

# Dedicated to Preserving San Jose's Architectural Heritage

PRESERVATION  
ACTION COUNCIL



## CONTINUITY

PRESERVATION ACTION COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE NEWSLETTER

VOL. 13, No. 1, WINTER 2002

[HTTP://WWW.PRESERVATION.ORG](http://www.preservation.org)

### INSIDE:

- Presidents' Report  
by *Pat Curia* Page 2
- Watch Dog Report Page 3
- Scheller House Restored  
by *Sharon McCarthy* Pages 4-5
- Golden Nail Awards Pages 6-7
- Eichler Homes Become Historic  
by *Dawn Hopkins* Pages 8-9
- Architect Series: Henry A. Minton  
by *Jack Douglas* Pages 10-12
- Book Review: *Preserving the  
World's Great Cities:*  
by *Anthony M. Tung*  
Reviewed by *Sharon McCarthy*  
Page 13
- New Board Members Page 14
- PAC\*SJ Receives  
National Trust Grant! Page 14
- SharkByte Auction Page 15
- Membership Form**  
**Join or Renew Today! Page 15**
- Board Roster Page 16
- Calendar Page 16

### Scheller House Restored! *Story on Page 4!*





## From the President

Congratulations to our neighbors to the north for their wisdom and foresight in preserving the historic San Francisco Mint building as a showpiece in the Upper Market St. district. The Mint won't be used as a lobby to a high-rise residential condo, as might have happened under jurisdiction of San Jose's Redevelopment Agency (SJRA). Here, First Church of Christ Scientist on St. James Park remains empty, chained and deteriorating, its most recent suitor, a local historic film archive, rebuffed by SJRA because they want the church as a foyer for a high rise. Business as usual in San Jose.

\* \* \* \* \*

After reading the Fall 2001 issue of *Continuity*, longtime PAC\*SJ member **Don Dietz** wrote to say that he was born not far from the recently landmarked Stern/Fischer House at 132 Pierce St. Also, his uncle went into business with the Renzels, whose home at 524 S. Almaden was also recently landmarked. Dietz is a walking encyclopedia of downtown history.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our annual Preservation Celebration last November at the Banker's Club in the old Bank of Italy (BofA) Building at First and Santa Clara Sts. downtown was another outstanding event. We honored **Keith Watt** (Friend of Preservation) for his generous support of PAC\*SJ over the years, **Beth Wyman** (Distinguished Preservation Educator) who is concluding over 20 years of teaching urban planning, and **Jack Douglas** (Distinguished Architectural Historian) for his contributions to the documentation of local architects and building in his numerous writings. (*Douglas' article on the architect of the Bank of Italy Building appears on pages 10-12*).

PAC\*SJ received a financial boost of over \$5,000 from the evening's silent auction, thanks largely to last minute donations of auction items from member **Bill Robson**. His gifts of antique flat irons, leaded glass doors and windows, musical instruments and 1930s radios created quite a stir among dueling bidders. Other generous donors provided a wide range of interesting items. Thanks to all those who donated, those who staffed the event, and our caterer extraordinaire **Greg Casella** of **Catered Too**, who underwrote a large portion of the event and provided an outstanding selection of food. The **Golden State Ramblers**, a local group, drew a crowd with their musical selections.

Councilmembers **Cindy Chavez**, **Forest Williams**, **Ken Yeager**, **Chuck Reed** and **Linda LeZotte** were all on hand. Almost a quorum! **Holly Fiala**, Western Regional Director for the National Trust for Historic Preservation also spoke at the celebration.

Many thanks as well to those who purchased tickets a level above the general entry fee. Preservation Heroes were **Ernie**



PAC\*SJ President Pat Curia

*'Our annual Preservation Celebration last November was another outstanding event.'*

**Yamane** of the **Steinberg Group**, **Jeffrey Davenport** of the **Hayes Mansion**, and **Core Development**. Preservation Angels included **Fernando Chavez**, **Richard Eilbert**, **Amanda Hawes**, **Robert Johnson**, **Leslie Masunaga**, **Gordon Smith**, **Judy Stabile** and **Diana Wirt**. Our Preservation Business Partners were **J. Lohr Winery**, **San Jose Mailing**, **Catered Too** and the **Golden State Ramblers**. Mark November 15, 2002 on your calendar for the next preservation mix and mingle!

\* \* \* \* \*

PAC\*SJ encourages voters to support Proposition 40, which appears on the March 5 ballot. the measure recognizes the link between California's natural and cultural heritage and provides \$267 million for the acquisition, restoration and preservation of buildings, sites, places and artifacts.

\* \* \* \* \*

Finally, we still have a wish list for second-hand equipment for PAC\*SJ offices, including a fax machine, printer and photocopy machine. Donations are tax-deductible. Call 998-8105.

