



JOSE THEATRE COURT DATE SET

MONTGOMERY HOTEL HEARING TO BE SEPARATE

by Tom Simon

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Despite the period of relative quiet, our legal challenge to the demolition of the Jose Theatre, three other nearby significant buildings and the Montgomery Hotel is moving forward. A full round of legal briefs has been exchanged, and we have been in court already for a hearing on how our causes of action should be heard. The hearing on the Jose Theatre and three other historic buildings will be held on November 10th at Santa Clara County Superior Court at Market and St. John. This is open to the public, and we encourage people to attend. Check our web page for the time of the hearing and any updates. (www.preservation.org)

The issues have not changed. The city is not following the law or its own policies in approving these projects. What is most alarming is that new projects which threaten numerous historic buildings are moving forward. As a Certified Local Government, the city is already well aware of the legal requirements for approval of projects affecting historic buildings. Yet we just witnessed the demolition of the Anderson-Barngrover Plant (original FMC building), even though a recent historic evaluation indicated that it might have been eligible as a city landmark. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) used for the demolition was 10 years old, 5 more years than considered acceptable, and it was not a project specific EIR, as required.

These losses may not stop until our cause of action concerning the city's pattern and practice of violating the California Environmental Quality Act is ruled on. The law is

intended to prevent the needless loss of historic buildings. If the city can regain integrity in its implementation of environmental protections, then our resources will receive the protection they deserve.

There has been other good news though. The California Preservation Foundation has decided to support our legal action, and the National Trust will likely weigh in with an

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PAC SJ'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY PENNY-ROLLING PARTY

Sunday, December 6th,
6:00pm to 9:00pm,

CASA VICKY

792 East Julian Street (at 17th)

\$15.00 per person (payable at the door)

Tax & Tip included

Children 8 and under free.

Variety of Mexican foods

Non-alcoholic beverages included

Full bar available

Reservations Required

This is a fun event open to members and their families. Bring those pennies you've been saving

for a worthy cause and

JOIN THE CELEBRATION!

Reserve your spot by

phoning 408.947.8025,

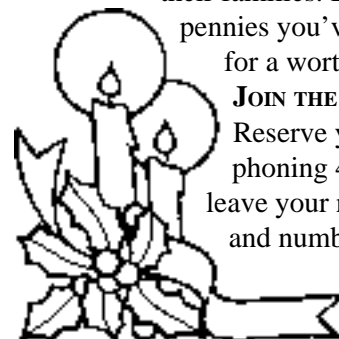
leave your name, phone

and number of reserva-

tions by

Wednesday,

December 2nd.





From the President

by André Luthard

For this newsletter, I thought I would focus on the new plan to add parking and rehabilitate the block surrounding Fountain Alley. The genesis of the plan's formation stems from the vote in late Spring to approve the proposed Town and Country project. The city council specifically directed the Redevelopment Agency and the SJ Downtown Association to meet and bring back to them a retail strategy. While PACSJ and others were not consulted during the formulation of the plan, we are happy that Judy Stabile and Jim Salata were central figures in the discussions. Former councilmember Stabile drove the preservation of the Hayes Mansion, and Salata is a former chair of the Historic Landmarks Commission. Both have been members of PACSJ and assisted our organization over the years. The renovation plans that are being proposed are very encouraging. What is ironic is that the Fountain Alley area is within an already established Historic Commercial District that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Every effort should be explored to utilize Historic Preservation Tax Credits and other sources of funds, and encourage compatible new architecture where new construction is planned. Now that the "easy part" is done, all that is left is implementation of the strategy! To that end, I feel very strongly that some sort of citizens committee should be established to oversee the specifics of the retail strategy as individual projects are proposed.

We have long advocated that San Jose capitalize on our existing historic heritage. The city is finally recognizing what is widely known by preservationists nationwide. Historic districts draw people, and thus can drive significant economic development. Dollar for dollar, rehabilitation also generates more economic benefits locally than new construction. New construction dollars are spent to a higher percentage on building materials. In many cases these materials or supplies are purchased from companies outside of our local area. This spending supports economies in other cities, counties or states. Rehabilitation on the other hand is much more labor intensive. Rehabilitation dollars are spent paying masons, carpenters, electricians and other construction personnel working on the renovation. These people largely live in the local area, they purchase goods and services in our city and therefore monies are channeled into the local economy. The ripple effect of economic benefits is more widespread and lasting.

