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## The Bay Area

9 Counties, 8 Bridges, 7 Million People

### Community Cheers as New Library Opens

Michelle Quinn



*A crowd waiting to get into the new Lafayette Library.*

THE opening of the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center on Saturday morning offered a needed respite from the doldrums of downbeat economic news along with some hope that communities can rise above the current bout of budget woes to create something amazing.

At the entrance of the new \$42 million library, a bronze sculpture named Speechless, by Brian Goggin, appears to be a teetering stack of book pages flying away with the wind. Laughing Squid has a good look drawing of what the permanent sculpture looks like.

Inside: vaulted ceilings of wood that remind some of the inside of the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite National Park, nooks with pillows and leather chairs and an outdoor patio that sports a glass sculpture that both captures the periodic table and the creeks of Lafayette.

Oh yes there are books — 110,000 — throughout the 30,880 square-foot facility. **But Saturday was not a day to browse but to marvel at**

**what can happen when people work together: More than 25 percent of Lafayette residents gave money to the project**, which was mostly paid through state grants and the city's redevelopment agency. More than \$1 million in used book sale proceeds was donated by the Friends of the Lafayette Library.

A partnership of 12 arts, cultural and educational organizations like the Oakland Zoo and the Lawrence Hall of Science will provide activities at the learning center, which should make the library and learning center a magnet for people from outside the city.

Steven Falk, the city manager told the Contra Costa Times: **This is clearly, far and away, the largest, most expensive, most spectacular, most important public improvement not only in the 40-year incorporated history of Lafayette but in the 160-year period since the first Yankee settlers arrived in Lafayette.**