*CONTINUITY* is published quarterly by the  
Preservation Action Council of San Jose

Opinions expressed in *CONTINUITY* are not  
necessarily those of PAC\*SJ

Editor: Don Gagliardi  
Technical Support: Tahj Gomes  
Distribution: Maria Brand

Please submit your comments and suggestions to  
PAC\*SJ, PO Box 2287, San Jose, CA 95109-2287

Entire contents Copyright 2001  
Preservation Action Council of San Jose  
Printed on Recycled Paper



## Watchdog Report

Dogs are smarter than humans when it comes to knowing its time to lay down and rest a bit. Maybe just gaze at our beloved city and think about what's good and what's not. With all the delayed and postponed projects, it's time to take a deep breath and ruminate a bit about whether we're not better off without them.

\* \* \* \* \*

The giant orange deserves some respect! If you haven't scarfed down a hot dog from Mark's Hot Dogs, you haven't lived! Hot diggity dog, they are scrumptious and this delectable morsel is served from an historic landmark giant orange out on Alum Rock Ave. Been there since the 1930s when it was built to accommodate the growing automobile traffic with a refreshing orange juice. In fact my grandpuppy tells me that back then you could find them up and down the byways of California, and San Jose's is about the last one left. Because of development, the current owner must move Mark's Hot Dogs (the giant orange) around the corner, and has \$250,000 set aside to do so. But those two-legged varmints in the City's code enforcement dept. insist he has to pay an additional \$100,000 for a storm drain and wall on the new lot, which he simply cannot afford.

Now, considering all the subsidies the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) gives to boring, same-old-same-old chains to get them downtown, seems as if they could find a few shekels to help a local, unique small business stay open. Or couldn't code enforcement just waive its requirements under the circumstances? My undercover dog tells me RDA cannot help because Mark's is not in a redevelopment zone. Yet, I hear it will be soon as part of the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI). So, let's find a way to save Mark's Hot Dogs. This is important to East San Jose, and all of us. Dogs deserve a little respect!

My fellow columnists at the Murky News have gotten a few barks in about saving the giant orange. Joe Rodriguez gives Mark's Hot Dogs high marks and wonders why San Jose doesn't protect its landmarks. And even Mark Purdy came off the field and opined it should be preserved. But move it to History Park where it would never be seen or used again? No way, it needs to stay in the 'hood!

\* \* \* \* \*

Purdy also says the Montgomery Hotel should disappear or get remodeled. Got to agree with him, the renovations have been going on too long, but the Monty will be stunning once it's done, so Purdy should jab the City honchos to find out why the developer hasn't moved on the project!



*Mark's Hot Dogs' 'historic landmark Giant Orange over on Alum Rock Ave. [has] been there since the 1930s when it was built to accommodate the growing automobile traffic with a refreshing orange juice. My grandpuppy tells me that back then you could find them up and down the byways of California, and San Jose's is about the last one left.'*

---

Purdy says it's not historic? Nobody of importance stayed there? A long line of by ancestors have left their mark there, Mark. Shows you don't know who counts.

\* \* \* \* \*

Time to meander down familiar paths, keeping an eye out for other lamebrain ideas for destroying our heritage. Grrr, see you down the trail.

— The Dog



# Back to School: Formerly Unrespected Scheller House Gets New Life as Gem of SJSU

*by Sharon McCarthy*

Having survived several close calls with demolition, years of neglect, and a legal battle, the fate of the historic Scheller House at San Jose State University (SJSU) is finally secure. The renovated Scheller House has reclaimed its status as a vital part of the campus infrastructure.

The preservation of the Scheller House represents the culmination of over a decade of effort and is due largely to PAC\*SJ's successful litigation against SJSU in 1994 for non-compliance with state preservation law. "The house would make an excellent contribution to the San Carlos pedestrian mall on which the University is spending \$3.7 million," PAC\*SJ board member Tom

Simon presciently said at the time. Simon was among the leaders of the preservation effort.

Santa Clara County Superior Court (now federal) Judge Jeremy Fogel ruled that the house was historically significant and needed environmental review before demolition. He enjoined SJSU from razing the structure with only two weeks to spare, after SJSU, the city and county all refused to take action to save the building. Judge Fogel required SJSU to submit the building to the State Office of Historic Preservation so that it could be added to the State's Historic Resources Inventory. As a result, then newly-appointed SJSU president Robert Caret agreed to save the house. The restoration completed, Scheller

House is now home to several SJSU offices including Associated Students, Campus Recreation, and Special Events. The house is also available for other university functions.

One of the most significant aspects of the house, the identity of its architect, was discovered quite serendipitously. Scheller House was designed by noted San Jose architect Theodore Lenzen. After emigrating from Prussia to Chicago in the 1850's Lenzen moved west, opening his own architectural firm in San Francisco in 1859.

