

SAN FRANCISCO TOMORROW WAS BORN AND BRED IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROVERSY, AND AT THE AGE OF 15 THE ORGANIZATION LOOKS FORWARD NOT TO TRANQUILITY, BUT TO NEW CHALLENGES, NEW TESTS OF ITS RESOLVE TO PROTECT THE CITY AND KEEP IT LIVABLE. I WOULD LIKE THIS EVENING TO LOOK BACK OVER SOME OF THE EVENTS AND SOME OF THE CONTROVERSIES OF OUR EARLY HISTORY AND OUR RECENT HISTORY. THOSE RECOLLECTIONS ARE ENJOYABLE IN THEMSELVES. IT MAY BE, TOO, THAT OUR PAST HAS SOMETHING USEFUL TO TEACH US FOR FUTURE CAMPAIGNS. AS ALDOUS HUXLEY SAID, EXPERIENCE IS NOT JUST WHAT HAPPENS TO A MAN; IT IS WHAT A MAN DOES WITH WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM.

MY ACCOUNT OF THE EARLY DAYS OWES MUCH TO THE SFT MEMBERS THAT I HAVE TALKED WITH ABOUT THEM. MY CHIEF INFORMANTS WERE OUR THREE HONOREES TONIGHT, GERALD CAUTHEN, JEAN KORTUM, AND NORMAN ROLFE, AND ALSO TONY KILROY, GREG JONES, ROBERT SCROFANI, AND RICHARD GRYZIEC.

I FIND THAT MOST CURRENT SFT MEMBERS WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ORGANIZATION ARE APT TO SAY, "OH, OF COURSE, THE BEGINNING WAS THE FIGHT OVER THE U. S. STEEL BUILDING. THAT IS CLOSE, BUT NOT QUITE ON THE MARK. THE BATTLE AGAINST THAT 50-STORY ABOMINATION, PROPOSED FOR THE WATERFRONT JUST SOUTH OF THE FERRY BUILDING, WAS SFT'S BAPTISM OF FIRE, ITS FIRST BIG CAMPAIGN. BUT BY THEN WE WERE A GOING CONCERN. THE SPARK THAT BROUGHT US TO LIFE WAS STRUCK BY AN EARLIER ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS. AND THAT WAS THE APPLICATION TO PUT UP THE TRANSAMERICA BUILDING.

THE TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS WERE PROMINENT IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ALLOWING THE PYRAMID TO GO UP ON THE SITE

THAT HAD BEEN PICKED OUT AT THE HEAD OF COLUMBUS AVENUE. THEY WERE JOINED IN THE FIGHT BY NUMBERS OF OTHER GROUPS, BUT IT CAN HARDLY BE SAID THAT THERE WAS A STRONG CITY-WIDE COALITION WORKING TO THWART THE DEVELOPERS. IT OCCURRED TO JERRY CAUTHEN, THEN COMING TO THE END OF HIS TENURE AS PRESIDENT OF THE HILL DWELLERS, THAT A BROADLY BASED ORGANIZATION ABLE TO DRAW STRENGTH FROM ALL NEIGHBORHOODS WAS NEEDED TO TAKE UP ARMS IN SUCCEEDING ENVIRONMENTAL BATTLES, SOME OF WHICH WERE EVEN THEN LOOMING ON THE HORIZON.

IT WAS THE FALL OF 1969. JERRY CAUTHEN BEGAN TALKING WITH OTHERS, SOME FROM TELEGRAPH HILL, SOME FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE CITY, ABOUT THE NEED FOR STRONGER ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY. HE GOT IN TOUCH WITH THE SIERRA CLUB AND THE PLANNING AND CONSERVATION LEAGUE WITH THE IDEA IN MIND THAT THEY MIGHT SPONSOR ACTION-ORIENTED GROUPS IN SAN FRANCISCO THAT WOULD SERVE THE PURPOSE. THEY SAID THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO DO SO, BUT THEY OFFERED TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH A NEW ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PROTECTING THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT.

AND SO THE LOGIC OF EVENTS SEEMED TO POINT TOWARD A NEW ORGANIZATION. FOUR PEOPLE MET AT LUNCH LATE IN 1969 TO PLAN THE LAUNCHING. THEY WERE JERRY CAUTHEN, JEAN KORTUM, BOB SCROFANI, AND ELAINE SUNDAHL, WHOM YOU MAY REMEMBER AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST FROM POTRERO HILL. THE RESTAURANT WHERE THEY GATHERED WAS PERHAPS THE MONTCLAIR; NO ONE TODAY IS QUITE SURE; AT ALL EVENTS, IT WAS IN THE NORTH BEACH-TELEGRAPH HILL REGION. THE FOUR LUNCHERS DISCUSSED AGAIN THE PROSPECTS FOR CITY-WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION. AGAIN IT SEEMED THAT NO EXISTING ORGANIZATION WOULD SERVE THE TURN. SPUR, THE SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING AND URBAN RESEARCH ASSOCIATION, WAS WRITTEN

