

## Heritage shines in Civic Center

### Editor:

Pittsburg, once again, has taken a giant step (its biggest yet) to recreate itself. I was very graciously invited to tour a work in progress of the new Civic Center. Even at this stage, it is magnificent. The architect is Fani Hansen, whose preliminary tour into our town began with a trip to the old Pittsburg Museum on Civic Avenue. Prior to her hiring by the city of Pittsburg, she was looking at the past as a point of reference while she was collecting information about our city. The two things I recall that struck her fancy was the fact of the multiplicity of our cultural heritage and the industries that provided the livelihood for its citizenry. So fascinated was she at the history and diversity of its people, that she has orchestrated the designing of the structure so that it is a testimony to who we are as a people.

A photo of the Columbia-Geneva Street mill, which was added in 1926, became a model for the fundamental structure. It is all tinted glass and steel framework; that will certainly wow an appreciative spectator. Glassed-in elevators take one up to the top floor of the three-story building. The south side presents a panoramic view of Mount Diablo and the surrounding hills, as well as the entrance area below. Fountains are planned, with pools of water that speak of our rivers. The use of medallions along the walkway to the entrance will depict past history, with blank spaces for future historical events. The architect's envisioned blend of past and present struck me

as quite innovative. It gave me a feeling of perpetuity. Tapestries of Pittsburg's historical eras are now finished and ready for hanging in the foyers of bottom and top floors.

There is a walkway that surrounds the building on the third floor, providing an overhang for shading the glass-walled offices. The smallest details have not been overlooked as Fani approaches the final stage of her creation. A daughter visited Isola de Femina last summer and brought back pebbles from the Mediterranean shores from which many of the early residents descended. The color of the pebbles will be the same used for the roof covering.

There is much symbolism used in the design, color and fabrics which are to represent the multicultural community in which we live. Shades of Mediterranean blues and the yellows and hews of Mexico will be used as a wrap-around over some of the exposed infrastructure. My personal interest leans more toward the aesthetics and may overshadow the more functional aspects of the center, but the very practical inclusion of all city services to be housed under one roof will make for a very convenient central location.

Plans for the City Council Chamber, located on the third floor, will provide seating for 130 and room for an additional 100-plus. All of the city's government offices will be housed in the one complex, which is 70,000 square feet of space. Space for outdoor events has been planned. Perhaps one day we shall be able to

watch our Folklorica dancers from the Mexican, Filipino, Italian and Pacific Islanders perform here.

Many of the products used to build the Civic Center come from local industry. This information and the fact that the cost of the building is coming in below budget is cause for jubilation from city planners. We have indeed been fortunate to have chosen the right architect for such an undertaking. The city fathers are to be congratulated for the stand taken to present this city with a bold new image. The City Hall will be a monument to past which has been built with the strong hands of a labor force "blue collar" workers and has produced generations of hardworking close-knit people who have become our city and county leaders.

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# Ledger Dispatch