By the end of the 1860's Lenzen had become one of San Jose's most prominent architects. His work included the Old City Hall, San Jose Normal

School (SJSU), Carnegie Library, and the Fredericksburg Brewery, all no longer in existence. Other works of Lenzen's include the Security and Leticia Bldgs. on So. 1st St. near San Fernando, Oddfellows Hall at 3rd and Santa Clara Sts., Santa Clara University, and the spires of St. Joseph's Cathedral at Market and San Fernando. By the late 1880s Lenzen could count upwards of 600 structures, primarily public buildings, to his credit. As prolific as Lenzen was (at one time on nearly every block in San Jose there could be found a Lenzen designed business or residence), fewer than half a dozen are known to survive. Scheller House represents a rare example of Lenzen's work and might in fact be the only surviving sample of his 20th century residential designs.

Scheller House was built in 1904 by Henry Beaumont Martin, a local business owner who settled in San Jose in 1863. In 1899 Henry B. Martin married Louise Scheller, and within the next few years commissioned Lenzen to design the house at 301 Fifth Street. The Martins moved into their new house in 1905 and shared it with Louise's brother Victor, and their widowed mother. Though he only resided there from 1905-1915, it is Victor Scheller for whom Scheller House became known.

Born in 1865, Victor graduated from Santa Clara College (now University) in 1886. He went on to earn a law degree from Hastings College of Law in San Francisco in 1889, graduating with honors. In 1890 he became the state's youngest district attorney. After serving two terms, Scheller left public office and went into private practice in San Jose. He remained active in civic affairs, co-founding the San Jose Chamber of Commerce in 1900 and acting as its president until 1911. Scheller also served as the president of the Santa Clara County Bar Ass'n and the Santa Clara Alumni Ass'n.

Scheller House is an example of California Colonial Revival architecture. The asymmetrical façade created by the home's off-center entrance represents a less common variation of the Colonial Revival style. The 5,200 square foot house also retains many of the unique interior design elements that illustrate the craftsmanship of the period. These include oval shaped rooms with curved windows, natural woodwork- door and window frames with



*Above: The unrestored Scheller House on blocks in the process of being rotated ninety degrees so as to face the San Carlos paseo on the SJSU campus.*

elaborate molded lintels, a staircase with a curved balustrade, hardwood floors with patterned light and dark wood inlays, high coved ceilings with picture moldings and wide natural baseboards, a ceramic tiled hearth, built-ins, and museum quality leaded beveled glass windows. Aside from its value as an architectural gem, Scheller House provides a window into life in early 20th

*‘The battle to save Scheller House was an important milestone for PAC\*SJ. It was the group’s first legal battle . . . [and] a crucial step in PAC\*SJ’s growth and development.’*

century San Jose. Both the Scheller and Martin families played important roles in the development of Santa Clara County and San Jose.

Scheller House provides a tangible link to San Jose's past and an invaluable tool for discovering and understanding the individuals who were instrumental in building the city's infrastructure and institutions. PACSJ is pleased to see the once dilapidated building now looking as elegant as ever and being used and appreciated by the students of SJSU.

The battle to save Scheller House was also an important milestone for PACSJ. It was the organization's first legal battle, cautiously undertaken because of the expense and resources required. In retrospect, it was a crucial step in PCSJ's growth and development. It expanded public awareness of the group's activities, brought in additional financial resources, and gave PAC\*SJ the experience and foundation to go on to save other buildings, including the Jose Theatre and Montgomery Hotel.



*The historic Metropole, at Market and Post Sts. actually comprises two buildings, the Alcantara (1903) and, in the rear, the Sunol (1894). It has been refurbished as the home of a dotcom.*

## San Jose Downtown Ass'n Awards Golden Nails to Metropole and First Unitarian Church for Outstanding Historic Renovations

*The following article is reprinted with permission of the San Jose Downtown Association (SJDA), from its December 2001 **Downtown Dimension** newsletter.*

The Golden Nail Awards recognize owners who have made significant enhancements to downtown's built environment, this year honoring Haury Properties for The Metropole and the First Unitarian Church of San Jose. The awards were recently announced by the San Jose Downtown Association's Beautification, Historic Preservation, Architecture and Design (BHAD) Committee and [were] presented at the December 14 Board of Directors meeting.

**A Jewel's Return to Glory**  
Haury Properties has owned the

*'We like to think of the Metropole as a jewel of downtown San Jose. It's a wonderful gift we are able to give back to the community.'*

— *Barbara Mellin*

Metropole, located at 35 S. Market St., since February 1997.

The structure was once two buildings. The front section, or Alcantara building, dates back to 1903 and the back, or Sunol building, goes back even further, to 1894. The name "Metropole" comes from the Alcantara's first and longest upstairs tenant, the Hotel Metropole, which was primarily a residential hotel that offered long-term room rentals. Henriette and Isabel de Saisset are thought to be the owner-builders. Researchers say they named the building after their father, Pedro de Alcantara de Brazillero de Saisset. The Alcantara name can still be seen on the Market Street façade. Over the years, the Metropole has switched ownership numerous times,



housing retailers such as a saloon, lodging house, café and card club. More recently, the building had two restaurants, a barber shop and pawn shop as tenants.