OFF AS ONE THAT BY AND LARGE SPOKE FOR DOWNTOWN INTERESTS. SAN FRANCISCO BEAUTIFUL WAS JUDGED TO BE NOT EQUAL TO THE TASK. SEVERAL NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE HILL DWELLERS, WON HIGH MARKS WITHIN THEIR LIMITED DOMAINS BUT APPEARED UNWILLING AND UNEQUIPPED TO TAKE ON CITY-WIDE RESPONSIBILITIES. IN SHORT, OUR FOUR STOUTHEARTED ORIGINALS, DECIDED WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS A NEW ORGANIZATION HAVING ALL SAN FRANCISCO AS ITS BAILIWICK, DEVOTING ITSELF TO PROBLEMS OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT, POLITICAL IN FUNCTION IN THE SENSE THAT IT EXISTED TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY, AND DRAWING ITS MEMBERSHIP AND ITS SUPPORT FROM ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF POLITICAL-PARTY AFFILIATION, FROM LIBERALS, MODERATES, AND CONSERVATIVES. THE FOUR SCHEDULED A PUBLIC MEETING FOR LATE IN JANUARY, 1970, AND ARRANGED FOR A NOTICE TO BE MAILED TO LIKELY PARTICIPANTS IN THE NEW VENTURE.

I'M SURE MANY OF YOU REMEMBER THE TRANSAMERICA FIGHT. YOU RECALL THAT THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, ALLAN JACOBS, KEPT STATING THE CASE AGAINST THE PYRAMIND BY SAYING TRANSAMERICA WAS A BUILDING THAT STOOD UP AND SAID, "LOOK AT ME!" HE WAS CERTAINLY RIGHT, BUT HIS ARGUMENT DID NOT PROVE EFFECTIVE. AND IT IS RATHER CURIOUS AND AMUSING TO SEE HOW THE BUILDING HAS NOW BECOME A TRADEMARK OF SORTS FOR THE CITY. MOST PEOPLE TOLERATE IT AND MANY FIND IT ATTRACTIVE. BUT NEARLY ALL OF US WHO FOUGHT AGAINST TRANSAMERICA IN THE LATE 60s, THOUGH WE MAY STILL INCLINE TO LOOK DOWN OUR NOSES AT IT, BASED OUR OPPOSITION NOT ON ITS PYRAMIDAL SHAPE, BUT ON ITS LOCATION. WE THOUGHT IF IT WERE TO BE BUILT IT SHOULD GO IN THE LOWER SOUTH OF MARKET REGION MARKED OFF FOR DOWNTOWN EXPANSION. WE THOUGHT THAT IN ITS PRESENT LOCATION IT MIGHT WELL BE THE BEGINNING OF HIGH RISE CONSTRUCTION THAT WOULD MARCH NORTH ACROSS NORTH BEACH

TO TELEGRAPH HILL. PERHAPS THE FIGHT WE CONDUCTED HAS IMPRESSED THE DANGER ON THE PUBLIC MIND AND HAS HELPED TO FORESTALL THAT MOVEMENT. ONE HOPES SO. BUT WE MUST REMEMBER THAT CHINATOWN IS NOW UNDER EXTREME HIGH-RISE PRESSURE; AND THE NORTHWARD INTRUSION OF THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT IS STILL SOMETHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT OUT OF THOSE DAYS OF TRANSAMERICA CONTROVERSY THE BEST REMARK CAME FROM JOHN BLAYNEY, A LOCAL URBAN PLANNER. A FRIEND OF HIS SAID TO HIM, "BUT ISN'T THE TRANSAMERICA BUILDING SPECTACULAR?" BLAYNEY'S REPLY WAS: "YES, IT IS. IT WOULD BE EVEN MORE SPECTACULAR IF THEY TURNED IT UPSIDE DOWN."

IT SHOULD BE SAID HERE THAT THE TRANSAMERICA STRUGGLE, THOUGH IT SERVED AS THE TRIGGER, THE PROXIMATE CAUSE, IN THE GENERATION OF SFT, WAS ONLY THE LATEST IN A LONG TRAIN OF ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES THAT PREPARED THE WAY. ONE IN THE TRAIN WAS THE PROTRACTED CAMPAIGN IN THE LATE 1950S AND EARLY 1960S FOR THE 40-FOOT HEIGHT LIMITATION AROUND THE NORTHERN WATERFRONT. ANOTHER WAS CERTAINLY THE GREAT FREEWAY CONTROVERSIES OF THE 1950S AND 1960S. THESE CRISES IN OUR CIVIC LIFE TAUGHT CITIZEN GROUPS THAT THEY COULD ORGANIZE AND PREVAIL, THAT THEY COULD MOBILIZE THEIR STRENGTH AND WIN OUT AGAINST THE BUREAUCRACY AND AGAINST MASSIVE ECONOMIC POWER. LITTLE BY LITTLE OVER THE YEARS A POLITICAL CLIMATE CAME INTO BEING IN WHICH SFT COULD THRIVE. AND SO WHEN THE ORGANIZERS SET ABOUT THEIR TASK IN 1969 THEY HAD A SENSE OF POLITICAL EFFICACY. THEY HAD SEEN THE POWER OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING. IT WAS THEIR AIM TO CARRY THE PROCESS FURTHER, TO MOUNT AN ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT THAT WOULD NOT MERELY RESPOND AD HOC TO A CRISIS BUT THAT

WOULD BE A CONTINUING PRESENCE, RESPONDING SYSTEMATICALLY AND COMPREHENSIVELY TO ISSUES, WHEREVER THEY AROSE IN THE CITY.

