Future of Museum to be Studied by City Council

On Tuesday, May 24, 1994, the San Jose City Council voted unanimously to undertake a study on the future of the San Jose Historical Museum. The study will focus on the organizational structure and the funding necessary to ensure that the Museum will continue to grow and prosper in the years ahead.

Since 1990 the City of San Jose has experienced a decline in general operating revenues and is looking at a deficit budget again this year. At the Historical Museum this has meant the loss of several full-time staff positions (including 1.5 curator positions), a deteriorating level of maintenance, and the necessity of an Association-led lobbying effort every year to minimize the cuts. As the budget deficits continue, future efforts to save staff positions may not be as successful as in the past.

To address this situation, City Council members Joe Harrington and Marjorie Fernandes have proposed the development of a strategic plan for the Museum's future. One of the most important concepts scheduled for analysis is a proposal to transition the management of the Museum from the City to the San Jose Historical Museum Association, conforming with other City museums The Children's Discovery Museum, The Tech Museum of Innovation, and the San Jose Museum of Art are already operated by non-profit organizations.

The Museum Association Board of Directors met in a special session and agreed unanimously to join the City in this study in the belief that, working together, we may be able to carve out a more secure future for the Museum. The Association's concern is that an adequate level of funding must be identified and maintained if the Museum is to grow as an educational and interpretive institution. This funding must continue to come from the City, as well as from earned revenue, foundation grants, other government funding, and from the community that cares about the Museum and its mission.

Councilmember Fernandes will chair a committee of representatives from the City (Nina Grayson, Jerry Allen, Mignon Gibson); the Museum

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THEATER PARTY

MORTAL DECISIONS:
A Diary of the Donner Party

NORTHSIDE THEATRE PRESENTS

WHEN: Thursday, August 4, 1994
Doors open: 7:00 p.m.
Show: 8:00 - 9:30 p.m.
WHERE: Olinger Theatre
Intersection of 18th & William
On-street and off-street free parking
COST: $20 per ticket

Join us for a special presentation of Mortal Decisions: A Diary of the Donner Party, a one-man theatrical production starring Stu Richel and produced by the Northside Theatre Company of San Jose. As Association members and guests we will have the theatre to ourselves on the evening of August 4. After the performance we will enjoy refreshments and a special reception with the actor.

Stu Richel has acted professionally since 1981. He writes and performs powerful one-man shows, including Theodore Judah and the Transcontinental Railroad which he has performed locally to critical acclaim. As James Frazier Reed, a survivor of the Donner Party, Richel looks back on one of the greatest American tragedies. The story of James Frazier Reed is especially appropriate for San Jose, since after his ordeal in the Sierras, Reed settled here and became a prominent citizen. He was one of the first land developers in California, served as a member of San Jose's first Town Council in 1851, and organized the first Masonic Lodge.

Space is limited for this special performance which will benefit the San Jose Historical Museum Association. For tickets, please send the coupon below and a self-addressed stamped envelope with your payment to: SJ Historical Museum Association, 1650 Senter Road, SJ, CA 95112.

This Issue of the Association News is Sponsored By:

GARDEN CITY CONSTRUCTION INCORPORATED

SAN JOSE HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
1650 SENTER ROAD
SAN JOSE, CA 95112-2898

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Trolley Corporation, Rod Diridon, and other Trolley Board members if you see them.

The Portuguese Heritage Society of California (PHSC) is moving forward with plans for an Imperio on the Historical Museum grounds as a showcase for the history of the Portuguese in San Jose and California. This project will bring another facet of our cultural heritage to the site. Joe Machado, President of the PHSC, should be commended for his work. The PHSC Board also includes two past Presidents of the San Jose Historical Museum Association, Patty McDonald and Docent Edith Walter. This makes for great communication with the volunteers and good understanding of what the museum is all about.

Construction should start in late summer and will be a little inconvenient at times. Please take the opportunity to visit often and see these projects in progress. Thank you.