“The building was in very poor shape,” said Barbara Mellin of Haury Properties. “We bought it at ground zero.” Haury Properties decided to convert the multiple retail outlets to a single space and were able to secure KnightRidder as a tenant. Their digital services division moved in on June 23, utilizing newly-installed fiber optic lines and 24,000 sq. ft. of office space in the city landmark.

RMW Architecture & Interiors designed the interior and a separate architect the exterior. The office of Jerome King restored the façade, including the intricate parapet. King kept the exterior as close to the original configuration as possible, using historic pictures for accuracy.

The interior space is a mixture of modern chrome, clouded glass and historic red brick, which makes up the two-story building shell. The building has received a seismic retrofit, with

*‘The First Unitarian Church of San Jose has stood since 1892. The city landmark is known for being a spiritual home and a de facto community center.’*

reinforced concrete and steel beams visible in various locations throughout the interior.

“We like to think of Metropole as a jewel of downtown San Jose,” Mellin said. “It’s a wonderful gift we are able to give back to the community.”

#### **Spiritual Reawakening**

The First Unitarian Church of San Jose,

located across from St. James Park, has stood at 160 N. 3rd St. since 1892. The city landmark is known for being a spiritual home and a de facto community center serving the downtown area.

Current improvements to the building began in 1992, when a structural analysis showed many repairs were necessary. In October 1995, workers were repairing the roof – using a blow torch to seal the tar and prevent leakage – when the heat fed through the 103-year-old dry roof timbers and burst into flames. The fire destroyed the social hall roof and a third of the sanctuary hall roof collapsed. No injuries were sustained and amazingly only one of the church’s stained glass windows broke, the one at the top of the church dome.

“It took us six years and a total of three capital campaigns to finally finish the entire reconstruction and restoration project,” said Reverend and Lindi Ramsden.

The general contractor, Toeniskoetter & Breeding, Inc., oversaw the \$8 million project, with \$3 million paid by insurance. The David & Lucile Packard Fdn. contributed \$900,000 in recognition of the building’s historic and community significance. Previously-planned structural improvements were also combined with fire repairs.

“While the roofs were off and the walls gutted, this was the time to do the earthquake retrofit, to insulate, to upgrade the electrical system and to add an elevator, making all floors accessible to the disabled,” Ramsden said. The foundation was reinforced. The church offices and classrooms were added to newly excavated space under the sanctuary. A courtyard entrance was created along the south side of the building, and low-level windows were added along the south side wall to brighten the below grade offices.

The first service in the newly rebuilt sanctuary was held on October 16, 1998, exactly three years after the fire. “We were blessed by the incredible generosity and perseverance of the congregation, as well as the strong support from the larger community,” Ramsden said.



# American Beauties: Eichler Homes Come of Age as Historic Structures

by Dawn Hopkins

Built just following World War II, single-family home developments across the country are nearing the 50-year mark that makes them eligible for recognition on the National Register of Historic Places. This includes many of the houses built by Joseph Eichler, specifically those that meet the nomination requirements of significance, integrity of location, workmanship, design, association, materials, and feeling, though all Eichler homes would likely benefit. Owners of Eichler homes throughout California are beginning a movement to gain historical designation status.

Architecture was not a part of Joseph Eichler's education and yet he succeeded at creating an architectural style all his own, a symbol of the American Dream to many who lived in

*'By creating an uncommon setting and peerless house designs, Eichler created more than just a home for potential buyers. He gave ordinary people the opportunity to live . . . in a custom-designed home.'*

his houses. Joseph Eichler was born in 1900 in New York and graduated from New York University in 1920 with a business degree. After marrying in 1925, he and his wife moved to San Francisco where he worked for his wife's family business. It was during this time that the Eichler family moved to Hillsborough and into a Frank Lloyd Wright house that would greatly influence Eichler.

In 1949, Eichler met with architect Robert Anshen of Anshen & Jones and James San Jule in Sunnyvale to discuss the building of some houses. From this meeting was born Eichler Homes, Inc. and Jack Harlow was hired as the construction manager. What made Eichler's concept unique was that he did not hire a site-planning engineer, rather allowing his architects to design the site plans. This led to the use of cul-de-sac streets that were molded by Anshen & Allen's "concentric circle" or "bull's-

eye” site plan and by Jones & Emmons “greenbelt scheme,” both of which reduced vehicle traffic.

Uniqueness abounds in Eichler home designs that distinguishes them from the typical tract home of the time. While small lots required equally small homes, Eichler homes were designed with glass walls that seemed to extend the rooms out into nature. Later houses included an interior court, similar to the Roman atriums, thus adding a classical remnant to a modern design. The use of the “post-and-beam” construction technique allowed for the extensive use of glass walls and for the low-pitched roofs, like those used by architect Earl “Flat-top” Smith of Richmond.