THE FIRST MEETING OF WHAT WAS SOON TO BE NAMED SAN FRANCISCO TOMORROW TOOK PLACE ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 24, 1970, IN THE MISSION ROOM ON THE 9TH FLOOR OF THE BAY VIEW SAVINGS AND LOAN BUILDING AT 22ND AND MISSION STREETS. THIRTY-EIGHT PEOPLE RESPONDED TO THE MAILED NOTICE, WHICH WAS FULL OF ALARMS AND TRUMPET CALLS. IT BEGAN ON A NOTE OF URGENCY THAT DID NOT SUBSIDE AS THE MESSAGE CONTINUED: "AS YOU KNOW, THINGS ARE CRITICAL. SAN FRANCISCO IS CURRENTLY BEING SET UP FOR MANHATTANIZATION!" IN AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO THE U. S. STEEL AND FERRY PORT PLAZA PROPOSALS THE NOTICE DECLARED: "ONE OF THE FINEST WATERFRONT AREAS IN THE WORLD IS ABOUT TO BE SACRIFICED TO A MIAMI STYLE HIGH RISE BUILDING BOOM!" AND THEN THE NOTICE WENT ON TO BROACH THE THEME OF THE MEETING: "AN ALLIANCE FOR A HUMAN CITY! IF SAN FRANCISCO IS TO REMAIN A LIVABLE CITY AT ALL, IT WILL BE THROUGH A NEW ALLIANCE -- A COALITION OF RESIDENT URBAN CONSERVATIONISTS SO STRONG THAT IT CAN COPE WITH THE CLIQUE OF SPECIAL INTERESTS WHICH TODAY IS VIRTUALLY RUNNING THE MUNICIPAL SHOW."

WELL, THAT NOTICE WAS NOT A BAD BEGINNING. IT HAD THE DOWNRIGHT, PLAIN SPEAKING APPROACH TO A PROBLEM THAT HAS ALWAYS CHARACTERIZED SFT IN ITS BEST MOMENTS. AS ONE LOOKS OVER THE EARLY DOCUMENTS ONE CAN'T HELP BEING STRUCK BY THE PRESCIENCE OF THE PEOPLE WHO PUT SFT TOGETHER. THEY SAID IN 1970 THAT SAN FRANCISCO WAS BEING SET UP FOR MANHATTANIZATION. WHO TODAY WOULD SAY THAT THEY WERE WRONG? THE COURSE OF DEVELOPMENT IN SAN FRANCISCO HAS ALWAYS CONFORMED REMARKABLY WELL TO OUR PREDICTIONS. SFT'S EARLY INSISTENCE UPON THE QUALITY OF URBAN

CONDITIONS OF LIFE IS ALSO WORTH NOTICING. IN THOSE DAYS IT WAS COMMON TO HEAR PLEAS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WILDERNESS AND THE BEAUTIES OF RURAL AMERICA, BUT UNUSUAL TO HEAR EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT IN CITIES, WHERE MOST OF THE PEOPLE LIVE. THUS SFT WAS A PIONEER IN ASSERTING THE SALIENCE OF URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES.

THAT FIRST MEETING IN THE BAY VIEW BUILDING LAID DOWN THE LINES OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW ORGANIZATION. IT WOULD BE A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION. IT WOULD UNDERTAKE PROGRAMS OF POLITICAL ACTION, LEGAL ACTION, PUBLIC INFORMATION, AND MONEY RAISING. THE FIRST MONEY RAISER WOULD BE ON MARCH 15 AT THE ARTIST'S CO-OP ON UNION STREET. COMMITTEES WERE FORMED TO STUDY THE ISSUE AREAS OF LAND USE, THE WATERFRONT, POLLUTION, AND TRANSPORTATION. AND THE ORGANIZATION GOT A NAME. NAN DALEY SUGGESTED THE NAME OF SAN FRANCISCO TOMORROW, AND IT WON IMMEDIATE ACCEPTANCE. I HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT THE CHOICE WAS AN ESPECIALLY HAPPY ONE. IT PUTS THE EMPHASIS IN THE RIGHT PLACE. OUR DECISIONS ABOUT PRESENT DAY MATTERS ARE INEVITABLY INFLUENCED BY OUR VIEW OF THE FUTURE. AND IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS IT IS SUPREMELY IMPORTANT THAT A VISION OF TOMORROW SHOULD CONTROL THE ACTIONS OF TODAY.