KATHLEEN MULLER, ADMINISTRATOR

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Honoring Our Museum Volunteers

The San Jose Historical Museum was founded in 1971 after several years of discussion and analysis by staff and the Development Council. The Peralta Foundation Educational Museum was founded in 1959 as a non-profit California Corporation. In 1973 the Educational Museum opened to the public at Foothill Community College. In 1992, due to Proposition 13 and a shift in the priorities of the College, the Educational Museum was asked to vacate the building they had funded to make room for other college activities. A court settlement awarded the Peralta Foundation $750,000 as compensation. The Museum holds over 20,000 items, the largest collection of electronics artifacts on the West Coast. Currently the collection is stored in 29 seagoing cargo containers.

Dating from the 1880s, the collections contain extremely important artifacts as well as documents relating to early technology. These represent the foundation that led to the development of Silicon Valley in the Santa Clara Valley. The Electric Light Tower, the symbol of early San Jose and of the Museum, stands as testament to the area’s commitment to technology and innovation. Among the stories represented in the collections of the Electronics Museum are the inventions of Dr. Lee de Forest who invented the vacuum tube triode in 1906, Cyril F. Elwell who invented C.W. Radio Telephony and Charles Herrold who was the father of radio broadcasting. The interior of Herrold’s first radio broadcasting station is part of the collection. These stories need to be preserved and told.

Electronics are part of our everyday life. The San Jose Historical Museum is dedicated to collecting and preserving the objects and papers that tell the story of San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley. The Peralta Foundation Educational Museum preserves the history of the electronics industry in Silicon Valley, acknowledges the contributions of local electronic pioneers and stimulates the imagination of young people in the science and technology of electronics with a hands-on approach to education. In partnership, an important aspect of our history will be preserved for future generations.

NANCY VALBY
Curator

MUSEUM STAFF
Mignon Gibson Director
Wanda Foss Senior Steno
Jeanne Kondo Clerk/Typist
Leslie Masunaga Archivist
Vera Hnatyshyn Director of Education
Bevley Blockie Volunteer Support (PT)
Fawnia Ferguson Volunteer Support (PT)
Carol Provenza Volunteer Support (PT)
Mary Anne Schreier Volunteer Support (PT)
Al Spivak Volunteer Support (PT)
Bevley Traenkle Volunteer Support (PT)
Monte Duran Museum Events Sarah Hergudt/Tours
Nancy Valby Curator
Fred Bennett Trolley Barn Manager

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Margaret Anderson Membership Secretary
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Julie Peterson Vintage Reflections Manager
Mayra Diaz Peralta/Fallon Shop Supervisor

In the Collections
San Jose City Council Approves Discussions with Perham Foundation

In 1909, "Doc" Herrold began broadcasting voice and music from San Jose Calling identifying as station "FN." This was the first regularly scheduled radio broadcast in the United States. Recognizing the significance of electronics and the historic role of the valley in the development of electronics, the City of San Jose was entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Perham Foundation (which operated the Electronics Museum at Foothill College) to explore the feasibility of relocating their Museum to the San Jose Historical Museum in a partnership arrangement. The MOU was approved by the City Council on February 16, 1994 after several years of discussions and analysis by staff and the Development Council. The Peralta Foundation Educational Museum was founded in 1959 as a non-profit California Corporation. In 1973 the Educational Museum opened to the public at Foothill Community College. In 1992, due to Proposition 13 and a shift in the priorities of the College, the Educational Museum was asked to vacate the building they had funded to make room for other college activities. A court settlement awarded the Peralta Foundation $750,000 as compensation. The Museum holds over 20,000 items, the largest collection of electronics artifacts on the West Coast. Currently the collection is stored in 29 seagoing cargo containers.

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ATTENTION: Association Members

Association members are our best resource and the best qualified to tell and promote the Museum to family and friends. During these challenging economic times, we ask for your help! And we're making it fun and easy with a membership contest. Please review the enclosed flyer outlining the details. Your help and assistance in obtaining members gives you and the "new member" an opportunity to win one of the three wonderful evenings "on the town." Should you have any questions, please call Barbara Johnson at 277-3780. With your help, our Membership Scale will rise. Thank you.

First Unitarian Church Undergoes Improvements

Over 100 years ago, ground was broken at 160 N. Third Street for the First Unitarian Church of San Jose, a Richardsonian-Romanesque structure designed by architect G.W. Page. This California Historical Landmark is one of a number of architecturally important buildings ringing St. James Park.

