CLOSED?

URGENT!

We urge you to write one letter, immediately, addressed to the Mayor and Members of the City Council, expressing your feelings regarding the value of the Museum to the community. Address your letter: "Dear Mayor and City Council" and send it to:

City of San Jose
City Clerk
801 N. First Street
San Jose, CA 95110
Attn: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Your letter will then be copied and placed in the file of each Councilperson. Letters seem to carry more weight, but phone calls and personal contacts would also be appreciated. The following is a list of City officials, their office phone numbers, and the districts they represent.

Mayor Janet Gray Hayes 277-4237
City Manager Francis Fox 277-4000
Lu Ryden (District 1 - West Valley) 277-5438
Jerry Estruth (District 2-Santa Teresa) 277-4282
Thomas McEnery (District 3 - Central) 277-5231
Shirley Lewis (District 4-Berryessa) 277-5230
Blanca Alvarado (District 5 - Alum Rock) 277-5157
Nancy Ianni (District 6-Willow Glen) 277-5166
Iola Williams (District 7-So. San Jose) 277-5226
Patricia Saucedo (District 8-Evergreen) 277-5242
James Beall, Jr. (District 9-Cambrian) 277-5276
Claude Fletcher (District 10-Almaden) 277-5251

San Jose Historical Museum
635 Phelan Avenue
San Jose, California 95112
Address Correction Requested

See Open Letter from Clyde Arbuckle Inside
DIRECTORS REPORT
MUSEUM CLOSURE PROPOSED

For the fourth year in a row, the Museum’s budget has been targeted for reduction by the City Manager’s Office. The only new slant to the process is that Mr. Fox, the City Manager, is recommending that the Museum be totally closed. The closure proposal is Mr. Fox’s response to a $19 million shortfall that the Office of Management and Budget predicts for the City’s 1982-83 fiscal year.

We believe the move to be in the best interest of some people and depressing to others, it boils down to whether the City of San Jose wants to have a history museum. The Museum began as a miscellaneous collection of artifacts brought together at the Statehouse Museum at the County Fairgrounds over thirty years ago. From that beginning, the Museum now offers school tours, a comprehensive changing exhibition program, adequate artifact collection care, a major research facility and one of the most active museum volunteer programs in the entire State. The Museum was accredited in 1977 by the American Association of Museums and has made substantial progress in obtaining construction grants from corporations and groups to add buildings and exhibits.

Part of our problem is the fact that the City has used its one-time reserves to avoid making the decision as to whether it really wants to have a museum, parks program, library system, community centers, swimming pools, or other amenities that will make the city worth living in. Putting off the issue only triggers people’s feeling that “Well, they always have found the money in the past to keep these things. I’m sure they’ll find it again.” There is no argument against this line of reasoning except to point out that: 1) City revenues are declining due to Proposition 13 and an ailing economy; 2) existing funds will be channeled to police and fire services.

The Museum staff is down to 3 full-time positions (Director, Curator, and Secretary) and 1 part-time position to run a seven day a week professional program. The Museum’s program is a capital facility that is worth $6.5 million. Lost over the years have been Curators, Exhibit Designers, Builders, Curatorial Research Assistants. The Museum Association has utilized all its available resources to maintain the docent program and the collection care program as the City support sloughed away. It is clear that with its limited resources the Association cannot assume an annual cost of $166,400 (which pays for the utilities, supplies and materials, and staffing for the museum program).

Options facing the City Council are: 1) close the Museum in hopes of some brighter economic future; 2) utilize the construction and conveyance tax to establish a basic service level at the current budget level; 3) close the Museum program from the Transient Occupancy Tax currently set aside for the Chamber of Commerce and the Fine Arts Commission’s use.

The City Council will only keep the Museum if constituents let the Council know that the people of San Jose want this facility in order to demonstrate that San Jose can do something of a unique and first-class nature. The people of the City will get what they deserve — please express your support for the Museum to the City Council with a letter or a phone call.

By Don DeMers, Director

ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Fellow members and friends of the museum: This special issue of the Association News is under your call to attention what may become a hardship for the Museum Association. With the City of San Jose’s nineteen million dollar shortfall for the coming year, the Parks and Recreation Dept., of which the museum is part, will suffer in budget cutbacks. We won’t know the extent the cutbacks until the budget is adopted by the Council.

In the meantime, we urge you to contact members of the Council to impress upon them the importance of the Historical Museum when they decide where cuts are to be made. Please read the information presented in this newsletter and express your views as it affects the Museum to the City Council.

Another item I wish to call your attention to is Measure C which will appear on the next City of San Jose ballot. The Museum needs your support on going to the ballot measure passed as it will allow any future concessionaire to be able to lease for an extended period of time rather than the three year limit as now specified. If we intend to construct future buildings with the intent of leasing them for revenue producing sales, the attractive long lease provision in Measure C will be to our advantage.