AT THE FIRST MEETING THE MEMBERS SET UP A STEERING COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN PEOPLE, AND THAT COMMITTEE SOON FUNCTIONED AS THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS WE KNOW IT TODAY. THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS WERE HENRIK BULL, GERALD CAUTHEN, MIKE DOYLE, HANS FEIBUSCH, JEAN KORTUM, ROBERT LAWS, JERRY MANDER, ALBERT MEAKIN, HELEN MEAKIN, NORMAN ROLFE, ROBERT SCROFANI, DR. WALTER STANTON, AND ELAINE SUNDAHL.

LATER, THERE WAS A SECOND SFT MEETING AT THE BAY VIEW BUILDING, AND THEN THE STEERING COMMITTEE BEGAN MEETING IN THE HOMES OF MEMBERS, AS THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS DOES TODAY. OFTEN IN THOSE EARLY TIMES THE MEETINGS WERE IN THE HOME OF THE LATE DR. WALTER STANTON ON BERNAL HEIGHTS.

AND IT WAS DR. STANTON, WHO SERVED AS NEWS-CONFERENCE SPOKESMAN WHEN THE NEW-BORN SFT PLUNGED INTO THE U. S. STEEL FIGHT. SFT CALLED THE NEWS MEDIA TO A MEETING INSIDE THE FERRY BUILDING, BUT PORT COMMISSION PRESIDENT CYRIL MAGNIN SENT THE HARBOR POLICE AROUND TO EVICT THE GATHERING; AND SO THE NEWS CONFERENCE WENT AHEAD ON THE EMBARCADERO SIDEWALK. SOON MANY INDIVIDUALS AND MANY ORGANIZATIONS GOT ABOARD THE ANTI-U.S. STEEL BANDWAGON, BUT IT WAS SFT THAT LED THE WAY. AND THE SAME MAY BE SAID FOR THE RESISTANCE TO THE FERRY PORT PLAZA, THAT GROTESQUE PROPOSAL FOR AN ARTIFICIAL ISLAND, HALF AGAIN AS LARGE AS ALCATRAZ, IN THE BAY JUST NORTH OF THE FERRY BUILDING.

IN THE YEARS SINCE OUR FIRST FINE FORAY INTO ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS SFT HAS ADDRESSED ITSELF TO SCORES OF ISSUES. AND MANY OF THOSE ISSUES HAVE SEEMED TO GATHER IN CLUSTERS AROUND CERTAIN MAJOR CONCERNS. THE WATERFRONT HAS BEEN WITHOUT DOUBT A CLUSTERING POINT. OUR CONCERN HAS BEEN TO PRESERVE THE NATURAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE LAND TO THE WATER, TO PREVENT THE CONSTRUCTION OF BARRIERS ALONG THE SHORELINE, AND TO REMOVE EXISTING BARRIERS SUCH AS THE EMBARCADERO FREEWAY, TO CONTINUE MARITIME USES WHEREVER POSSIBLE, AND TO ENABLE PEOPLE TO LOOK UPON THE BAY, GET CLOSE TO IT, AND ENJOY IT. WE HAVE OPPOSED THE CHEAP AND TAWDRY, SUCH AS PIER 39. WE HAVE FOUGHT AND WE ARE STILL FIGHTING TO DEVELOP PIER 45 AS A PLACE TO ACCOMMODATE THE FISHING INDUSTRY AND NOT AS A PLACE FOR

HOTELS AND OFFICE BUILDINGS. AND NOW THE WATERFRONT ENVIRONMENTAL BATTLE MOVES TO THE SOUTHERN WATERFRONT WHERE THE SANTA FE-SOUTHERN PACIFIC MISSION BAY PROJECT THREATENS SHIPPING USES FROM CHINA BASIN TO ISLAIS CREEK.

OTHER MAJOR ISSUE CLUSTERS ARE THOSE TOUCHING ON TRANSPORTATION AND DOWNTOWN HEIGHT, BULK AND DENSITY CONTROLS. I VENTURE TO SAY THAT OVER THE YEARS SFT HAS SPENT MORE TIME AND ENERGY ON TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONS THAN ON ANY OTHER SORT. AND IT IS PERHAPS THERE THAT WE HAVE BEEN MOST PRODUCTIVE. NORMAN ROLFE HAS POINTED OUT TO ME A DOZEN ISSUES OF VARYING MAGNITUDE, IN THE SETTLEMENT OF WHICH WE HAVE BEEN INFLUENTIAL. HE CITES ONE THAT I HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT ENTIRELY -- THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE LONG-LIVED PROPOSAL FOR A NEW SOUTHERN CROSSING OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY. IT PUT ITS UGLY HEAD UP AGAIN AS A BALLOT MEASURE IN 1972 AND SUFFERED DECAPITATION, WITH NORMAN AND SFT HELPING TO MAN THE TUMBRELS. A WHOLE SLEW OF ISSUES INVOLVED THE SAN FRANCISCO-MARIN TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR, AND JEAN KORTUM HAS HELPED ME RECALL THEM -- ATTEMPTS TO REVIVE THE GOLDEN GATE FREEWAY PROPOSAL, PROPOSALS TO PUT A ROADWAY THROUGH FORT MASON, TO WIDEN DOYLE DRIVE, AND TO SECOND-DECK THE BRIDGE. THOUGH WE HAVE STAVED OFF DISASTER IN THAT CORRIDOR, YOU CAN BET YOUR LIFE THAT WE HAVE NOT FACED THE LAST OF THE THREATS. THE TRANSIT FIRST POLICY AND THE MAINTENANCE OF SURFACE RAIL TRANSPORT DOWNTOWN HAVE ALWAYS HAD STRONG SFT SUPPORT. AND IN THAT LATTER CASE IT IS NO GREAT EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT THE PROPOSED E LINE, THE RAIL LINE AROUND THE EMBARCADERO, SPRANG FULL BLOWN FROM THE HEAD OF JERRY CAUTHEN. IN 1974 THEN-SUPERVISOR DIANNE FEINSTEIN ASKED HIM WHETHER HE DIDN'T THINK A SOLUTION TO WATERFRONT TRAFFIC CONGESTION MIGHT