JOSE THEATRE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

amicus brief to help protect the integrity of the National Register District that we are fighting to preserve.

The hearing date on the Montgomery Hotel, which the city council has voted to demolish, has not yet been set. This will require another set of arguments and hearings.

We are fortunate as an organization to be in a position to challenge these improper demolitions. The city, redevelopment agency and developers "own" the process to push bad projects through. It takes enormous resources, both time and money, to intervene to protect the public interest. It would certainly not have been possible without the dedication and financial support of our members. All of our members and everyone receiving this newsletter should feel that they are helping to preserve our city's past. Look for more updates in future issues.



WEBMASTER NEEDED

PACSJ is looking for a webmaster to maintain and enhance our web presence. If you have web development experience and would like to help PACSJ, please contact Tom Simon at tom@preservation.org.

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Preservation Action Council of San Jose, CA 95109

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Watchdog Report

The Planning Department of our fair city put one over on the old Doggie, setting new speed records for issuing the demolition permits for the *FMC building*. For decades the food processing business was the most important industry in the Valley. The building was torn down so fast that the required photo documentation was compromised. Wreckers had the roof off before the photographers could take their pictures. **Sobrato Development** is the prime mover on this project, the same folks who tore the *Weir Building* down right around my ears!

Wandered over to the *Scheller House* on the SJSU campus last week. It looks like the same tired old pile of bones! **San Jose State** keeps promising to take it to the groomer but that sounds like another shaggy dog story to me.

A pack of developers has been sniffing around the *Del Monte* buildings on Santa Clara Street, hoping to take out the old *Western Pacific freight depot* and the old cannery buildings.

And the speculators are still picking over the parcels on East San Carlos Street, trying to pick up any little scrap that could benefit the proposed new City Hall. Landlords on both sides of the street are hoping to make big money on parking facilities when the new City Hall is built. Dozens of old buildings on 5th and 6th Streets are at risk as well as hundreds of affordable housing units.

My nose did ferret out some possible good news the other day. I visited our old dogfight area and found that **The Taylor Grind ‘em Up and Spit ‘em Out Company** was forced into a change of heart, and came up with a plan to update and reuse those great old buildings in the *Fountain Alley* area. Maybe there’s a glimmer of hope for those two-legged animals yet!

And dig the latest plans for that grand old *Fox Theatre*! Now there was a place I frequented in my youth, along with the prettiest little female doggies right by my side! Now that was entertainment in the grand style! If **Opera San José** takes over, the Fox can sail through many more decades of splendor.

Tough to keep up with all these changes, the DOG has a lot to keep his eye on these days.

The Dog



PAC SJ Board of Directors at Retreat in New Almaden
from left: front row, Jim Arbuckle, Patt Curia, Ellen Garboske, Marti Wachtel, April Halberstadt; middle row, André Luthard, Beth Wyman, Natalie Wells, Tom Simon; back row, Kitty Monahan, Ton King, Rick Sherman, John Olson.

PAC SJ BOARD HOLDS RETREAT

Members of PAC’s Board of Directors held a retreat recently at the Community Center in New Almaden. The purpose of the retreat was to find ways to more effectively protect historic resources in the greater San Jose area. A lot of good ideas were presented, but attendees found need for more time to analyze and present the results to our members. One of the most important points covered the need to have better communication with general members, particularly when they first join, so that their talents can be used actively to help the organization attain its goals. The board hopes members will notice improvements in communications and goal-achieving in the near future. ↗



TO OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

As you join or renew your PACSJ membership there is sometimes a period of time before you hear what activities are taking place, particularly since our newsletter is a quarterly. We value your membership and would welcome hearing from you, and hope more of you will become active by helping with administration, projects or events. PACSJ would like to remind you that our board meetings are open and we encourage our members to attend. Check the calendar on the back of the newsletter for time, date and location and **WE’LL SEE YOU THERE!** ↗



1903 Hotel Metropole undergoing renovation

THE HOTEL METROPOLE

by Jack Douglas

The Alcantara Building/Hotel Metropole, built in 1903, may soon celebrate its 100th birthday totally renovated and ready for the next century. This unique historic brick building stands on the northwest corner of Market and Post Streets. It is the lone survivor of the section of Market Street that once included the historic Murphy Building, the Liberty Theatre and the American Hotel. The Metropole's fate has been uncertain for years, but now the Redevelopment Agency has agreed to put conditions on the developers of the remainder of this block that require that it be rehabilitated for office and retail uses.

