

## The Noon Balloon

NOT BAD FOR A 30-yr-old movie: Alfred Hitchcock's "Rear Window," at the Bridge, outgrossed every other film in town over the past wkend, pulling in \$20,825. Despite all the hype and hoopla, "The Right Stuff" scored only \$17,215 at the much bigger North Point ... James Pryor, Margaret Thatcher's Secty. of State for Northern Ireland, speaks before the Irish Forum in the Palace Hotel's Concert Room noonishly today — and can expect some expert heckling. In the audience will be Owen Carron, the Sinn Fein leader who entered this country illegally (he is free to roam while awaiting trial) ... Awwwww: After Monday night's Symphony gala at the Opera House, celebrating McKesson Corp.'s 150th birthday, Maestro Edo de Waart approached Meryl Streep and asked rather sheepishly, even Streepishly: "I never do things like this, but could I have your autograph?" "Well, that breaks the ice," smiled the Streepsease. "I was about to ask for yours." ... Item: Mayor Feinstein is now having second thoughts about a retractable dome on the proposed China Basin superwok because it might be dangerous in an earthquake. Look, everything's dangerous in an earthquake. No retractable roof, no go.

HOW THE 1st set, what's left, reacts to major news stories: At Le Central last Fri., Paul Clisura said, "Well, Martin Luther King is now a holiday," at which Billy Gaylord whooped, "Oh great — let's go to Hawaii!" As for Sen. Jesse Helms, who fought MLK Day, Randy Alfred thinks he might be mollified if we also honored the Chief Justice on the third Monday in January, which then would become National Burger King Day ... Yet another cogent comment on current events, this from Tomas Latta: "I don't understand all the concern over the greenhouse effect. I took my grandmother to Lehrs and she loved it."

ONWARD: Ever wonder why you never see a personalized license plate with the letters "JAP" in it? That's because a decade or so ago, a San Franciscan ordered "JAPTIN" for his Toyota, an event that caused a flap and the banning of "JAP" in any combination by the Dept. of Motor Vehicles. Update: the San Franciscan wanted that license plate as a putdown, but the Toyota "Jemon" is still running ... He never sleeps: Comic Robin Williams, back in town after working three months in N.Y. and Europe on a movie called "Moscow on the Hudson," worked an hour at the Holy City Zoo on Clement Mon. night and then dashed to The Other Cafe at Cole and Carl to preside over the grand opening of the second bathroom. The facilities no longer are coed ... Suppose Ronald Reagan, instead of Bogart, had played the role of Rick in "Casablanca"? (As you know, Reagan was considered for the part) "Well," ventures Ross Grossman, "we would have lost a great movie, but wouldn't it have been nice to have Bogie instead of Reagan in the BIG Casa Blanca?"

GOLDEN OLDIES: S.F.'s oldest living twins, born in different months, celebrate their 95th birthdays Sunday at St. Anne's Home on Lake. Elizabeth Burns Kain was born in the Mission at 11:45 p.m. on Oct. 31, 1888; her sister, Mary Burns Escude, arrived at 12:15 a.m. Nov. 1 ... Ben Selling, who is 96 and housebound in the Marina, rec'd a phone call from the San Francisco Ballet, offering dance lessons. "Well," chuckled Ben, "I look kinda funny in leotards so I'll have to turn you down, young lady. But you should have seen me dance 80 years ago — I was great!"

PHIL STEARNS thinks it's time we heard about Mrs. Firmina Fornaca, who cooks two or three times a week for the several Italian clubs in the Temescal district of Oakland (Colombo, Fratellanza, Ligure, etc.), turning out meals for about 400 people. She keeps house for herself and tends her garden; her crop of pale beans is descended from the handful she brought from Italy when she was 10. When she feels the need for a little action, she drives to Reno and has a go at the gaming tables. Firmina is 88.

BAY CITY BEAGLE: Tired of hearing about stores being taken over for branch banks and savings & loans? Okay: Santa Barbara Savings at Kearny and Sutter has been replaced by — a Kushin's shoe store. Nice design job by architects Kirby Fitzpatrick and Fred Karren ... Fishing off the Ft. Baker pier a couple of sunny days ago, Don Oppenheimer caught a big salmon that was immediately snatched off the hook by a sea lion. Don to the crowd after reeling in: "Hey, anybody care for salmon nose?" ... Ralph Crab heard it on the Berkeley police radio, cop checking in after checking out a burglary: "Entry was by unlocked door. They took everything but the fleas. I got the fleas." ... The official opening of the Doubleday bookstore on downtown Sutter tomorrow night must be a big deal. Nelson Doubleday Himself is flying in from N.Y.

ANOTHER GOOD one is gone: Wilbert Baranco, the first-rate jazz pianist who played at the Dawn Club before Lu Watters, even, and at the Club Alabam in the old Fillmore, died last wkend in his El Cerrito home ... That guy who looked like Billy Dee Williams, swinging down Broadway yesterday morn, was indeed Billy Dee; after taking the air in great gulps, he popped into the Lido Cafe for an omelette and a mimosa (champagne and orange juice) ... Bill Sless, touring England, found this sign in a pub in Wokingham, Berks: "Telephone Answering Charges. He's not here" — 50p. "He just left" — 60p. "He's not been here all day" — 75p. "Who?" — 1 pound.

ENDS SUNDAY

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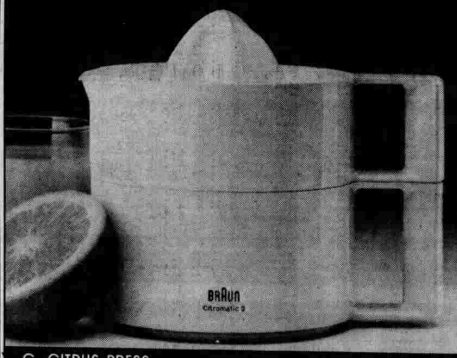
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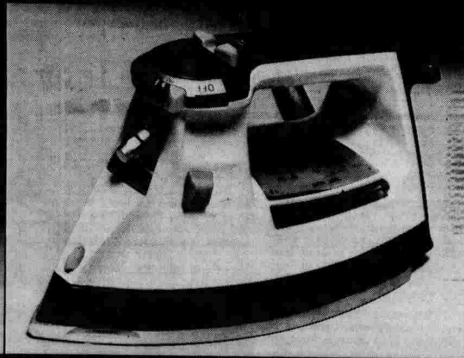
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