BE TO CONVERT THE FINGER PIERS INTO PARKING GARAGES. LUCKILY IN THOSE DAYS DIANNE WAS PUTTY IN JERRY'S HANDS, AND HE SOON CONVINCED HER OF THE WISDOM OF DISTRIBUTING THE PEOPLE BY RAIL. IN DUE COURSE HIS WRITTEN REPORT ON THE E LINE GOT WRITTEN INTO WATERFRONT PLANS, AND WE CAN BE FAIRLY SURE THAT ONE DAY IT WILL BE A REALITY. SFT MUST ALSO BE GIVEN CREDIT FOR ORIGINATING THE IDEA OF THE F LINE, THE ONE THAT WILL RUN ON THE SURFACE MARKET STREET RAILS. THE CREDIT FOR THAT GOES TO NORM ROLFE AND THE PEOPLE WHO WORKED ON IT WITH HIM.

SFT HAS SHOWN ITSELF TO BE FECUND IN THE GENERATING OF COLLATERAL ORGANIZATIONS TO WORK AT THE TASK OF CONTROLLING DOWNTOWN GROWTH, AND IT HAS BEEN IN THE VANGUARD OF COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TO CIVILIZE THE MISSION BAY PROJECT. IN 1979 SFT DECIDED THAT A SEPARATE ORGANIZATION COULD MOST EFFICIENTLY CARRY ON THE INITIATIVE CAMPAIGN FOR PROPOSITION O, DESIGNED TO REDUCE DOWNTOWN HEIGHT LIMITS AND FLOOR AREA RATIOS. THE RESULT WAS SAN FRANCISCANS FOR REASONABLE GROWTH, WHICH NOT ONLY FOCUSED ENVIRONMENTAL ENERGY FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROPOSITION O BUT WENT ON TO A VIGOROUS AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE OF ITS OWN. THERE IS STILL AN OVERLAP BETWEEN ITS BOARD AND OURS. SFRG WAS ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE IN ITS SPONSORSHIP OF PROPOSITION M, THE GROWTH CONTROL MEASURE ON THE 1983 BALLOT. ITS PROGRAM OF FILING COURT ACTIONS TO ENFORCE ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AGAINST FREE-WHEELING DEVELOPERS HAS PROVED OUTSTANDINGLY EFFECTIVE. AND SO THE LONG CAMPAIGN CONTINUES. A YEAR AGO SAN FRANCISCO TOMORROW'S DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE AND ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS DECIDED TO CONCENTRATE SOME ATTENTION ON THE ISSUE OF AN ANNUAL LIMIT ON COMMERCIAL OFFICE DEVELOPMENT IN SAN FRANCISCO. WE GOT IN TOUCH WITH LIKE-MINDED GROUPS, AND TOGETHER WITH THEM WE FORMED THE ANNUAL LIMIT COALITION. OUR COALITION PROPOSAL

FOR AN ANNUAL LIMIT OF 500,000 SQUARE FEET AND OTHER LIMIT PROPOSALS STIMULATED BY OURS HAVE BECOME THE CENTER OF DEBATE IN THE PROCEEDINGS ON THE PENDING DOWNTOWN PLAN. ONCE AGAIN SFT HAS STRUCK A SYMPATHETIC CHORD IN THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS.