Joseph Eichler became a prominent figure in American residential architecture through his desire to build

homes for both the individual and family of average means and his steadfast convictions on the residential design and construction techniques. While the larger Eichler communities can be found in Sunnyvale, Palo Alto, and Southern California, San Jose has Eichlers on Fairorchard Avenue, Briarwood Drive, Fairgrove Court and in the Westgate area.

By creating an uncommon setting and peerless house designs, Eichler created more than just a home for his potential buyers. He gave ordinary people the opportunity to live in a community where their home seemed “customized-designed” for them. Today that community extends to all owners of Eichler homes in California through the Eichler Network that recently formed “Historic Quest,” a committee which aims to locate and identify those Eichler developments and custom homes

built prior to 1960 for the possible addition to the National Register of Historic Places. As the Bay Area continues to “up-scale” itself, many historic buildings are paying the price. Many people have a preconceived notion of what is “historic” and many of the mid-century modernist movement structures, like Eichler homes, have yet to receive such recognition. As Eichlers near their fiftieth birthday, they would rather be revived than retired.

*Sources: www.eichlernetwork.com; Jerry and Lanny Stern. **Design for Living: Eichler Homes.** San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1995; Laura J. Tuchman, **San Jose Mercury News**, January 5, 1994.*



*‘Uniqueness abounds in Eichler home designs that distinguishes them from the typical tract homes of the time. While small lots required small homes, Eichler homes were designed with glass walls that seemed to extend the rooms out into nature.’*

---

# Henry A. Minton: A.P. Gianini's Architect

by Jack Douglas

From the day of its establishment in San Francisco in 1904, the Bank of Italy rose rapidly to become a major statewide banking institution. Founder A.P. Giannini, a San Jose native, required a multitude of plans for branches throughout California, and the San Francisco architectural firm of H.A. Minton was the fortunate recipient of many of these building commissions.

Henry A. Minton was born in Boston and obtained his degree in architecture at Harvard University. Like many of his peers he came to San Francisco in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fire, soon becoming an established practitioner in that city and the surrounding area. The light of the San Francisco Catholic diocese shone favorably upon the Minton firm, for he became their architect for numerous Catholic schools and churches, including St. Brigid's, St. Francis Xavier Mission for Japanese and the Mission Dolores Church. He also did the plans for the Alameda County Courthouse and, in cooperation with noted theater specialist Thomas W. Lamb, designed the lavish Fox Theater in San Francisco.

One of Minton's most impressive was his design for our thirteen story skyscraper at the corner of First and Santa Clara Sts. Opened in January 1927, this distinctive building was, until recently, the most identifiable feature of San Jose's cityscape. San Jose saw a period of rapid growth in the 1920s. Saturday editions of the *Mercury Herald* featured a report on the current ground-breakings and grand openings for new buildings. This building fever was at its peak when the Bank of Italy chose to build its new branch at the very crossroads of commerce in San Jose.

## **Built for the Ages**

Perhaps because it was in the owner's home town, the architects were allowed to spare no expense in this new cathedral of banking. Designed, appropriately, in the

*'Not one of the more well-known Bay Area architects, Henry A. Minton was nevertheless a major contributor who should be remembered locally for his two landmark Bank of Italy buildings.'*

---

Italian Renaissance Revival style, the bank set a standard for high quality construction. Because Bank of Italy headquarters were in San Francisco, it is not surprising the contractor, McDonald and Kahn, Inc., along with over fifty subcontractors, were from there. The only local contract went to Solon and Schemmel for art tile on the tower and to L. Lions for the linoleum flooring.

Minton had to compromise on the lower façade of the building in order to accommodate the store front of the Roos Brothers Men's Store. The five columns on the right hand side rose not from the sidewalk, but from the top of the Roos Brothers display windows. This anomaly was corrected years later when the Roos store was relocated and the hanging columns were extended to the sidewalk as they are now. The decorative frieze above the capitals features the three masted sailing ship which was the logo of the Bank of Italy; it can still be seen on almost all of the former Bank of Italy buildings.

## **A Beacon in the Sky**

At the top of the slightly hipped tile roof stands the building's most distinguishing feature—a 5-story tower surmounted by a large copper lantern displaying bear-like figures. Finials rise from the four corners of the base and from the corners of the tower itself. The spire, which rose above these decorative elements, was replaced in 1929 by a columnar beacon. This wand-like device served to warn off approaching aircraft and also foretold the weather by turning green for fair and red for stormy. The beacon was lit for the first time on January 12, 1929 when bank president James Bacigalupi threw the switch from his home in Los Gatos. The beacon replaced the long gone Light Tower as a landmark for people approaching San Jose at night. It went dark as well in the 1980s.