For years it seemed that only historic preservationists could see beyond the flop house hotel, with its lower floor pawnshops, bars and card rooms, to the building's fine proportions and architectural detailings. Designed by William Binder, San Jose's most prolific architect and creator of most of T.S. Montgomery's buildings, the Hotel Metropole had many features that made it stand out from similar buildings of the period.

The Metropole sits on the location of the old Spanish jugado or city hall and jail which was the center of official activities during the days when the Pueblo de San Jose was California's first civil settlement. The land was, for many years, held by the Sunol and Pacheco families who could trace their lineages back to the Anza party.

Pedro de Saisset, who arrived in California from France in July 1849, acquired the property through marriage. De Saisset was an important businessman and developer who founded the Brush Electric Company, which supplied power for our famous Light Tower in 1882. In 1894 he supervised the construction of the Sunol Building on what is now Post Street. The Alcantara/Metropole, built almost a decade later, ad-

joined the Sunol Building on the east end. (Both are to be rehabilitated as one structure.)

De Saisset died in 1902, and his daughters Isabel and Henriette, possibly carrying out their father's plans, built the hotel building on the corner and named it the Alcantara Building after one of their father's middle names. Like other downtown blocks the upper rooms were rented to long term residents, while the street level was broken up into shops of various sizes. The daughters, well educated and socially prominent, managed their numerous downtown properties until 1950.

With the turn of the century South First Street rapidly became the fashionable part of town, and Market Street lost its prominence as a shopping area. As a consequence the Alcantara had a revolving procession of short-lived businesses: bars, barber shops, cigar stores, etc. The tenant who was there the longest (1909 to the 1970s) was August Mignola and Co., a cutlery and knife sharpening business. The Depression brought the California Loan Office and a string of pawn shops which occupied the corner spaces until recently. Around the time of the First World War the name of the building was changed to the Hotel Metropole.

This unreinforced masonry building came through the 1906 earthquake unscathed, while older buildings nearby were badly damaged. Sometime in its history the corner parapets were removed. These are to be rebuilt when the building is restored.

The Sunol and Metropole Buildings are both designated city landmarks and we can hope that they will be put to public use—perhaps restaurants—so that everyone can admire these early gems. As a small building surrounded by high rises, the Alcantara/Metropole should stand out as it never has before. ✍

Note: I am indebted to Glory Anne Laffey and Charlene Duval for much of the information in this article. JD

PACSJ BOARD MEMBER ELECTIONS COMING UP

Late Fall is when PAC begins to look for prospective new Board Members. Any member interested in serving on the Board of Directors is encouraged to leave your name, phone number and a brief message on PAC's answering machine at (408) 947-8025. A board member will return your call to discuss details. **WE NEED MANY DIFFERENT TALENTS ON THE BOARD, SO PLEASE CALL IF YOU'RE INTERESTED!** ✍

PESTANA BUILDING SLATED FOR DEMOLITION

by April Halberstadt

Another architectural gem in San Jose is about to fall to the wrecking ball. The interior of the white marble Pestana Building at the corner of First and San Carlos Streets is currently being dismantled and may be a pile of rubble by the time our readers receive this newsletter. Built in the 60s, the six-story building was typical of the hard-edged clean lines of architecture of the new space age.

The Pestana Building was a special favorite of architecture critic Alan Hess, who made several pleas for reconsideration. It was to no avail. The building had been vacant for at least twenty years, the only occupants within the last decades were a penthouse restaurant named Mr. P's and a bank on the ground level. Even those two tenants disappeared during the recession of the late 1980s. The Redevelopment Agency budget shows \$16.4 million as the price paid for the property on what is known as Block 8. The RDA prefers to ignore the names of buildings, referring to them by parcel number.