WHEN YOU STOP FOR A MOMENT TO CONSIDER, OF COURSE, IT DOES NOT SEEM AT ALL ODD THAT AN ANNUAL LIMIT SHOULD TURN OUT TO BE A SURE-FIRE POLITICAL ISSUE. IT IS OBVIOUS TO US IN SFT THAT THERE HAS BEEN FOR A LONG TIME A LACK OF BALANCE IN SAN FRANCISCO'S DEVELOPMENT. PUBLIC AWAKENING TO THAT IS ATTESTED BY THE GROWING VOTER SUPPORT OF GROWTH-CONTROL BALLOT MEASURES. THE TIMES ARE CERTAINLY OUT OF JOINT WHEN RUNAWAY OFFICE CONSTRUCTION IS ALLOWED TO OVERWHELM THE CITY'S CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH THE ATTENDANT EFFECTS. HOUSING PRICES AND RENTS SOAR; THE MUNI BECOMES STILL MORE OVERCROWDED; AUTOMOBILE CONGESTION INCREASES; RESIDENTS ARE DISPLACED; NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESSES AND BLUE-COLLAR EMPLOYMENT ARE CROWDED OUT -- ALL THESE THINGS IN ADDITION TO THE DIRECT PHYSICAL IMPACT AND THE ESTHETIC IMPACT OF HIGH-RISE STRUCTURES. A RESTORATION OF BALANCE IS WHAT WE SEEK IN AN ANNUAL LIMIT, BALANCE BETWEEN DOWNTOWN GROWTH AND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, HOUSING RESOURCES, EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES, BREATHABLE AIR, OPEN SPACE NEEDS, AND NUMBERS OF OTHER CONSIDERATIONS THAT AFFECT THE LIVABILITY OF OUR URBAN ENVIRONMENT.

I'M SURE THAT WE HAVE ALL HAD SOME SARDONIC COMMENTS TO MAKE ABOUT MAYOR FEINSTEIN'S BELATED PROPOSAL FOR AN ANNUAL LIMIT OF 950,000 SQUARE FEET, A LIMIT WITH SO MANY EXCEPTIONS THAT IT'S HARD TO CONCEIVE OF IT AS A LIMIT AT ALL. AND HER ENTRY INTO THE ANNUAL-LIMIT ARENA COMES AT A TIME WHEN THERE

IS SO MUCH APPROVED OR SOON-TO-BE-APPROVED CONSTRUCTION IN THE PIPELINE AS TO MAKE EVEN OUR OWN FIGURE OF 500,000, WITHOUT EXCEPTIONS, SEEM OVER GENEROUS. STILL, WE SHOULD NOT MISS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MAYOR'S ACTION. IT IS PROBABLY THE HIGHEST COMPLIMENT WE HAVE YET RECEIVED AT HER HANDS. IT MEANS THAT THE FIGHT OVER WHETHER THERE SHALL BE AN ANNUAL LIMIT IN THE DOWNTOWN PLAN HAS BEEN SETTLED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THE ONLY ISSUES NOW ARE WHAT THE LIMIT SHALL BE AND WHICH PROJECTS IF ANY SHALL BE EXEMPT FROM IT. IT MUST BE RECORDED, THEN, THAT SFT HAS PLAYED A NOTABLE ROLE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE DOWNTOWN PLAN. WE HAVE SET THE TERMS OF THE DEBATE. WE HAVE OCCUPIED THE FIELD. WHEN PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE PLAN TODAY THEY THINK ABOUT IT IN RELATION TO THE ANNUAL LIMITS THAT HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED. THAT WAS NOT SO A YEAR AGO WHEN WE BEGAN OUR ANNUAL LIMIT CAMPAIGN. IT MAY WELL BE THAT WE SHALL BE DISSATISFIED WITH THE DOWNTOWN PLAN THAT GETS ADOPTED AND THAT WE SHALL IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT A CAMPAIGN TO TIGHTEN IT UP IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. BUT REGARDLESS OF THAT IT IS NO INCONSIDERABLE EXERCISE OF POLITICAL POWER THAT WE AND THE ANNUAL LIMIT COALITION HAVE DEFINED THE ISSUE, DECIDED WHAT THE PUBLIC DIALOGUE SHOULD FOCUS ON, AND WON ACCEPTANCE FOR THE IDEA OF A LIMIT.

I EARLIER MENTIONED THE MISSION BAY PROJECT OF SANTA FE-SOUTHERN PACIFIC. IT IS FATEFUL FOR THE FUTURE NOT ONLY OF THE SOUTHERN WATERFRONT AND THE PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO BUT OF A GREAT LAND AREA SOUTH OF MARKET STREET. AND HERE ONCE AGAIN SFT HAS MADE COMMON CAUSE WITH OTHER GROUPS THROUGH AN ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS THE MISSION BAY CLEARINGHOUSE. IT IS FAIR TO SAY, I THINK, THAT SFT, AND MORE PARTICULARLY ITS

