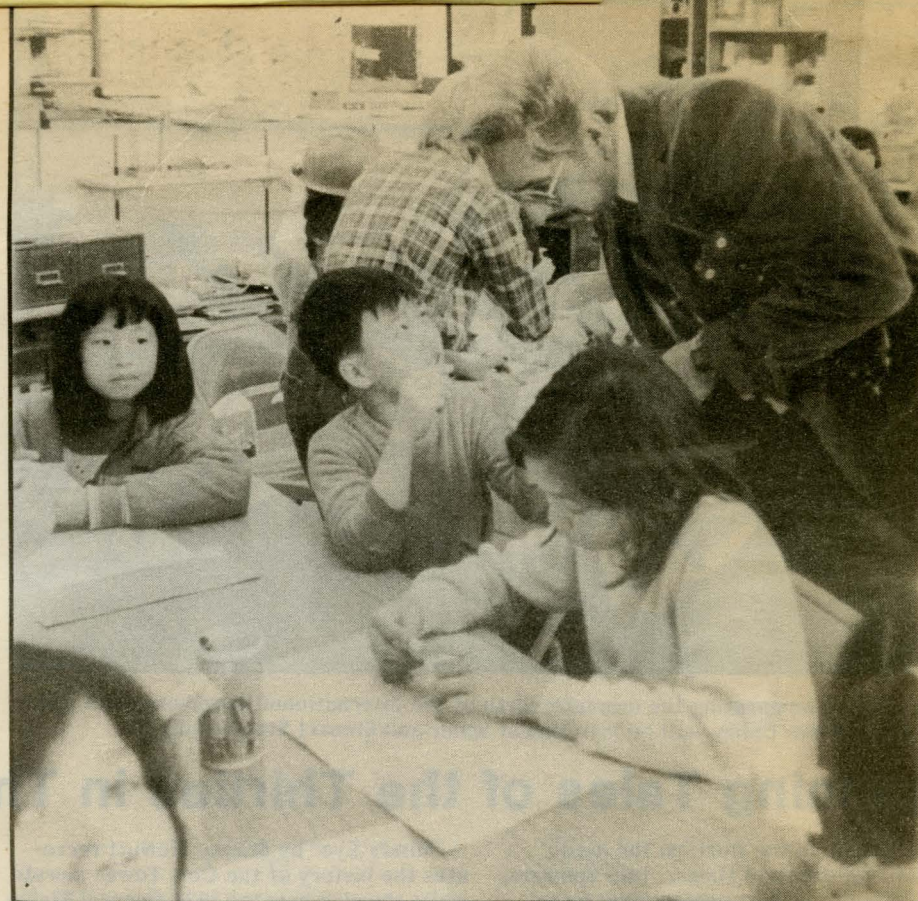
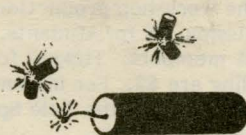
Bob Hayes photos



Students at the elementary schools' graduation ceremonies greeted their audiences in many languages. The students in photo are from Starr King School.

We'll miss you

BENNY GOODMAN



Daniel Webster Elementary School students were treated to a Career Day in June, when representatives of Potrero Hill businesses explained to the youngsters what their work is and what they do. The students asked good questions, and Principal Willi Santamaria was pleased with the results.

Ruth Passen photo

Graduation

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Though he was set to take office beginning July 1, Cortines made himself available even before that date to meet with neighborhood groups and acquaint himself with both the problems and pluses of the job he inherited from the former administration.

To the delegation of 25 people from Potrero Hill, Cortines pledged that "though it will take time," he will "hammer away at core teaching." And about the need to appear at the Board of Education meetings to lobby for the schools, Cor-

tines told the group, "I don't want the community to be lackeys for the local school administration" and urged Hill residents "to speak downtown," and promised that "empowerment is shared involvement," and that he will pay attention.