Tradition has it that the design was inspired by a church studied by Page in Transylvania, where Unitarianism originated. The building boasts 70 Romanesque arches, 48 stained glass windows and a unique circular sanctuary that is crowned with a dome reputed to be nearly acoustically perfect.

History of Local Activism

Throughout its history, the church congregation has been an active community force. (Before the first service held in the building on June 5, 1892, the group had already been meeting for 27 years in rented quarters.) Early members included J.J. Owen, architect and editor of the San Jose Mercury; A.T. Herman, the civil engineer who built Mt. Hamilton Road; Dr. Benjamin Cory, San Jose's first physician; and state legislator J.E. Brown.

Many San Jose "firsts" mark the Church's history. A Unitarian churchwomen's group founded in 1904 later grew into the San Jose Visiting Nurse Association. In that same decade, San Jose's first children's day nursery was founded by the Church. The first production of the City Lights theater company was staged in the church's sanctuary, which, since 1966, has been the performing home of the San Jose Chamber Music Society. In 1955, farmworker organizer Cesar Chavez attended his first political meeting in the building.

The Church has long been active in social-justice issues. For example, it supported a Santa Clara housing project for the unemployed during 1910-15. In 1933, the Church was one of the few voices that spoke out against the lynching in St. James Park of the suspects in the Brooke Hart kidnapping and murder. In the summer of 1965, the church organized and funded a project that provided houses and summer jobs for black teens from Selma, Alabama. For seven years during the late '60s, the building housed the Urban Food Organization, an interfaith group which provided 100 daily meals for the downtown hungry.

The Second Century Project

During its first 102 years, the church building survived the quakes of 1906 and 1989 with minimal damage. However, decades of deferred maintenance and heavy use (including rental to other community groups) have taken their toll. So last year, the congregation embarked on a capital campaign—the Second Century Project—that resulted in pledges of over $250,000 from members and friends of the Church. These funds will be used to initiate the first phase of an ambitious four-stage architectural program. Phase I, titled "The Moral Imperative," is dedicated to making urgent, top-priority repairs to keep the building safe and standing, including replacing the roof and gutters, doing foundation repairs, and making structural repairs to the attached social hall. Later phases will improve usage and add space to the building.

For more information, call the Rev. Lindi Ramisden at (408) 292-3858 or Mary Helen Doherty at 408-287-2827.

Bella Mia Brunch Offer

Your Association membership continues to present you with new and unexpected benefits. One of San Jose’s newest restaurants, Bella Mia on South First St. in downtown San Jose, is offering all current and "new" Association members gift certificates for a FREE JAZZ BRUNCH. The certificate is good for any entree selection from Bella Mia’s regular Sunday brunch menu, expiring September 1, 1994.

To obtain you BRUNCH CARD, please stop by the Museum or call the Association Office at 277-3780. When renewing your membership between now and September 1, you will receive your BRUNCH CARD will be mailed with other membership information.

We hope you will take advantage of this offer. When visiting Bella Mia, please let them know how much the community appreciates their support of non-profit organizations, such as the Museum Association.

Endowment Fund DONATIONS

From April 27, 1994 through June 27, 1994, the Endowment Fund of the San Jose Historical Museum received the following donations:

In Memoriam:
Laura Lico, Robert R. Bartlett, Nancy Emmick, Marie Warburton Roger, Helene V. Evans, Philip J. Winter

In Honor of:
Mr. and Mrs. James Baker, Mr. and Mrs. Jimi Yamachi, O'Brien's Volunteers, Living History Days' Dollhouse donors and winners

In Celebration of:
Anita Karsen’s retirement from the Oak Grove School District

Gifts to the San Jose Historical Museum Association to honor someone on a special occasion, or as a memorial, may be sent to the San Jose Historical Museum Association Endowment Fund, 1650 Senter Road, San Jose, CA 95112-2599. A letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the person being honored or the family of the deceased.
PLANNING AHEAD
Remembering SJHMA in Your Will

“Life is no ‘briet candle’ to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations...I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can...” —George Bernard Shaw

Including a provision in your will, insurance policy or living trust for the San Jose Historical Museum Association allows you to make a substantial contribution to the Museum with lasting impact. Here is some sample language to use, should you choose to include SJHMA in your Estate Planning.