MISSION BAY COMMITTEE, HAS PERFORMED SPECTACULARLY WELL IN HELPING TO WIN EXTENSIVE CUTBACKS IN THE SCALE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT. TO SEE THAT IT IS ONLY NECESSARY TO COMPARE SOUTHERN PACIFIC'S PROPOSAL OF APRIL, 1983, WITH THE GUIDELINES ACCEPTED BY SANTA FE-SOUTHERN PACIFIC IN OCTOBER OF 1984. THE LATER GUIDELINES PROVIDE FOR A CUT BACK OF MORE THAN SEVEN MILLION SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE SPACE, WITH BUILDING HEIGHTS OF UP TO 42 STORIES BEING REDUCED TO NO MORE THAN EIGHT STORIES. IN OTHER WAYS THE PROPOSAL WAS IMPROVED, NOTABLY IN ITS HOUSING ELEMENT. WE HAVE BY NO MEANS SEEN THE LAST OF THE CONTROVERSY OVER MISSION BAY. AND IN SOME INSTANCES OUR FIGHT IS WITH THE MAYOR AND OTHER CITY OFFICIALS AS WELL AS WITH THE RAILROAD. FOR EXAMPLE, ONE MATTER DESERVING VIGOROUS OPPOSITION IS MISSION BAY'S THREAT, WITH THE MAYOR'S CONCURRENCE, TO GOBBLE UP SHORELINE LAND NOW RESERVED TO EXPAND THE PORT'S SHIPPING TERMINALS. OUR MISSION BAY COMMITTEE HAS SEVERAL OTHER BONES TO PICK WITH SANTA FE-SOUTHERN PACIFIC CONCERNING LAND USE AND CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION, ESPECIALLY THE FATE OF THE RAIL PASSENGER TERMINAL.

IT IS RIGHT THAT THIS EVENING WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE THE DOWNTOWN PLAN AND THE MISSION BAY PROJECT. THEY ARE BIG IN OUR MINDS BECAUSE THEY PRESENT THE MOST CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES NOW PENDING. BUT MY TREATING OF THEM AT SOME LENGTH REQUIRES THAT I SKIP OVER MANY IMPORTANT EPISODES IN OUR HISTORY. PERHAPS, THOUGH, I SHOULD HURRIEDLY MENTION A FEW MORE. WE HAVE PLAYED THE WATCH DOG OVER THE CITY'S PROGRAMS TO REDUCE BAY POLLUTION AND EXPAND THE SEWER SYSTEM. WE GAVE A STRONG PUSH TO THE SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN OF THE 1970S TO DOWN-ZONE MANY OF SAN FRANCISCO'S NEIGHBORHOODS, CERTAINLY

ONE OF THE MOST NOTEWORTHY ENVIRONMENTAL VICTORIES OF RECENT TIMES. ON OCCASION, WE HAVE RESORTED TO THE COURTS TO GAIN OUR ENDS. IT WAS OUR LAWSUIT AGAINST STATE OFFICIALS IN THE MID-1970S THAT SAVED THE HASLETT WAREHOUSE AT AQUATIC PARK FOR PUBLIC USE. AND IN SFT'S EARLY DAYS, IN 1972, WE BROUGHT AN ACTION IN FEDERAL COURT TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO FILE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE YERBA BUENA CENTER REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT. I CANNOT FORBEAR TELLING A STORY INVOLVING THAT CASE. WHEN HE WAS PRESIDENT OF SFT, BOB SCROFANI ATTENDED A MEETING IN MAYOR JOSEPH ALIOTO'S OFFICE IN CONNECTION WITH THE SUIT. IT WAS A SORT OF RECONCILIATION MEETING IN WHICH REPRESENTATIVES OF SEVERAL GROUPS ENGAGED IN LITIGATION OVER YBC GOT TOGETHER WITH THE MAYOR TO SEE WHETHER SOMETHING COULD BE WORKED OUT IN THE WAY OF A SETTLEMENT. THE MAYOR SOLICITED COMMENTS FROM SEVERAL PERSONS. AT LAST BOB SCROFANI STOOD UP AND SAID, "EXCUSE ME, MR. MAYOR. YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN SAN FRANCISCO TOMORROW. WE ARE SUING FOR AN INJUNCTION." MAYOR ALIOTO LOOKED AT SCROFANI REFLECTIVELY AND SAID, "AH, YES, SAN FRANCISCO TOMORROW. ISN'T THAT THE GROUP THAT WANTS TO SAVE THE WILD LIFE SOUTH OF MARKET?" WELL, WE MIGHT FIRST NOTE, AS THE MISSION CONSERVANCY HAS BEEN QUICK TO TELL US IN RECENT DAYS, THERE IS SOME WILD LIFE WORTH SAVING IN THAT REGION. AND IN EVALUATING JOE ALIOTO'S LITTLE BURST OF SARCASM WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT HE IS THE MAYOR WHO WHEN HE CAME INTO OFFICE SAID HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FINE TO BUILD ROWS OF RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES IN GOLDEN GATE PARK, ALL AROUND THE EDGES.