By Eric Bracher
Association President

INFORMATION IN THE REPOSITORY SHOULD BE AVAILABLE

The fact that a research facility is available at the Museum is of little interest to most of our visitors. The exhibits do a very good job of informing them about the history of the Valley. But growing numbers of people are discovering that a variety of services are available in addition to exhibits and tours, meet just as wide a variety of needs.

The photographic collection offers the only source of historical reproductions available to the general public in the South Bay area. Other museums and private collectors may allow copies to be made of their holdings but are often hesitant continued on next column

San Jose Historical Museum
Association News

The purpose of the San Jose Historical Museum Association is to support the San Jose Historical Museum through its membership, fund raising, educational and volunteer services, development of the museum in the community and the acceptance of the responsibility of the Museum.

Association Board of Directors

Eric Bracher .................................... President
Carole Carlson .................................. Vice-President
Sheryl Pohle .................................... Treasurer

Judy Misko, Jr., Patty Inman, Peggy Hartwell, Dick Reid, Bill Sweet, Terry Gifford, Donald Howell, Helen Kusel, Martha Tracy, Grace Swearinger.

Kathy Muller .................................... Executive Director
Mignon Gibson .................................. Editor
Ann Whitesell .................................. Photo Editor

CONTRIBUTORS: Clyde Arbuckle, Eric Bracher, Don DeMers, Mignon Gibson, Kathy Muller, Ann Whitesell.

Special THANKS to our Type Extermina, Yo Ogawa.

The San Jose Historical Museum Association News is published by the San Jose Historical Museum Association four times each year. Membership in the San Jose Historical Museum Association includes subscription to the News.

San Jose Historical Museum Association
1500 Saratoga Drive
San Jose, California 95112
(408) 287-2390

continued from previous column
to do so and do not have an organized system or service. The Museum’s photo collection is not only available but organized, and the on-site darkroom facility means that copies are available quickly, and special needs such as cropping and contrast variation are no problem. A new location is given to the Museum photo lab yearly for purposes ranging from student term papers to interior design, scholarly books and articles, popular books and magazines, television stations, advertising, Christmas gifts and yearbooks. The revenue collected from photo reproductions total several thousand dollars a year.

In addition to the photo collection, the city also receives several hundred thousand dollars a year. College students and professors, professional research firms, local citizens interested in their ancestors, historic preservationists and archaeologists are some of the people who use the photo lab. The revenue collected from photo reproductions total several thousand dollars a year.

The repository has many manuscripts, municipal and court records and periodicals that are not available from any other source.

Already these facilities are operated on such a shoestring that they are available only on certain days a week and by appointment only. There is only one, part-time, curator to handle all researchers, process and maintain the collections and staff the photo lab.

If the Museum were forced to close, these unique resources would no longer be available to anyone. And who knows what would happen to the valuable historical items it has taken so much time and effort to collect?

CAN THE COLLECTION SUPPORT THE MUSEUM?

As a regional history museum, the San Jose Historical Museum holds an exceptional and large (over 300,000 objects) collection of artifacts relating to the different ethnic groups and the changing economies of the area. It has been said that the Museum has one of the largest and most complete local historical collections in the state of California.

The Museum’s collections date back to 1949 when material was gathered for a special display to celebrate the centennial of the 1849 Gold Rush and California’s first legislature. As part of the celebration and to house the exhibition, a replica of the California State Capitol was built in the downtown. Public enthusiasm was so great that instead of the building being demolished and the objects returned, the building was moved to the County Fairgrounds and under the care of the City Historian Clyde Arbuckle the San Jose Historical Museum was started.

Over the years a wide variety of materials have been accumulating through donations, transfer of other Historical Society, and even an outstanding purchase made possible by Ernest Renzel, Jr. in 1967 which tripled the holdings of the Museum.

The Museum and the City of San Jose have a legal and moral obligation to the donor who, in good faith, have given things to be cared for and displayed to the public. The Museum does not accept artifacts unless they are considered good pieces and important to the Historical Museum’s collecting period.

There is a small percentage of surplus material that are duplicates or inappropriate that should be disposed of, but these wouldn’t bring the kind of income to the Museum needed to pay operating costs. Regulations state that money derived through disposal of artifacts must go back into the collection by being applied to the care or acquisition of the collection.

Museums’ reputations are based on the quality of their collections and if we resort to selling off our collection our quality and interest as a museum will inevitably decline.

Sun Jose Historical Museum
Incorporated
San Jose, California 98112
(408) 287-2390

The purpose of the San Jose Historical Museum Association is to support the San Jose Historical Museum through its membership, fund raising, educational and volunteer services, development of the museum in the community and the acceptance of the responsibility of the Museum.
SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

BY CLYDE ARBuckle

San Jose, as a Spanish pueblo and American community, must have had at least two major destinies to preserve its historical heritage until almost a century after American occupation of California.

