

LEAH GARCHIK

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Wednesday, September 14, 2005

The 90th birthday of Angelina Alioto, first wife of late Mayor Joseph Alioto and first lady of the city from 1968 to 1976, was celebrated by her children at a party for 60 friends and family members at Villa Taverna on Saturday night. Of course, Saturday was opening night of the Opera, too, and Michela Alioto-Pier, Joe and Michele Alioto's daughter and granddaughter of Angelina, described her grandmother taking her to opening nights. The operas, she said, told tales of intrigue, love, revenge, cunning and drama, all lessons she had found invaluable as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supes.

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Meanwhile, Stanlee Gatti turned the Rotunda of City Hall into a furniture-filled living room on Monday night, for a book party for research psychologist and gender scholar Peggy Drexler. Her "Raising Boys Without Men" says that sons of single mothers, lesbians or divorcees often find outside-the-home role models, remain masculine and strong, and good parenting has nothing to do with gender.

These are welcome findings particularly in same-sex-marriage-oriented San Francisco. One of the event hosts was Mayor Gavin Newsom, himself raised by a divorced mother and present at the event, along with former Mayor Willie Brown, Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown and District Attorney Kamala Harris.

The list of party hosts included Newsom, Harris, Ann and Gordon Getty, Sally and Bill Hambrecht, Mimi and Peter Haas, Rose and Phil Kaufman, Mimi Silbert, Alice Waters and Jann Wenner. All book-lovers surely, and just as certainly, all believers in the author's premise.

But guests familiar with everyday book parties, where a plastic cup of white wine is considered abundant, were struck by its lavishness, including a buffet dinner by McCall's. Drexler's husband is former Gap honcho and current J.Crew honcho Mickey Drexler, and although they don't live here any more, they have lots of friends, which is one reason for the star-studded turnout. When I asked one politician what had lured him, he blurted,

"Mickey's a good guy," before amending his answer to something more relevant to the subject and author. The Drexlers are donors to a variety of causes, including political ones.

The author, whose book is serious and timely, was excited to be on The Chronicle's best-seller list. "What it is, is that I've hit a nerve," she said. The opulence of the fete was astounding, an observation that might be considered apart from Drexler's findings.

With little regard for the feelings of wretched refuse and huddled masses who emigrated from afar, San Francisco Generations is putting on a San Francisco Native Jamboree on Friday "to bring together native sons and daughters of San Francisco to celebrate their roots." SBC Park will be named a San Francisco Classic, and a Hall of Fame award goes posthumously to Sacramento-born Herb Caen, "someone who has made a difference in our community." The event salutes the worthy San Francisco Conservation Corps, but is there a hint of chauvinism about it? If we had lawns, the Natives might burn models of the Golden Gate Bridge on them.

En route to Yerba Buena Gardens to hear Friday's San Francisco Symphony lunchtime concert, a woman mentioned to her cabdriver that KDFC was going to accept donations for Katrina victims there. When they arrived, the driver turned around to hand her a donation to the cause, reports the station's Diane Nicolini. As to other comings and goings of that event, Michael Slaughter saw one of the musicians, still in his white jacket, depart that event on a Segway.

P.S. When flutist/KALW announcer David Latulippe received his Symphony subscription tickets, one pair was for a concert of works by "Wanger" (which, in British slang, is the equivalent of an American composer named Johnson).

Margo St. James, founder of Coyote (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics, a would-be union of prostitutes), celebrates her 68th birthday tonight at Pier 23. St. James, who's been living in Bellingham, Wash., was a community activist and supervisorial candidate when she lived here. Her husband, Paul Avery, died in 2000 and is to be played by Robert Downey Jr. in

the about-to-be-shot movie about the Zodiac killer. "He would have loved it," St. James said of the casting. "They had a lot in common."

Dept. of tsk, tsk: Erik Wilson saw a sign in section 311 at SBC Park over the weekend saying, "He may be a cheater, but he's OUR cheater," which is no way to say hello again. Meanwhile Cisco DeVries, chief of staff to Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates, forwards a constituent's snapshot of two adjacent billboards at Alcatraz and Shattuck, one warning against childhood obesity, the other for McDonald's. You think it's easy being mayor of Berkeley?

Public eavesdropping

"It's so sad that our relationship is coming to an end."

Season's greetings, woman to vendor with sign reading, "Next week is our last week," at Ferry Plaza Farmers Market, overheard by Jeffrey Lipsett.

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