“I give, devise, and bequeath to the San Jose Historical Museum Association, located at 1650 Senter Road, San Jose, CA 95112, % of my estate; OR $ dollar amount; OR gift or description of property; OR % of the residual of my estate.”

You should consult your legal advisor about the best way to provide for SJHMA in your Estate Planning. If you choose to include the Museum Association in your Gift and Estate Giving Plans, please let us know so we may acknowledge your generosity. Call Barbara Johnson, Development Director SJHMA for further information at (408) 287-2290.

BUSINESSES IN HISTORY
Markovits & Fox

What began in 1886 as the San Jose Bottle Yard has grown into a leader in the metal trading and recycling industry. The original bottle yard recycled rags, sags, metals, and, of course, bottles.

Founders Mark and Ed Markovits immigrated from Hungary via Ellis Island to San Jose. At the turn of the century, Edward Fox arrived from Hungary, bought a horse-drawn wagon and began a recycling route with his uncle, Mark and Ed. Eventually, Ed Markovits sold his interest to Edward Fox and the company name became Markovits & Fox. When Mark Markovits died in 1913, Edward Fox became the sole proprietor. Four years later, Milton Fox joined the business.

During the early 1900s the company’s business consisted of cleaning and recycling used bottles; renovating cotton and burlap bags for agricultural use; cleaning and bundling rags and wiping clothes; and recycling metal items such as home tools, old farm equipment, copper, brass, pewter, and iron.

After Edward died in 1933, Milton expanded the business to handle waste paper and an increasing volume of scrap iron and non-ferrous metals. Milton’s sons, Marvin and Robert, joined the business in the mid 1950s. And during the mid 1960s, Markovits & Fox moved onto a 29-acre site on Old Oakland Road. Milton saw the company through the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, the war years, post-war industrial expansion and the high technology and consumer-related developments of the sixties and seventies. Milton died in 1979 and the fourth and fifth generations took leadership of the company. Today’s management team consists of Marvin, Robert, Larry and Bruce Fox, along with David Migdahl.

Today’s operation includes the handling of ferrous and non-ferrous scrap metals generated by industrial and commercial sources, as well as from community recycling programs. In recent years the company has expanded into a branch operation in Reno, Nevada and an affiliate in Chandler, Arizona. Additionally, Markovits & Fox conducts a world wide trading business which concentrates on marketing of primary and secondary copper and aluminum products.

The Fox family is proud and grateful for its 108 years as part of the San Jose Community and looks forward to the challenges and changes that lie ahead.

A NEW SERIES

We are starting this series to feature local businesses that have sustained and prospered in the community. The businesses featured in this series have been identified for at least 75 years of service to the community as well as the active role each business family has played in local history.

This month focuses on Markovits & Fox, established in 1886 and who has been a corporate member of the San Jose Historical Museum Association since 1984.

ANNUAL CORPORATE MEMBERS

PATRON
Bank of America Foundation

BENEFACTORS
Coast Engraving — Fred Wool Jr. FMC — Patience Department Hollander Smith Construction, Inc. Minnesota-Cedar Rapids Mogen Packing Company Mountain-Canyon Insulation Services, Inc. Orchard Supply Hardware San Jose Bicycles Santa Clara County Planning Department San Jose Real Estate Board San Jose Sherry Barry Swanson Builder Victorian Preservation Association

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Historical Footnotes of the Santa Clara Valley

Captain Henry M. Naglee Arrives in California

As I look out over my palatial estate in San Jose in the middle of the afternoon, the smell of cigar smoke and the sound of distillery nestled in a park-like setting of trees and vines brought from around the world, it is difficult to imagine how barren and underdeveloped California was in the 1840s. Early explorers like Captain Henry M. Naglee arrived in California in 1848, bringing with them the promise of new beginnings.

If I was a religious man I might say that it was an act of providence which placed me in California when the opportunities for a man with my abilities were almost unlimited. As a cadet at West Point my head was filled with notions of manifest destiny and our need to expand the nation to the Pacific. President Polk was determined to add California to our recently acquired Oregon Territory. Some said that we didn’t take it, the English would.