Historian George H. McMurry of the San Jose Mercury Herald observed as early as 1933 that this city had been the state's most diligent in destroying its history. By that time, innumerable priceless documents and artifacts had slipped away to distant communities and into the hands of private collectors, not always interested in preserving them for the public's curiosity.

Finally, in 1945, a more enlightened City Council acted to correct this situation by appointing a city historian and creating a historic landmarks commission. In 1949, the city established a first public museum, availing itself of a temporary structure that had served as a "theatrical prop" during a recent public celebration.

This "prop," a hastily constructed replica of California's first Statehouse, was thereafter operated by the Junior League of San Jose as the Junior League Replica Museum. From it grew the large institution now identified as the San Jose Historical Museum.

The museum has responded to these simple beginnings with amazing enthusiasm and generosity. Gifts of all kinds poured in from all over the state, ranging from broken down fountain heads to the $126,000 purchase of a newspaper file legally appropriated at $126,000. By 1987, the statewide Conference of California Historical Societies recognized San Jose's museum possession as "the finest collection of purely local historical materials in the state."

The Museum was well on its way toward becoming the outstanding research center envisioned by its founders.

During the year 1980-81 alone, 8,000 school children, 27,300 adult visitors, and a large number of college students, teachers, and professional researchers pointed up the museum's importance in this city.

Therefore, to prevent reversion to the city's early day apathy toward our community's history, the Museum's friends and administrators must keep in mind the foregoing details. They may prove helpful when the Museum's proposed budget goes to the City Council for consideration on June 10.

VOLUNTEERS AND THE MUSEUM

The San Jose Historical Museum has been blessed with the energy and dedication of many volunteers who feel strongly enough about the value of the Museum and the services it provides to make a commitment to unselfishly give of their time and talents. But these volunteers work under the direction of and with the support of staff members paid by the City who insure professionalism, aid in acquiring the materials and workspace needed, coordinate and direct activities, and assure that the best interests of the Museum as a whole are honored and that museum-quality standards are maintained.

Currently, volunteers serve on the Museum Association, Board of Directors, through the Docent Council, the Museum Service Council, or in helping to care for the collections. It is important to remember that without a commitment from the City for a basic staffing level to coordinate all of these efforts, the enthusiasm contributions of so many volunteers will be lost.

Association Board of Directors

The Museum is fortunate to have special services donated by members of the Museum Association Board and others who assist the Museum through fundraising, membership drives, publications, capital improvements, annual events, and special projects.

Other in-kind services donated include law advice, publicity advice, accounting services, both landscape and building architectural services, project (such as street lights) services, promotional and special events.

The Museum Association is in no way able to provide basic funding for the Museum, but in recent years the Association Board has stepped in, itself, and hired part-time staff people to make up, in part, for City cuts.

Docent Council

The Museum Docent Council currently numbers 90 members. The Docent Council offers interpretive tours of the Museum facilities and the Peralta Adobe, and specific outreach programs to increase public awareness of Valley history and heritage. In order to become a docent, each volunteer must complete a comprehensive 12-week training course and evaluation and commit himself to nine hours of monthly service for two years thereafter. Academic lectures, in-gallery training, and communication workshops give docents both a command of local history and the tools to communicate it. During 1989, the Docent Council provided interpretive tours to cover 5,000 children and adults throughout Santa Clara County.

To more effectively take the Museum to the community, the Docent Council prepared two major educational outreach projects during 1981, a Victorian Schoolskit and a filmstrip. The Schoolskit was created as a classroom presentation given by two docents. It was designed as a "hands on" experience for students to relive life 100 years ago in the Santa Clara Valley. This program alone has reached over 1,000 students since October 1981 with only one presentation weekly.

The filmstrip entitled "Over a Century Ago: Daily Life in the Santa Clara Valley - 1870-1900" is only the filmstrip on this era of local history available for classroom use and has been praised as an excellent supplement to the school curriculum.

The training, skills and commitment of this group was recently recognized as outstanding in a Special Award presented by the Volunteereer of Santa Clara County and the Junior League of San Jose.

Museum Service Council

The 35 members of the Museum Service Council staff all the historical buildings during the weekend hours and function as desk attendants in the Pacific Hotel. They also provide interpretive tours to the general public, serving countless senior groups, Scout, service clubs, exchange students, handicapped groups and convention groups visiting our City. In 1981 they reached over 1,400 people in pre-arranged tours and upwards of 27,000 casual visitors to the Museum.

Volunteers in the Object Collection

In the object collection of the San Jose Historical Museum, volunteers are trained and utilized to perform duties that the Museum staff, due to continuous cutbacks in time and personnel, can no longer accomplish. Because of a lack of staff, only a minimum number of volunteers can be supervised in a few specialized areas, but these few volunteers have a major impact on the quality of the care to the collections.