It was difficult to save a building on architectural merit alone. When the RDA wanted the site as a location for an important corporate headquarters, and the owner wanted



*1960s Pestana Building Being Prepared for Demolition
Photo by April Halberstadt*

to rid himself of an albatross, there was little local preservationists could do to save a building that was not protected under preservation law and was less than fifty years old. It was one of the few office buildings built in San Jose during the 1960s. Only the Community Bank building and the Valley Title Building currently remain to represent that era. ↗



Photo from Dedication Invitation

LA CASA
GRANDE
OF
ALMADEN
QUICKSILVER
COUNTY
PARK
OPENS
TO
VISITORS



*Santa Ana Schoolhouse restored at
San Jose Historical Museum*

ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE BUZZES WITH VOICES AGAIN

by Donna Robinson

The San Jose Historical Museum recently held a dedication ceremony for the Santa Ana One-Room Schoolhouse, the latest addition to its inventory of historic buildings. The Santa Ana, once located in the Santa Ana Valley in San Benito County, was moved to the museum grounds, restored and reopened as a one room schoolhouse typical of the 1800s rural areas. The project was sponsored by the College of Education Alumni Association of San Jose State University and is a joint project with the History Museums of San Jose to honor those "special teachers" who made such a difference in our lives.

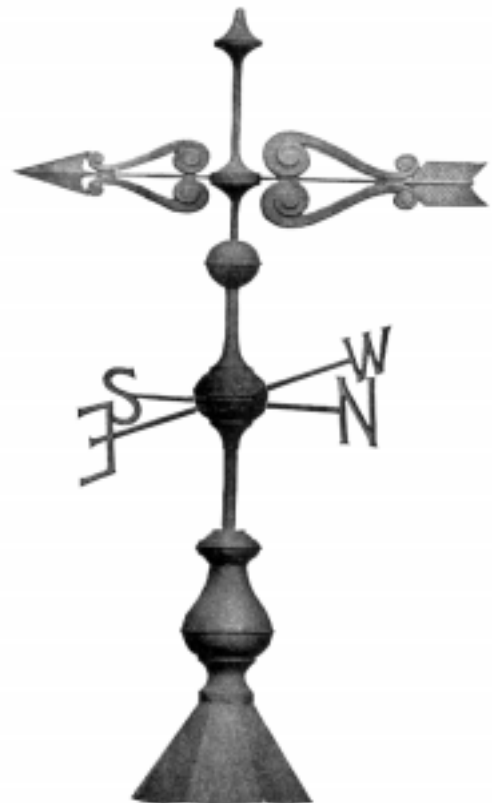
Daily lessons in the schoolhouse produced a constant buzz of voices as students read aloud and recited as many as thirteen different lessons conducted at one time. The teacher would call the student to come forward by grade level to the recitation bench in the front of the room. The last time this classroom heard the schoolroom buzz was in 1972-74.

The ceremonies featured musical entertainment and food booths as well as a Dance Attack! by Santa Clara Performance Company. At noon, the official dedication of the Schoolhouse began and the schoolhouse was open for tours. ↪

CASE OF THE PURLOINED SIGN UPDATE

In our last issue we reported that an historic neon sign had mysteriously disappeared from a structure at 584 Columbia Avenue. The building is owned by Catholic Charities, and Catholic Charities wanted help in locating the sign. PAC members Beth Wyman and April Halberstadt got on the trail, located the "stolen" sign, notified the authorities, and the sign was returned to its owners. If readers refer to the last issue, the photo shows a large vertical sign with an automobile at the top and the words "DRIVE IN" down the length. Beth Wyman reports that Catholic Charities says that the sign is too old to successfully repair. Therefore they are planning a "replica" which would be a "scaled down" version placed at the housing development site. It would say PENSIONE ESPERANZA running vertically (instead of Drive-In) and would still have the cloud at the top but no automobile. It would have the same kind of neon as the original.

Regarding the original sign, CC will keep it until the new one is completed and then they will sell or donate it to a good cause. Beth asked to be informed when they reach this state. Did PAC do the "right thing" by reporting the location of the stolen sign? Depends on your point of view. ↪



Weather vane in the Omniform pattern from the Broschart & Braun Catalog, ca.1900, price complete \$14.00

PACSJ PARTICIPATES IN LOCAL CELEBRATIONS

BOOTH CANOPY STOLEN FROM RIVER STREET STORAGE

Tapestry 'n Talent, Alameda Living History Days, and Pumpkins in the Park — PAC members assembled and staffed a booth for these three recent celebrations, all within a five-week period! This marathon period of activity brought us into contact with a large segment of the local population, and gave us the opportunity to talk to many of them about the benefits and importance of preserving our historic buildings. Our information was well received and many visitors signed our mail list requesting further information.