## **Rich Interiors**

A variety of imported and domestic marble was used throughout the building. The free-standing banking screens were constructed of durable rosetta and tavernalle marbles. The floors in the banking hall were done in black and white Tennessee marble checker board pattern and the upper floor offices and hallways were lined with French gray marble. The cost of the entire building was just under one million dollars.

## **Grand Opening**

According to the *Mercury Herald*, thousands attended the grand opening on Saturday, January 15, 1927. The new bank was decked out with immense floral pieces donated by local merchants. A corps of fifty ushers was on hand to shos the visitors around. Bank officials, all local men, were there to greet the guests, as were A.P. Gianini and the bank's statewide president, Bacigalupi.

*Continued on page 12*



*Left: a photo of the Bank of Italy building at First and Santa Clara Sts. in downtown San Jose.*

*Photos courtesy of Jack Douglas.*

The Bank of Italy became Bank of America in 1930 and eventually the nation's largest banking institution. In the 1970s, the bank vacated the First and Santa Clara building and moved to Park Center Plaza.

### **Hester Neighborhood Branch**

To make banking more convenient, the Bank of Italy spread its system of branches beyond the inner cities and into the neighborhoods. The Hester Branch, located on The Alameda at Hester St., was one of the earliest. This handsome gem of a building was also a Henry Minton design. Now a beauty salon, this former bank still has most of its original features, including a marble banking screen, tables and benches. The bronze doors and Bank of Italy ornamentation are still intact, as is the walk-in vault with its massive door. Built in the popular Spanish Colonial Revival style, the building is designated a city landmark.

### **Minton's Final Years**

The Great Depression brought a decline in architectural commissions and Minton ceased working for the Bank of America in 1931. He formed a partnership with Wilton Smith in 1934. Minton died on February 3, 1948 after a lengthy illness. Not one of the more well-known Bay Area architects, he was nevertheless a major contributor who should be remembered locally for his two landmark Bank of Italy buildings.

*Editor's postscript: The Bank of Italy (America) tower at First and Santa Clara*

*'The Hester Branch, . . . a handsome gem of a building, was also a Henry Minton design [and] is a designated city landmark.'*

---

*Sts. is potentially endangered by the Palladium mixed-used development project being proposed by the Redevelopment Agency to revitalize downtown. Palladium reportedly would like to alter the building at ground level to facilitate its grand retail strategy. PAC\*SJ is closely monitoring this*

*and other aspects of the Palladium project and we will keep you posted. As ever, no building is sacred to local officials, not even the seminal structure defining San Jose's skyline.*



*Left: the Hester St. Bank of Italy branch visible along The Alameda at Hester St. near the Shasta/Hanchett and Rosegarden neighborhoods. Lower photo: a closeup of the decorative frieze showing the three-masted sailing ship which was the trademark of Bank of Italy buildings.*



Book Review:

# Preserving the World's Great Cities: The Destruction and Renewal of the Historic Metropolis

by Anthony M. Tung

New York: Clarkson Potter/Publishers, 2001. 469 pp. \$40.00

Reviewed by Sharon McCarthy

During World War II the Nazis destroyed over 95% of Warsaw's historic architecture as part of an effort to eradicate the city's cultural legacy, to punish the Poles for their resistance, and as an expedient to clear the way for an agricultural center. During the Nazi occupation students and faculty members of Warsaw Technical University risked their lives to secretly create detailed drawings and photographs of the cityscape, materials instrumental in the city's eventual reconstruction.

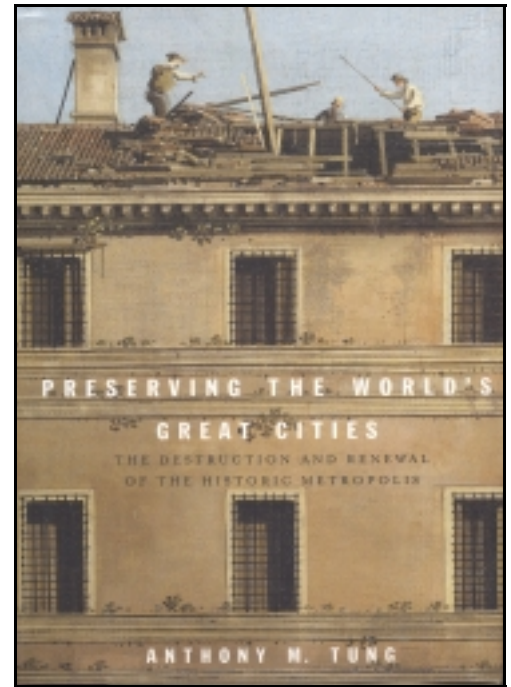
While Warsaw's post-war reconstruction is often heralded as the quintessential preservation success story, *Preserving the World's Great Cities* by Anthony M. Tung explores preservation failures as well, such as the destruction of the ancient wall surrounding Beijing in the 1950s. The wall was demolished to make way for a modern highway and subway system, Lost with the wall, says Tung, was a singular opportunity to reconcile the ancient city with the modern metropolis. Contemporary challenges to urban conservation are also raised, such as the implications of unfettered tourism in Cairo and the toll on its historic resources.