A minor fracas with Mexican troops on the Texas border in 1846 gave President Polk the opportunity to declare war on Mexico. I had been out of uniform for over a decade while I exercised my engineering skills in building railroads. I knew the need to join the Army, and, in truth, I was becoming tired of railroad construction, so I quickly inquired about my possibilities. My former fellow cadets were all for military service, but I decided to accept the call from Winfield Scott to fame and glory. I, on the other hand, was more intrigued by the thought of joining a volunteer regiment forming in New York which was going by ship to the western front.

The New York Volunteers were organized by an adventurer and political back by the name of Jonathan D. Stevenson. Stevenson had connections in Washington, convinced Polk that he was the man to lead the take-over of California. They were both aware that the time the regiment was trained and sent around the horn, California would have already been taken by the U.S. naval forces. It is one thing to take a few towns, but it is another to occupy and hold an area the size of California. Stevenson’s men were supposed to do. Not only that, it was understood that when the war was over the men were to stay in the west to ply their civilian occupations. With this in mind, Stevenson attempted to tell me about the good character and with a variety of skills which would be useful in settling the country.

Stevenson had his problems from the beginning. Some in New York City, especially the Tammany Hall machine, were upset by all the notoriety. The problems of the administration got some of them to bring charges against Stevenson for unlawfully holding them against their will, and a warrant was issued to arrest him. Meanwhile, the ranks of the deserters were being filled with men off the streets of New York.

This scurvy element was to cause trouble on the journey, and would not add to the regiment’s reputation in California. As a volunteer regiment from New York State we could choose the style and colors of our uniforms. Stevenson had promised that the quality and cost would be the same as U.S. government issue. When the uniforms arrived, I was dismayed at the shoddy way they were made. The material would hardly withstand parades, let alone long marches in the wilderness. It was evident that Stevenson had made arrangements with a crook to make a profit at our expense. I complained to Stevenson and he told me to write to the Quartermaster General. This having failed, I wrote to the Secretary of War. Still getting no satisfaction, I refused payment for the uniform, and recommended the men that they do likewise. I was prepared to take my case to the President had we not already set sail. Poor uniforms and equipment would plague us for the rest of the expedition, and Colonel Stevenson made a point of avoiding me during the campaigns to follow.

With the critical harping of the press and the threat that the sheriff or the Congress might bring the expedition to a halt, Stevenson hurriedly set sail, leaving New York Harbor on September 26, 1846. Like Columbus, we set sail in three chartered ships. Stevenson, his staff and three companies sailed in the Thomas H. Perkins. Major Hardie and three companies were on the largest vessel, the Susan Drew. The officer in charge of our ship was Lt. Colonel Burton.

The 300 men on the Susan Drew became restless and insubordinate to their sergeants after they had gained their sea legs. The first showdown came in early November when my men balked at bathing in the tanks provided, daintily refusing to use water that others had used. I ordered the sergeant of the guard to forcibly douse these men and to put their livers in the improvised guardhouse on deck. To my dismay, the following morning the men had dismantled the guardhouse and thrown it overboard. If that were not enough, they handed around caricature signs reading “Songs of Liberty.” I had their leader, a brutal Irishman named Kelly put in double irons, and I had my upstairs servant (not a soldier) tied to the rigging for deserting his post. It was naval customs to flog men for disobeying orders, but Lt. Colonel Burton was afraid to set that example. As a consequence, we never felt that we had control until we reached California.

On the 19th of November we noticed insects and butterflies which indicated that we were near land. The next day we dropped anchor in the bay of Rio de Janeiro.

There had been some ugly incidents involving sailors from the USS Columbia which was anchored nearby. It seemed that the police were not going to release them. Our own Colonel Stevenson almost brought Brazil and the United States into open war when he sent a bevy of our troops ashore to liberate the sailors. The police avoided an international incident by releasing the prisoners. We set sail again on the 29th of November leaving four dead behind.

All was not grim aboard the Drew however. The men were finding healthy outlets from the boredom of the voyage. In December we had the first edition of the San Francisco Examiner, the first well-written and amusing newspaper. Some of the men took to writing and performing plays. On New Year’s Day we were entertained by the play Bombarde Fariaso. Performed before a select audience, the play was rendered more ludicrous by the rolling of the ship. The day after Christmas set off the sightseeing tour to Horn. The night was as bright as day as we passed around to the Port of San Francisco.

Another of my men, Charles Palmer, died on the 7th of January. Both of our men, Palmer, who succumbed to tuberculosis, had had no physical examination in California.