The morning of Alameda Days, when committee members went to our storage facility on River Street to pick up the booth materials, they discovered that the house had been broken into and the booth canopy along with several other items had been stolen. It was apparent that people had been living under the house. Police were notified, but there's not much hope of finding the stolen items. Event organizers at both Alameda History Days and Pumpkins in the Park were kind enough to supply us with a canopy — we thank them for their consideration. And PACSJ extends a very big **THANK YOU!** to the many members and friends who designed, set-up, staffed, and tore-down our booth for these events! 🙏



John "Hayseed" Olson and friend at Pumpkins In The Park



Egg and Dart Enrichment

PACSJ T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE

As a fundraising effort to support our efforts to preserve the history of San Jose, members and friends of preservation can now purchase a high-quality T-shirt. This unique and very attractive shirt shows a representation of the San Jose skyline, with the Peralta Adobe in the foreground. Priced at \$10.00 for PACSJ members, \$15.00 for non-members, or 2 T-shirts for a contributory membership of \$250.00, we urge you to purchase this hot item soon! Available in sizes M, LG and XLG, shirts can be purchased at our open board meetings, the Holiday Party, or you can reserve yours by phoning PAC at (408) 947-8025. Leave your name, phone, quantity and sizes, and your call will be returned to arrange for pickup. 🙏

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION
IS
GOOD BUSINESS**



WWW.PRESERVATION.ORG



*Architectural Detail on SJSU's Wahlquist Library
South Building stands in way of proposed
Joint City/University Library*

JOHN T. WAHLQUIST LIBRARY, SOUTH

by Jack Douglas

The news that the Wahlquist Library building at San Jose State University will be pulled down to make way for the new joint City/University Library will bring pangs of regret to many alums as well as to current and past employees who have worked in this structure. This is especially true for those who know the old South Wing. Actually there are three buildings, all add-ons to the original Tower Hall library which was demolished in 1964. The South Wing, constructed in 1940, is certainly the most architecturally significant. Library Central was opened in 1957, and the final stage, the six-story North Wing, was added in 1960.

Wahlquist Library South was joined to the old Tower Hall complex by the arch which is still attached to the east end of the building. The architects had a stylistic problem — they yearned to create a modern looking building but were afraid it would clash with the historic Tower Hall complex. They solved the problem by imitating the rustic Spanish Mission style, with its distinct tile roof and decoration, on the east end. The Mission decor fades away as

you look toward the west end of the building which is finished in a distinctive moderne or Art Deco styling.

The west end of the South Wing is one of the most distinctive examples of Art Deco style in San Jose with its pyramidal green tile roof, its grand entryway with heavy bronze doors and articulated vertical windows which bring light to both the upper and lower lobby areas. The entablature above the doors is decorated with three open books indicating the building's purpose. The cathedral height ceilings and the north facing tall windows bring adequate natural light even on dark days. There are five levels of book storage which are currently being used for archives. This was the first building at San Jose State to have air conditioning.

Recent modifications to the interior have stripped the inside of the building of its fine oak paneling, built-in shelves and other accoutrements which made it unique. Long gone are the Mission-style furnishings which added to the overall Spanish feeling of the original Tower Hall complex. The old South Wing reflects a quality and richness which is not evident in any of the post-war campus buildings.✍

COME TO THE FANDANGO!

**Founders Day Celebration;
Celebrating El Pueblo San José**

**Peralta Adobe & Fallon House Grounds
175 West St. John Street**

Come to an exciting celebration of the founding of California's first city: El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe — a "birthday party" for San Jose. The one-day event, which includes a civic ceremony will celebrate San Jose's culturally diverse communities with:

- Live music and dance bands
- Performance by ethnic youth and performing arts groups
- Food and beverage booths
- Open house at the Peralta Adobe and Fallon House
- Hands-on activities for children and much more.