WHEN WE THINK OF THE OUTRAGES THAT HAVE SERIOUSLY BEEN PROPOSED IN THE PAST I THINK WE MUST DRAW THE CONCLUSION

THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSE HAS MADE SOME PROGRESS. I DO NOT THINK THAT ANYONE TODAY WOULD PROPOSE A HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE PARK. NOR DO I THINK ANYONE TODAY WOULD PROPOSE TO PUT A 50-STORY BUILDING ON THE NORTHERN WATERFRONT. PERHAPS THERE ARE SOME BATTLES THAT HAVE BEEN WON FOR ALL TIME. BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THE NUMBER OF PROBLEMS DIMINISHES. NEW ISSUES CROWD IN, AND THEY ARE PERHAPS SUBTLER AND MORE COMPLEX, DEMANDING A MORE SOPHISTICATED RESPONSE FROM US. NONE OF THE SFT MEMBERS THAT I HAVE TALKED WITH IN PREPARATION FOR THIS PROGRAM HAS HELD OUT ANY HOPE FOR A TIME WHEN WE MIGHT DISBAND THE ORGANIZATION AND DECLARE THAT WE HAD WON OUR CAUSE. ALL AGREE THAT WE MUST RECONCILE OURSELVES TO CONTINUAL STRUGGLE. I'M SURE THAT 15 YEARS FROM NOW WE SHALL BE REPEATING THAT FIRST SENTENCE OF THE INVITATION TO THE FIRST SFT GENERAL MEETING 15 YEARS AGO. THAT FIRST SENTENCE WAS: "AS YOU KNOW, THINGS ARE CRITICAL." AND THEN WE SHALL PROBABLY GO ON TO DETAIL SOME OF THE THINGS WE MUST DO TO KEEP SAN FRANCISCO HABITABLE IN THE FIRST YEARS OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY..

LET ME SAY WHAT I THINK HAS BEEN SAN FRANCISCO TOMORROW'S GREATEST CONTRIBUTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OF SAN FRANCISCO. WE HAVE HAD MANY SPECIFIC VICTORIES. WE HAVE SAVED A HISTORIC BUILDING, WE HAVE STOPPED A STREET WIDENING, WE HAVE RE-ROUTED A MUNI LINE. ALL THOSE THINGS ADD UP, AND THEY ARE IMPORTANT. BUT I AM THINKING BEYOND THEM TO A MORE GENERAL EFFECT. OTTO VON BISMARCK, THE 19TH CENTURY EXPONENT OF REALPOLITIK, TOLD US THAT POLITICS WAS THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE. I DON'T THINK ANYONE WHO HAS SPENT SOME TIME TRYING TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY DECISIONS IN SAN FRANCISCO WILL CARE TO DISPUTE THAT. WE ACCEPT THE PRACTICAL

LIMITATIONS OF POLITICAL ACTION, AND WE REALIZE THAT OUR VICTORIES ARE LIKELY ALWAYS TO BE PARTIAL RATHER THAN TOTAL. BUT THE DANGER ATTENDANT UPON OUR ACCEPTING AND REALIZING THESE THINGS IS THAT WE WILL RESIGN OURSELVES TO SPIRITLESS EFFORTS TO MANIPULATE THE PRESENT STRUCTURE OF POWER WITHOUT TRYING TO OPEN UP NEW POSSIBILITIES OF ACHIEVEMENT. IF POLITICS IS THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE, THEN SURELY A GOOD TEST OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IS WHETHER ONE CAN EXPAND THE REALM OF THE POSSIBLE. I THINK SFT HAS MET THAT TEST FAIRLY WELL. IN OUR WORK ON THE DOWNTOWN PLAN, ON MISSION BAY, ON NUMBERS OF TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, AND OTHER ISSUES WE HAVE EXPANDED THE REALM OF WHAT IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR SAN FRANCISCO'S POLITICAL SYSTEM TO ACHIEVE IN AID OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSE. AND THAT IS POLITICAL PERFORMANCE OF A HIGH ORDER.

I BELIEVE WE HAVE GOOD REASON TO BE PROUD OF OUR 15-YEAR RECORD. BUT WE ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH YESTERDAY. WE HAVE HIGH AND DIFFICULT THINGS TO DO TOMORROW. AND UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS WE HAVE AN EAGER APPETITE FOR THE TASK. ON MARCH 9, 1970, SFT FILED ITS INCORPORATION PAPERS IN SACRAMENTO WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE. INCLUDED IN THOSE PAPERS WAS A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE THAT HAS NOT LOST ITS FIRE IN 15 YEARS. I THINK IT WILL WARM US TODAY AND TOMORROW AND SPUR US ON TO THE WORK AHEAD. WE SAID THE FOLLOWING:

"THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THIS CORPORATION IS FORMED ARE...TO INITIATIVE, SPONSOR, PROMOTE, AND CARRY OUT PLANS, POLICIES, AND ACTIVITIES WHICH WILL CULTIVATE WITHIN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO A PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT WHICH IS IN HARMONY WITH ITS NATURAL SETTING AND THE NEEDS OF ITS INHABITANTS; TO CREATE RESPECT FOR ITS PRICELESS NATURAL FEATURES, ITS HUMAN

POPULATION, ITS FLORA, AND ITS RICH ENDOWMENT OF ANIMAL, BIRD, AND MARINE LIFE, EACH IN PROPER RELATION TO THE OTHER; TO FOSTER THE ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY AS A FIT PLACE IN WHICH TO WORK AND TO LIVE; AND TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC AND ITS ELECTED OFFICIALS TO THE URGENCY OF PRESERVING THE FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT WHICH PLACES SAN FRANCISCO AMONG THE GREAT CITIES OF THE EARTH."

JACK MORRISON
MAY 22, 1985