On the 19th of January we anchored in Valparaiso. I found this city a most delightful place, one I could easily reside in. Apparently, some of the men felt the same way, for 44 of us stayed on.

The voyage up the Pacific coast was spent on drill and muscle building. My company was beginning to come together as a unit by the time we arrived in San Francisco Bay on the 18th of March, 1847. We soon learned that the Navy had taken Monterey and Yerba Buena (later named San Francisco). Stevenson was ordered by General Phillip Kearny, the military governor, to go up the old San Diego Trail and take over the territory to maintain order now that Mexican authority had been withdrawn. Garrison was published at Monterey, Yerba Buena, Monterey, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles. Most of the men spent time building fortifications and fraternizing with the Mexican land owners.

My company was given horses and sent out from Monterey to maintain order in the more remote areas. It is still not clear to me why I received this assignment. Was it because they thought I was the most suited for the assignment (I was), or did they hope I’d get killed? One of our first orders was to chase squatters off the lands of Minson San Jose. With the absence of Mexican control the Indians were getting bold in their attacks on the ranchos and their livestock. During the pursuit of these raiders I and two of their leaders shot as an example to the rest. Colonel Mason, the new military governor, was especially pleased. Americans not appear aggressive, chastized me for being so bold.

The next day I was next sent to Los Angeles to aid Lt. Colonel Burton who was facing a revival of Mexican resistance. Burton, acting on his own, took it upon himself to clear a pocket of Mexican resistance at the head of Baja California. Here again he found himself outnumbered and dependent upon Harry Naglee’s Riders to save his skin.

During the skirmish at Todos Santos I had two replacements, two Indians shot. Upon hearing this, Colonel Mason ordered me to Monterey, under arrest, to be court martialed. By the time I arrived in Monterey the war was over and the regiment was being disbanded. As it was I was discharged rather than go through with a trial where I could prove I was acting under Lt. Colonel Burton’s orders.

On Monday I had seen discovered the previous year and a third of the regiment had deserted for the gold fields. Had the rest not been discharged they would have run off as well. I saw that my opportunity lay in the prospect of gold. It allowed me to be honorably discharged and then go through with a trial where I could prove I was acting under Lt. Colonel Burton’s orders.

Ewers's Note: This "memoir" was composed by Jack Douglas using diaries and reports written by Captain Naglee during the Mexican War.
M elinda Chiurato first visited the Historical Museum with a friend back in 1988. It was then when she noticed another friend from church, Mary Ellen Chandler, who was completing her training as a Docent and was doing her evaluation tour. Intrigued, Melinda inquired at the front desk of the Pacific Hotel as to how she too could become involved as a volunteer. The rest, as they say, is history.

“Oh boy, I had found something I really enjoyed,” she comments. Melinda has always loved history; but never could find the time for it, except for an occasional historical novel.

Now six years later, Melinda has received her “Five Year Pin” as a Docent and just completed her term as President of the Docent Council. Furthermore, Melinda finds herself training prospective Docents, serving on the Evaluation Committee, and sitting on the Museum Association’s Board of Directors as the Docent Council Chair.

But that’s just the beginning. After 35 years of “on and off” elementary teaching, she has completely immersed herself in history and experienced an education of her own. “I know everything there was to know about teaching children, but when I started reading history, I truly found myself.”

Born in Kansas City, Kansas, Melinda moved to Avenal, California at eighteen months of age. After graduating from high school, she followed her father to Watsonville, and settled on a community college. She had two choices: Peninsula College in Monterey or Hartnell in Salinas. I literally flipped a coin, and ended up at Hartnell. It was at Hartnell where she met her husband Angelo. After the two decided to marry, Melinda quit school to work full-time as a teacher at Watsonville Child Care Center. The Chiuratos finally made their way to San Jose in 1956 where Angelo attended San Jose State University and Melinda quickly began teaching at Lowell Child Care Center. The Chiuratos were already in the process of raising their two boys and two girls.

Melinda’s experience with children has been a great asset to the Historical Museum. Currently, she is involved with the presentation of Victorian School- kits, a program that takes San Jose history out to the schools. Also, Melinda designed her own children’s version of the History Walk in Downtown San Jose, introducing children to historical landmarks like the Peninla Adobe, the old Post Office, and the Courthouse.