A native New Yorker, Tung is a trained architect and has served 3 terms on the city's landmarks preservation commission, whose 11 appointees have sole authority for all preservation matters in the city. Tung discusses the political pressures he experienced in wielding power over land-use regulations in a city where great wealth accumulates in the real estate market. His grasp of local politics inform his analysis of political pressures involved in the preservation process in other cities.

According to Tung the conservation of historic cities entails two acts of social invention: (1) creating a beautiful cityscape, and (2) deciding to preserve it. He makes one point dramatically: conservation is simply a matter of choice. The earliest recorded preservation statute, the Roman Emperor's Majorian's in 458, prohibited stripping stone from imperial monuments. The first U.S. preservation law, in Charleston, S.C. in 1931, required new buildings to conform to the existing milieu. Different laws in different times, they reflected the prevailing zeitgeist.

In 1995, Tung journeyed around the globe to 22 of the world's most architecturally significant metropolises. *Preserving the World's Great Cities*, the result of this ambitious undertaking, is a comprehensive international survey of urban preservation practices. Tung describes the evolution of each city's unique architectural tradition and the social, political and economic history that have shaped and reshaped the built environment of each place over time. Tung hoped his work would fill a void in the preservation literature by collecting conservation lessons learned across continents over time.

Unsurprisingly, San Jose is not among the "world's great cities" Tung examines. Despite its pretensions as the capital of Silicon Valley and the engine of the global economy, San Jose is far from obtaining world-class status at least as an architectural destination. But if our civic leaders want to play in the big leagues, they might consider studying Tung's analysis of how the world's great cities go



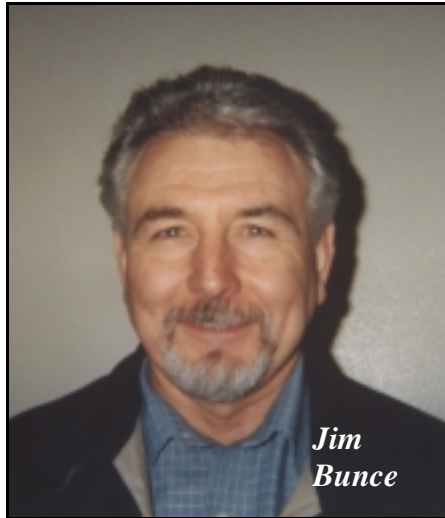
## Excerpt

*'In cities on all continents, the new developments that herald economic well-being frequently result in a threat to the continuation of landmarks and historic neighborhoods. . . . The pursuit of money creates the resources to make landmarks, and to save landmarks, but it is also the justification for destroying them.'*

# Three New PAC\*SJ Board Members Elected for 2002

Three new members have been elected to the Preservation Action Council of San Jose (PAC\*SJ) board of directors this year.

**Jim Bunce**, a member of PAC\*SJ for 5 years, is a San Jose native whose family lived on N. San Pedro St. close to the Fallon House when he was born. His family also had a home in the River St. Historic Dist. since the 1940s (Charles Hill House) and he has a keen interest in its survival. Bunce studied engineering at San Jose State and served in the Army National Guard for 8 years. He has his own business, APRUVAL (derived from apricot & prune valley) designing and manufacturing test equipment for high tech companies.



**Gayle Frank** is a second generation San Jose native residing in Willow Glen. However, it wasn't until she became a docent at the San Jose History Museum over 10 years ago that the beauty and historical value of the community's buildings were thoroughly appreciated. Training for San Jose downtown walking tours was an opportunity for history to come to life.

Frank, an environment, health and safety engineer at NASA Ames Research Center Wind Tunnel Division, holds a masters in toxicology/biological science from San Jose State. She participates in historical fashion shows with "Portraits of the Past" and loves vintage clothing. Frank has three daughters in Seattle, a son in San Jose, and four grandchildren with a fifth on the way. Her hobby is taking care of her two Siberian Huskies.



**Julia Howlett**, already an active member of PAC\*SJ for a year before her election to the board, has been living in downtown San Jose since graduating from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with a degree in city and regional planning in 1996. After stints with the City of Oakland, the U.S. Navy and an urban planning firm, she is now a GIS specialist with a vehicle tracking firm. Her lifelong love is old buildings. San Jose's rich history has inspired her to help preserve our remaining resources.



## PAC\*SJ Gets Grant from National Trust for Historic Preservation

Preservation Action Council of San Jose has been awarded a \$2,500 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP).

NTHP grants are awarded to enable preservation groups to strengthen their organizational structure.

