

February 26, 1993

The current design of the Chronicle has evolved over the course of more than 30 years. In that time, there have been no major redesigns -- a look at copies of the paper over time shows a distinct continuity of design and typography. The look of the paper may appear quirky or dated to some. But like San Francisco and the Bay Area, the Chronicle does not feel obliged to follow national design trends, preferring to nurture its own look.

A large part of the look is typography, particularly the use of a traditional Metro for news headlines. Accent types are from the Spartan and Century families.

The news design aims to be newsy, active, vertical and generally modular. The story count for the front page is usually seven (sometimes six and sometimes eight).

There is considerably more freedom for design and type creativity in special feature sections, such as Food and Home, which are designed in the Art Department. The section fronts of News, Bay Area, Business, Sporting Green, Datebook and People usually are designed by copy editors in those departments.

There is a daily news meeting at 2:30 p.m. to discuss the lead stories of the day in various sections, but the decisions over content and design of the front page rest almost solely in the hands of the Assistant Managing Editor for news, Jack Breibart. He dummies the front page and the jump page.

The February 10 front page is a little unusual. I would have expected to see the one-column Tax Revenue story in column 1 and the picture in columns 2, 3 and 4. This "'1-3-2'" format is frequently used on page 1.

Also slightly unusual is the placement of the Clinton Cuts story in the "'armpit'" of the double column lede on U.S. Prepared. Usually that story would be placed in the outside column.

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Breibart says he dummied a "'3-1-2'" for variety; he'd done a "'1-3-2'" the day before.

The Chronicle began running color on its Business, Datebook and Sporting Green section fronts and the weather page in September 1991. However, on Wednesdays, the size of the paper precludes running color. So, in that respect, the February 10 issue is not typical of the overall look of the paper on a daily basis.