

# Science Hall Is to Reopen After 5 Years

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After five years and \$9 million of work, the city is preparing to reopen what officials hope will become a world-class center for public displays of science and technology.

As the sound of hammers and drills fill the air, exhibits are being installed, carpets laid and walls painted at the city's Hall of Science in Queens, which is to reopen July 30.

The 80-foot-high concrete structure, built as part of the 1964-65 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, remained open for 16 years after the fair ended, and it continued to draw several hundred thousands visitors a year. But critics, citing inadequate exhibit space and insufficient financing, said it fell short of its potential. In 1981 the Koch administration began a thorough rehabilitation.

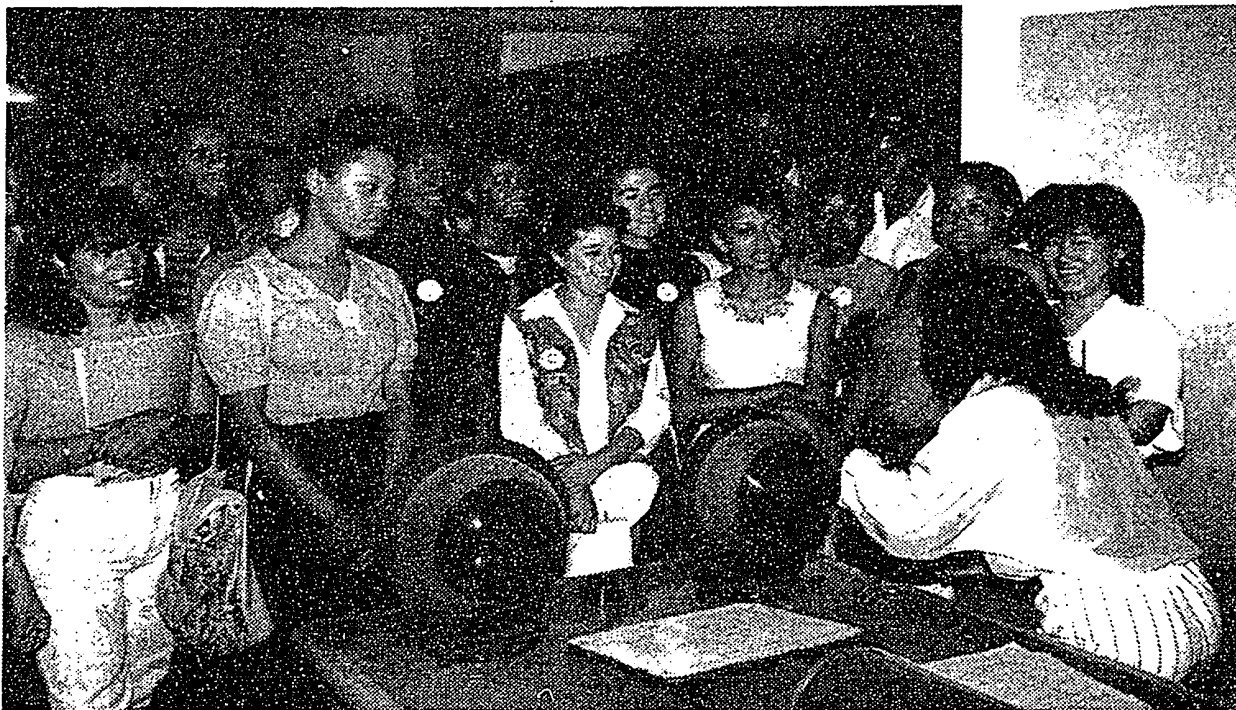
"In an important way, the events on July 30 are an opening rather than a reopening," the city's Cultural Affairs Commissioner, Bess Myerson, said in an interview.

She spoke of "an almost brand-new test tube" whose ingredients included new exhibitions in a renovated structure, an "expanded and revitalized" board of directors, greater involvement by the corporate and scientific community and "strong and enthusiastic support from the city."

"For the first time, the much-stated goal of making this institution a world-class center for science and technology is more than pleasant but empty rhetoric," she said.

Her aides voiced the hope that the Hall of Science would soon be considered in the same league as such leading science and technology exhibition sites as the Ontario Science Centre and the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia.

In the renovation, thousands of additional square feet of display space have been created by building a third exhibit level. A leaky roof has been replaced. Heating, cooling and lighting systems have been improved. New office space



Darlene Libro explaining an exhibit to a group who will in turn be explaining it to visitors at the Hall of Science.

has been fashioned and classrooms and workshops have been created for programs to complement the exhibitions, which will change periodically.

Plans call for the exhibits to cover such topics as robots and cosmic rays, light and vision, lasers and physics, electronic communications and astronomy. Most of the exhibits will be designed and built at the hall, said Dr. Alan J. Friedman, who was named director of the center in 1984.

### 'Fun to Do Our Own'

"It's more fun to do our own," said Dr. Friedman, a 43-year-old science-museum specialist with a doctorate in physics.

"We'll be showing people that science is fun," one of the center's "explainers," Heda Zweig, said the other day. These aides will circulate through the hall to answer questions and show visitors how to work the many exhibits that will invite hands-on participation. Half a million or more people a year

divided about equally between adults and children, are expected to visit the center.

The July 30 reopening is billed as the start of a preview period, which will run until a formal opening in October and will provide a chance to work out any kinks, Dr. Friedman said.

But he added that July 30 is the key date because that is when the general public can begin seeing the fruits of the renovation. The exhibits in the preview period, covering such subjects as self-regulating machines and human perception of light and color, will form 70 percent of the first year's exhibits, he said.

### Using Everyday Objects

Wherever possible, the hall intends to use readily recognizable objects to illustrate concepts.

"Look at this," Dr. Friedman said, pausing in front of a Rube Goldberg-like exhibit, built by his staff, that combined an airplane propeller, an exer-

cise bicycle and a mechanical system he referred to as "feedback control."

"The feedback principle means that in some way a machine can regulate itself," he said. "The visitor will peddle the bicycle to make the propeller turn. When he turns on the feedback control, the propeller keeps at a constant speed whether he peddles hard or light. This is to show how people can make machines that can control themselves. It's the system that functions in nearly all propeller airplanes."

The hall is near an entrance to the park at 111th Street and 48th Avenue, close to the Grand Central Parkway and Long Island Expressway and seven blocks from the 111th Street station of the No. 7 IRT Flushing line. Plans call for a shuttle bus from the station to the hall, Dr. Friedman said.

The hall will be open Wednesdays through Sundays from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. There is no admission fee, but a donation is suggested of \$2 for each adult and \$1 for those under 18.