PAC\*SJ's grant is the result of a cooperative working relationship between it, NTHP and the California Preservation Foundation. The grant application, written last October by PAC\*SJ president Pat Curria, newly-elected board member Julia Howlett and office manager Sarah Sykes, outlines the current preservation need in San Jose and PAC\*SJ's role in the process.

PAC\*SJ intends to use the grant funds to hire a consultant to guide it through the process of transitioning from an all volunteer organization to a more professional one, including the hiring and supervising a full-time executive director. The transition should ultimately relieve board members of many administrative duties and allow them to focus on creating programs to increase PAC\*SJ's effectiveness, collaborative outreach, and educational projects.

*For more information about the grant, contact Sarah Sykes at 998-8105.*

# Preservation Shark on Auction Block

SharkByte Art, the outdoor art exhibit sponsored by the San Jose Downtown Ass'n (SJDA) that premiered last summer bringing 100 colorful shark sculptures to San Jose, will be auctioning the entire collection on Saturday, March 2 at the San Jose Convention Center to raise funds for local charities and non-profit organizations, including PAC\*SJ.

PAC\*SJ's shark, covered with old newspapers and historic postcards of San Jose, is suspended from an evocation of the light tower at Market and Santa Clara Sts. at the turn of the 20th century.

Tickets are available for \$35 each and include a champagne and dessert buffet, souvenir program and auction paddle. Come bid on a piece of San Jose history and support PAC\*SJ at the same time. For more info., call SJDA at 279-1775 or log onto [www.sharkbyteart.com](http://www.sharkbyteart.com).



Above: Several PAC\*SJ board members and staff make a lunchtime visit to "Endangered Species: the Preservation Shark" at Park Center Plaza in downtown San Jose. From left to right: John Olson, Tom Simon, Andre Luthard, Ellen Garboske, Dawn Hopkins (student intern), Beth Wyman and Pat Curia. The PAC\*SJ shark will be available to the highest bidder on March 2, proceeds to benefit PAC\*SJ.

## PRESERVATION ACTION COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### I could assist with the following:

\_\_\_ Newsletter      \_\_\_ Public Relations  
\_\_\_ Grant Writing      \_\_\_ Photography  
\_\_\_ Graphic Arts      \_\_\_ Desktop Publishing  
\_\_\_ Education      \_\_\_ Preservation Law  
\_\_\_ Finance      \_\_\_ Special Events  
\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership:** New\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_

\_\_\_ Individual \$20  
\_\_\_ Family \$30  
\_\_\_ Senior (Over 65) \$10  
\_\_\_ Contributor \$100  
\_\_\_ Benefactor \$1000  
\_\_\_ School/NonProfit \$25  
\_\_\_ Small Business \$100  
\_\_\_ Corporation \$250

Enclosed is my \$ \_\_\_ tax deductible contribution

Please complete this form, enclose it with your check made payable to 'Preservation Action Council of San Jose' and mail to:

**PAC\*SJ**  
**PO Box 2287**  
**San Jose, CA 95109-2287**

# CALENDAR

## February

- 18 PAC SJ Board Meeting  
7 p.m. Le Petit Trianon  
72 N. 5th St.

## March

- 18 PAC SJ Board Meeting  
7 p.m. Le Petit Trianon  
72 N. 5th St.

## April

- 15 PAC SJ Board Meeting  
7 p.m. Le Petit Trianon  
72 N. 5th St.

## May

- 20 PAC SJ Board Meeting  
7 p.m. Le Petit Trianon  
72 N. 5th St.



The Preservation Action Council of San Jose is a nonprofit 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.

### Directors:

Patricia Curia, *President*  
John Olson, *Vice President*  
Beth Wyman, *Treasurer*  
Brian Grayson, *Secretary*

Bev Blockie  
John Bondi  
Jim Bunce  
Norm Finnance  
Gayle Frank  
Don Gagliardi  
Ellen Garboske

Julia Howlett  
Andre Luthard  
Kitty Monahan  
Tom Simon  
Bill Thomas  
Natalie Wells  
Michael Youmans  
Jim Zetterquist

### Advisory Board:

Bonnie Bamburg  
Marvin Bamburg, AIA  
Paul Bernal  
Lawrence Bryan  
Joan Corsiglia  
Jack Douglas, SAH  
April Halberstadt

Susan Hartt  
Judi Henderson  
Alan Hess  
Karita Hummer  
Paul Hummer  
Edward Janke, AIA  
Jerome King, AIA  
Franklin Maggi  
Betsy Mathieson

Craig Mineweaser, AIA  
David Pandori  
John Pinto  
Leonard C. Ramirez  
Gil Sanchez  
Judy Stabile  
Keith Watt  
James C. Williams



PO Box 2287  
San Jose, CA 95109-2287

(408) 947-8025  
[www.preservation.org](http://www.preservation.org)

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT 46  
SANTA CLARA, CA

***Join or Renew Today: Membership Form Inside on Page 19!***