Her involvement with the different Museum committees and boards has turned Melinda into what she describes as a “lack of all trades.” In 1993, she contributed the “games” section of the Chinese Legacy book, attended the initial meeting of every Docent Committee as acting Docent Council President, participated in a workshop to increase cultural awareness, all the while a regular Museum Docent.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my time as President. I met so many great people and had the opportunity to do so many things I would have never been able to do otherwise.”

Always the teacher, Melinda offered this advice to current and future Docent Presidents. “Just have fun with it, relax, and be there for the rest of the Docents,” she says. “You have to be there, willing to listen. Volunteers are there because they love people, history and just being part of everything.”

We’re happy that Melinda is good at taking her own advice.

—Dan Bingham

Eighty Years Ago

San Jose Continues to Grow

Eighty years ago, the Santa Clara Valley was a rich agricultural area with approximately 65 fruit packers, over 6,000 farmers, nearly five million fruit trees, and numerous canneries. Paul Masson, Pierre Mignon, and Charles T. Eveleigh had the largest wineries. Paul Masson had just won the first Grand Prix award for an American champagne in St. Louis. Unemployment was up to 9.7%, farm occupations dropped to 30,294, and women in the work force had risen to 21.4%. The horse and buggy were slowly being replaced by the Ford Model-T, Cadillac with a V-8 engine, and other automobiles as industrialization crept into the valley.

The city of San Jose was a growing community of 33,220 residents. Dr. Fred R. Husted was the former dentist who had recently been elected mayor (1914-16). F. Roy Hayward was the experienced salesmen, insurance, and real estate agent who had been elected Chief of Police (1914-15). The growth of San Jose was shown by its annexation of the incorporated town of East San Jose in 1911. San Joseans were earning an average of twenty-two cents an hour and receiving an annual salary of $408. They could buy a house for $4,616 or a Ford Model-T for $440.

Educationally, San Jose had the oldest California state college and teachers’ college (1857) in San Jose State Normal School. The college was located on Washington Square and had a recent building program (1910), which included the Tower, library, auditorium, classrooms, and arcade around the courtyard of the oldчат.

The new buildings were created in an Art Nouveau architectural style and were called the cornerstone of instruction by Morris Elmer Daily, who was its president.

The San Jose Mercury-Herald and San Jose Evening News informed their readers about the national and local news. They wrote about the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, the Great War (1914-18), President Woodrow Wilson’s neutrality and isolation in World War I, the grand opening of the Panama Canal, the bloody massacre in the coal mines of Ludlow, Colorado, and Wilson’s intervention in Mexico under President Victoriano Huerta. The sports legends were football’s Jim Thorpe, baseball’s Ty Cobb, golf’s Walter Hagen, boxer Jack Johnson, tennis’ Mary K. Browne, and race driver Ralph De Palma. Babe Ruth was in his rookie season with the Boston Red Sox, and the Boston Braves swept Connie Mack’s Philadelphia A’s 4-0 in the World Series.

San Jose had the Theatre DeLuxe at 236 South First Street and the Liberty Theatre on 67 South Market Street, which were the only movie houses. Readers could go down to the library to pick up the best seller of 1914, Tarzan of the Apes by Edgar Rice Burroughs. On the weekends, locals visited the newly opened marine whale in Santa Cruz for sightseeing and dinner.

With its agricultural expansion and rapidly increasing population, San Jose was on its way to national prominence. Eighty years later, San Jose would be the 11th largest city in the United States.

San Jose Athletic Club Plan an Event in History

Built in 1924 as a Scottish Rite Temple, the San Jose Athletic Club is available for catered events.

Enjoy this neo-classic historical site — the décor is unique, incorporating Art Deco and Egyptian elements.

Make some history of your own in one of downtown San Jose’s beautiful historical landmarks — the San Jose Athletic Club. Call the Catering office at (408) 292-1281.

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Future of Museum Studied

FROM PAGE 1

Association (Victor Giacalone, Gerry DeYoung, Kathleen Muller), and the Museum Volunteers (Ted Rogers). This Core Planning Committee will work with an outside museum consultant to analyze the current situation, do comparison studies of other museums, develop a strategic plan for the future, and determine whether any management changes are warranted. No final decisions will be made by anybody until the work of the Core Planning Committee has been completed.