**Saturday, November 14, 1998; 12 noon - 5:00 p.m.
Free Admission**

FOUNTAIN ALLEY REVITALIZATION GAINS CITY APPROVAL

by Ellen Garboske

Plans to rebuild the Town & Country shopping center, including major housing and office space, and designed to represent a "Main Street USA" made a few people sit up and take notice. Downtown retailers and business owners were concerned that this development would impact downtown San Jose in the same manner that Valley Fair did back in the 60s. Preservation Action Council of San Jose appeared before the council at that time and advanced the premise that the most obvious way to counteract any adverse effects the Town & Country project would have on the downtown business picture would be to emphasize the unique historic tapestry of downtown San Jose. At the same time the Downtown Association was begging the Redevelopment Agency to concentrate on providing adequate, free or reasonably priced parking to counteract the ease of parking at a mall.

The Town & Country project was the catalyst that finally brought about recognition from city officials that there was a problem, and also a solution. At the direction of the council, the RDA has now presented a proposal, which they call the Fountain Alley Historic District Project, to rehabilitate or restore the historic buildings surrounding Fountain Alley on First, San Fernando, Santa Clara and Second Streets, and along Fountain Alley. They would also construct three new parking garages nearby, doubling the amount of parking currently available. At an estimated cost of \$100 million dollars, this project is one PAC feels they can support, with some reservations.

First, we should point out that Fountain Alley and its surrounds are already part of San Jose's Downtown Historic Commercial District which has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1979. It's not easy to gain this recognition, and it's the many fine historic structures within this area of downtown that earned San Jose this honor. Within the proposed project area are some of San Jose's most historic buildings, including the Bank of America Building (historical name Bank of Italy), Knox-Goodrich Building, El Paseo Court, the Waterman Building, Letitia Building, Ryland Block, Lion's Furniture Building, San Jose Office Equipment, the Jose Theatre, and Fountain Alley itself.

In recent years we lost Costa Hall, a contributing structure to the district, and RDA still plans to save only the facade and lobby of the Jose Theatre. Two other contributing structures behind the Jose are also scheduled to be demolished. The loss of individual structures jeopardizes the district's National Register status and the attendant tax incentives that are available if historic structures are preserved and reused. We hope the city council and officials will reconsider the demolition of the Jose Theatre auditorium and save this early vaudeville theatre for community use.

Next, preservationists will need to be vigilant, watching the progress of this project, to be sure no other historic structures are targeted for demolition or inappropriate updating. With these reservations in mind we applaud the projected plans to revitalize the downtown core. Downtown San Jose already has historic buildings—the Town & Country project will have to fake it.✍

✂

P R E S E R V A T I O N A C T I O N C O U N C I L O F S A N J O S E M E M B E R S H I P F O R M

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone #: _____

Work Phone #: _____

Fax/E-mail address: _____

Membership Status: NEW RENEWAL

Membership Type:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> School/Non-Profit \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (over 65) \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Business \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation \$250 |

My interests include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Desktop Publishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Enclosed is my \$ _____ contribution for

- Legal Defence Fund River Street

**Please complete this form, enclose it with
your check, and mail to:
Preservation Action Council of San Jose
P.O. Box 2287, San Jose, CA 95109**

CALENDAR



The Preservation Action Council of San Jose is a non-profit membership organization providing information to property owners and education to the public, and promoting programs and policies for historic preservation and compatible new architectural design.

<i>NOVEMBER</i>
14 (SAT) FOUNDERS DAY CELEBRATION — PERALTA ADOBE FALLON HOUSE (SEE PAGE 8 FOR DETAILS)
16 (MON) PACSJ OPEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 7PM MOTHER OLSON'S INN, 72 NORTH FIFTH STREET
<i>DECEMBER</i>
6 (SUN) PACSJ HOLIDAY PENNY-ROLLING PARTY PLEASE JOIN US FOR THIS FUN EVENT (SEE PAGE 1 FOR DETAILS)
BECAUSE OF THE HOLIDAYS, THERE WILL NOT BE A PACSJ OPEN BOARD MEETING IN DECEMBER. SUB-COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES WILL MEET AS NECESSARY.
25 - JANUARY HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
<i>JANUARY</i>
18 (MON) PACSJ OPEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 7PM MOTHER OLSON'S INN, 72 NORTH FIFTH STREET

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Susan Hartt	Betsy Mathieson	Keith Watt
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*Garland, in the Feeling pattern,
3ft. 2in x 12in. out to out, centers 27 in.*



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