

It's not Long Now

Dr. Gloria C. Duffy, President and CEO

TWO MONTHS FROM NOW, the Club expects to occupy its new headquarters at 110 The Embarcadero. About a month after that, in January, our members and the public will be invited to attend the first programs held in the building. We are in the final three months of a seven-year-long saga to provide the Club with a home in which its many talks and forums will be held.

The saga actually dates back to 1982, when then-President of the Club Shirley Temple Black established the first building committee for the Club, at least in modern history. More recently, the Club held a board retreat in 2009 to consider whether we should pursue a building. The tale since then has involved many steps and stages, but a relatively straight path to our goal.

For those who don't already know, the new building will contain two auditoriums, a library, reception areas and lounges, an audio and video production suite, a full basement, a roof deck and garden, the premium Meyer Sound Constellation system in our large auditorium and other Meyer systems throughout the building, and three floors of glass on the Embarcadero with beautiful, panoramic views of the Bay. The Steuart Street side of the building will feature restoration of the historic façade and a plaque explaining the important labor history that took place at the site.

So many wonderful people and institutions have helped and supported the Club to realize this dream. The Accornero family, who owned the building for more than 70 years, agreed to sell it to the Club and gave us the time we needed to close escrow so we could raise the necessary funds.

Over 200 individuals, families and companies have contributed to the approximately \$24 million raised thus far for the project. We will be acknowledging all of the extraordinarily generous donors when we open the building, but one deserves special note. The Packard Foundation awarded the Club a "program related investment," essentially a bridge loan that allowed us to close escrow on-time, prior to some of our donations being received. We are especially grateful to them for their sustained support over the past 20 years. It has made a huge difference for the Club.

The building will be sustainable, with a low-energy footprint. Windows in both facades will open, and together with large ceiling fans inside will allow us to cool mainly with outside air. The lobby tile is domestically manufactured and contains high recycled content, including crushed porcelain from toilet manufacturer Toto's "seconds" that they are unable to sell. The carpeting has post-consumer yarn. The wood paneling we will use is being milled from the floor and ceiling joists we found in the building,

which are old-growth fir. Other sustainable and renewable materials you will see in the building include cork, "plyboo" (bamboo plywood), low-water bathroom fixtures, bottle-filler fountains and countertops containing crushed post-consumer glass.

Our architects, Leddy Maytum Stacy and Gensler and our contractor Steve Oliver have all done a great job of beautiful design and construction. Our project manager, Piper Kujac, has kept everyone on task, on time and on budget.

We plan on grand opening ceremonies in mid-January, with specific dates to be set soon.

There is so much to say about the building, and what the experience in it will be like for our members and the community. But we will have time in the next two months and when the building opens to introduce our members and the public to the new headquarters.

What bears saying now is that all good projects take time and sustained focus to bring to fruition. Many people, including Mary Bitterman, the Club's Board chair at the time we decided to proceed, the Board of Governors and the many building committee, finance committee, audit committee, and executive committee leaders and members spent seemingly endless hours reviewing information and making the decisions necessary to keep the project on track.

Our Honorary 21st Century Campaign Co-Chairs George and Charlotte Shultz, and fundraising committees chaired first by Maryles Casto and then by John Farmer, have worked incredibly hard and effectively to raise the funds needed. We still have about \$4 million left to raise, and we are working diligently to raise the final funds before the building opens in January. Our goal is to own the building free and clear, without a mortgage.

Our bankers, our members, our real estate broker, our corporate and philanthropic supporters, our community partners including the Longshoremen's Union, San Francisco city leaders, wise advisors and so many, many others have collaborated to make the project successful. The Club's project shows what broad cooperation and sustained attention to a goal can achieve.

We are in the home stretch. Thank you for being with us on the journey. We look forward to showing you the fruits of all of our labors, come January.



Photo courtesy of Gloria Duffy