The Museum's Art Collection is almost entirely cared for by the devotion of one volunteer who spends over 400 documented hours a year organizing, researching, highly-skilled conservation tasks and specialized care of art objects on display. This special volunteer has "been on the staff" since 1978 and her contributions to this particular collection are outstanding.

The Museum's costume collection has evolved into an accessible and vital collection due to the efforts of a group of 4 volunteers who meet regularly and give over 623 hours a year. The Museum's costume collection is the result of cooperative efforts with the staff and the volunteers have never worked without their contribution of time. These volunteers all have the education, expertise and experience necessary to make them highly skilled and extremely important to the existence of a usable and displayable costume collection.

Volunteers in the Repository

Several volunteers are working on a variety of projects in the repository. Though none of them are trained archivists, two are former librarians and the others make up for a lack of formal training with innate enthusiasm and competent diligence. Two of the archivists are cataloging the book collection in the Library of Congress system and arranging a card catalog for them.

Without these volunteers, very little or no processing of material would be going on.

Can Volunteers Run the Museum?

As the above narrative illustrates, the volunteer programs are integral to all facets of the Museum's operation, but without a basic level of permanent and professionally trained staff the volunteers would be unable to function. There has to be accountability and responsibility for an operation of the Museum's size. The San Jose Historical Museum has developed a reputation as a professional institution and this quality should be maintained and developed.
MUSEUM INFORMATION

TOURS OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS
For current times call (408) 287-2200

HOURS
10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Mon-Fri
12 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Sat & Sun

ADMISSION
Adults $1.00
Children (2-14 years) 50
Groups (12 or more)
pre-announced 25¢ per child
50¢ per adult

Dates to Remember

June 10, 1982
Tentative Budget Hearings
Council Chambers
City of San Jose

The San Jose Historical Museum is part of the City of San Jose Parks and Recreation Department.

MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
The Museum Association was founded in 1971 to financially and socially assist the San Jose Historical Museum. Through fundraising, volunteer activities, publications, annual events, dedications and special projects, the Museum Association adds active community interest and participation in this project. Your membership benefits include a local historical publication, gift shop discounts, invitations to special events and free admission to the Museum. The Museum Association Board Members are annually elected by the Museum Association membership and serve for a period of one year.

MUSEUM BACKGROUND
To celebrate the centennial of the 1849 Gold Rush and California’s first legislature, the City of San Jose, with the help of the State of California and Santa Clara County, erected a replica of California’s first state house. The two-story, 40’ x 60’ replica provided space for artifacts to be shown. Public enthusiasm was so great that instead of the building being demolished after the celebrations, it was given a home at the Santa Clara fairgrounds where it was moved in 1950 under the supervision of City Historian, Clyde Arbabke. The public donated so much material that an annex was added in 1968; in another four years, the annex was filled.

In 1965 Theron Fox, with the help of the Historic Landmarks Commission, convinced the City of San Jose to set aside 16 acres at the south end of Kelly Park for the reconstruction of an historic town, to be known as the San Jose Historical Museum. In 1967, the purchase of a large collection was made which tripled the holdings of the Museum. Ernest Rentz, Jr. generously provided funding for this purpose by making an interest-free loan to the City. To house and exhibit this collection of over 300,000 artifacts, restored buildings and replicas were constructed in the south end of Kelly Park. Included to date are a Print Shop, the Dashaway Stables, Warburton’s Doctors Office, the Bank of Italy, the Pacific Hotel with O’Brien’s Ice Cream and Candy Store, the Umbarger House, the Electric Light Tower, the 1927 Associated Oil Company Gas Station, and the Museum’s Water Tower Entrance. Immediate plans call for the completion of the Empire Firehouse, the Coyote Post Office, the Ichichi House, the Steven’s Ranch Fruit Storage Barn, and the San Jose 1888 Chinese Temple.

SAN JOSE HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

Name ___________________________(Bus.) Phone _____________________
Mailing Address ___________________________(Res.) Phone _____________________
Individual Authorizing Contribution _____________________

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MEMBERSHIP
☐ Pioneer Circle ($5,000) ☐ Mission Circle ($1,000)
☐ Patron Circle ($3,000) ☐ Pueblo Circle ($500)
☐ Treasurer Circle ($50) ☐ Century Circle ($100)
☐ Half-Century Circle ($50) ☐ Quarter-Century Circle ($25)

Please indicate method of payment: ☐ Check or money order enclosed, ☐ Master Charge ☐ Visa
Expiration Date ___________________ (Please list all digits from your charge card)

Master Charge customers: in addition to your account number, please list the four digits above your name.

*To receive your premium by mail, add $2.50 for handling charges.
Make check payable to:
San Jose Historical Museum Association, 636 Phelan Ave., San Jose, CA 95112