The concept of change is always unsettling and everyone involved in the discussions will have a difficult job balancing various needs and concerns. Until the committee process is begun and factual information is available, there is no way to address all the misinformation that has grown from the uncertainty. Association members should be assured to know, however, that under no circumstances would the educational mission of the Historical Museum be lost or would the City abandon the Museum financially.

Because many loyal supporters care a great deal about the Museum, meetings of the Core Committee will be open. All interested Association members and Museum volunteers are encouraged to attend. A schedule of the meeting dates has not yet been determined, but for more information call the Office of Cultural Affairs at (408) 277-5144.

River Street Historic District

In downtown San Jose lies an old residential area called the River Street Historic Neighborhood that will soon be the subject of public discussion regarding its future place within the rebirth of our urban core. Located at River and St. John Streets just east of the San Jose Arena, this old residential area dates back to the 1860s, and was built to house Italian immigrants near the turn of the century.

As part of the environmental analysis of the Guadalupe River Flood Control Project, consultants for the US Army Corps of Engineers identified this district of 43 buildings as being qualified for the National Register of Historic Places. In 1992-93, the Preservation Action Council of San Jose signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Army Corps to study mitigation procedures to the impacts of the flood control project on the buildings in this district.

The district is remarkably unchanged since its historic Italian immigrant period of significance. With the Holy Family Church (razed to make way for Route 87) as its anchor, and the Torino Hotel (Henry's Ill-Lite) as its current focal point, the neighborhood consists of small wood frame houses, many built by the Italian craftsmen who provided the foundation for the large Italian American community that grew here during the early 20th Century. Through the 1920s, Santa Clara Valley was a major destination point for Italian immigrants, and by 1920, the Italian-born population was the largest single immigrant group in the county.

A report by Michael Garavaglia AIA, hired by the Army Corps, is being finalized that studies alternatives to demolition of these 43 buildings. The draft report indicates that all the buildings can be saved, and the report provides a market plan that utilizes a multitude of funding sources to stabilize the district. The most feasible and exciting alternative is to regenerate the area into a privately owned commercial district of shops, offices, and restaurants that would bring a sense of human scale and relief to our downtown, while offering a place for services along the Guadalupe River Park Walk.

For those of us who treasure the heritage of our city, the River Street District offers an opportunity to integrate the end of one of old San Jose into our new downtown. We encourage the local history community to step forward and join us in the policy discussions with our City leaders later this summer that will determine the fate of these buildings. The Preservation Action Council would like to see a diverse downtown that retains a sense of human scale, and that reflects the historical values of our community.

APRIL HAMFISTAT
CO-CHAIR, RIVER STREET TASK FORCE
PRESERVATION ACTION COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE

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DATES TO REMEMBER

July 10

Summer Daze

"Teddy Bear Picnic"

12 Noon - 3:30 PM

Museum Grounds

August 3

Author Nancy Newlin

City Store Gift Shop

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Peralta Adobe & Fallon House

August 14

Theatre Party

"Morales Decisions: A Diary of The Donner Party" 6:00 PM

Northside Theatre

August 7

Summer Daze

"Pet Parade"

12 Noon - 3:30 PM

Author Nancy Newlin 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Museum Grounds
Without Your Support, We’re History.
So here’s a way we all can win...

Each time you recruit a NEW MEMBER for the Museum Association between July 1 and October 1, 1994, you -- and your friend -- have an opportunity to participate in a special drawing for:

1. “A Night to Remember” in San Jose
   One night at the historic Hotel DeAnza
   Dinner for two at Bellino’s Restaurant
   Two tickets to a production of the San Jose Repertory Theatre

2. An Evening “On The Town”
   Dinner for two at Euphias Restaurant
   Two tickets to the San Jose Civic Light Opera

3. A San Jose Experience
   Dinner for two at Bella Mia Restaurant

Use the membership application on page 8 of the Association News or call our Membership Office (287-2290) for a brochure. When the membership form and payment are received, YOU and our NEW MEMBER will be entered in the drawing. Don’t forget to include your name and phone number on the form.

Drawing to be held on October 25, 1994

SAN JOSE HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

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