

CONTINUITY

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Dedicated to Preserving San José's Architectural Heritage

Summer/Fall 2005

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San Jose's Last Family Winery



Heritage House, built 1924.

The Mirassou Winery's history travels back to Pierre Pellier, who returned to San Jose in 1856 carrying precious Bordeaux grape cuttings from France. Not only did the Pellier brothers (Pierre and Louis) introduce vineyards to the Valley, they also were responsible for introducing the prune to the area. Pierre Pellier's daughter, Henrietta, married a neighboring French immigrant vintner, Pierre Mirassou. This union brought about the Mirassou vineyards and the eventual winery.

In 1909, the Mirassou brothers (Peter, John and Herman) formed a partnership and purchased the winery on White and Aborn Roads that their grandfather had built in 1909. A vineyard was planted on the newly purchased parcel of 100 acres on Aborn Road and soon wine was produced. By 1937 a new generation of brothers (Edmund and Norbert) took over the business that was primarily

(Continued on page 8)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



*Jim Zetterquist,
2005 President*

So much has happened in San Jose this summer. We became the nation's 10th largest city, our new city hall, designed by a world renowned architect is opening to critical acclaim, we hosted Northern California's first Grand Prix race and in September, the beautiful Guadalupe River Park will celebrate its grand opening. The

Park will serve as downtown's centerpiece. There's so much to be excited about and proud of in San Jose. These positive steps are marred only by the three giant, backward steps taken by our city leaders.

- The historically significant Fox-Markovitz building was demolished to make room for a parking garage.
- The Mayor and a majority of city council members voted to approve the demolition of one of our last architectural resources that portray San Jose's agricultural past, Del Monte Plant #3.
- Our city leaders continue to support the demolition of IBM building #25, significant for its modern architecture, hoping to replace it with a big box Lowe's store.

As the council and mayor seek new political positions or reelection, we will keep you updated on how they vote on preserving our historic resources so you can make informed decisions. Well, I guess all great cities have overcome greater losses of historic resources due to wars and natural disasters. I'm sure San Jose can overcome some shortsighted politicians.

Research shows that businesses occupying historic buildings are more successful than those in generic buildings. PAC SJ must take the lead in promoting the fact that historic preservation is good for business. The best way for us to do this is to partner

with businesses that occupy historic resources. Through our website, we can inform visitors and citizens on how they can have a truly unique San Jose experience. Options for dining, lodging, and shopping in historic buildings will be listed. Successful businesses occupy historic buildings and thus ensure successful historic preservation!

Much has also been going on at PAC this summer. We started the summer with a highly successful Willow Ranch House Tour that netted \$17,000. Great fun was had by all. A big thank you needs to go out to all the volunteers and home owners who worked so hard to make this event a success. Joe Melehan, the event chair, deserves special mention and many thanks for putting the house tour together. In the office much has happened as well. Dawn Hopkins, our part time office manager, has left for a full time position. Our Executive Director of 20 months, Alex Marthews, moved to Boston (a city that really understands historic preservation) with his wife, Catherine. Dawn and Alex will be greatly missed, both as fellow preservationists and friends. Fortunately, we have Kathy Pinna acting as interim business manager during our transition.

Finally we will be celebrating our annual gala early this year at a new location. It will be held Sept. 24th at History Park San Jose. The theme will be "Remembering Frontier Village." This event promises to be fun for the whole family. With Ellen Garboske and Patt Curia as chairs, I'm sure it will be a real western blow out.

See you there pardners,

JIM ZETTERQUIST



Between the Gates



Celeste M. Melehan, Joanna M. Reynolds (original owner of 2496 Cottle Ave), & Joseph P. Melehan

Willow Ranch House Tour: A SUCCESS!

On Friday evening, June 10 and during the day on Saturday, June 11 PAC*SJ presented two unique events. Both events centered on our efforts to draw attention to an often-overlooked “historic” structure – the 1950’s Ranch Style home.

Friday night’s tour of four homes in the Willow Ranch neighborhood in Willow Glen was sandwiched between a backyard 50’s cocktail party honoring Mr. Bob Dodge, the developer of Willow Ranch, who was in attendance with his family. After a serving of martinis and a dance skit presented by cheerleaders from Willow Glen High School, Mr. Dodge was introduced. He reminisced about the time when the homes were built and how things have changed. He was complimented on his vision of providing a peaceful enclave, which was highly sought after by WWII veterans and their families. After their life changing experience, veterans were seeking a comfortable, calm and harmonious living environment. Bob Dodge and his uncle Walker Vaughn provided them with that opportunity. The neighborhood retains those same charms to this day, even with the adaptations made over the years by the individual homeowners.

More than 200 people took the docent-led walk through the Maestri, Gallagher Hyland, Zetterquist and Melehan homes. Each home reflected the homeowners’ tastes and displayed sensitive ways to update a house, while staying true to the spirit of the developer.

At each house, additional martinis and refreshments were served. All PAC*SJ members who volunteered at the event were dressed in their finest 1950’s attire, as were many of the attendees. The Friday night patio cocktail party was decorated with authentic 1950’s furniture and accessories. A great time was had by all.

On Saturday the Home Tour continued. The tour differed from most home tours in that it was in one neighborhood (all homes were within walking distance) and it provided the opportunity for people to compare homes that were similar when constructed, but have

grown to be radically different. The 50’s theme continued with docents in costumes and the display of numerous



Friday’s special party at Willow Ranch; Joe Melehan’s backyard

(Continued on page 4)

Between the Gates

(Continued from page 3)

classic cars of the era. Some of the men on the tour who may have been dragged to the event by their wives, spent more time viewing the autos than walking through the homes.

It was special for the current homeowners to meet and talk to previous residents of their homes and to find out what life was like in our neighborhood before San Jose became the "Capital of Silicon Valley." Once again, PAC*SJ did a fantastic job in our efforts to educate the public and help save historic buildings. Everyone in attendance agreed that it was an outstanding success. All those who participated worked above and beyond the call of duty. PAC*SJ people who dedicated their time and resources included Jim Zetterquist, Joe Melehan, Bev Blockie, Jim Bunce, Patt Curia, Brian Grayson, Judi Henderson, Kayla Kurucz, Alex Marthews, Lucille Moyer, Kathy Pinna, Edie Pricolo, Helen Stevens, Deb Wible, Gayle Frank, Ellen Garboske, and many others.

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It's About Time!

As you may know by now an effort is under way to rebuild the clock tower at the San Jose Museum of Art. Originally built in 1892 as the San Jose Post Office, the clock tower was partially destroyed in the 1906 earthquake. A volunteer citizen effort was started earlier this year to rebuild the tower to Secretary of Interior Standards for renovation of historic structures. This steering committee, *It's About Time*, has been meeting regularly to develop ways to get the tower rebuilt.

At a recent meeting Mr. John Lyon, Vice President of the local chapter of the National Association of Clocks and Watches (NACW), and several of his associates informed the committee that their organization is prepared to donate approximately \$160,000 of in-kind services to the effort. This is significant for two reasons: first, this generous donation will count significantly as matching funds for additional grants the committee will be seeking; secondly it means that a very unique San Jose artifact will be restored and maintained.

The original Seth Thomas clock was destroyed in the '06 quake. When the tower



Exterior of the clock tower.
Photo by Linda Larson Boston.

was hastily rebuilt a few years later, a clock built by Nels Johnson was installed. There are only a few of his clocks known to exist today. San Jose has a treasure!

The several members of the local NACW have agreed to work as a subcommittee of *It's About Time* and focus distinctly on the renovation of the clock. To say that these gentlemen are excited is putting it mildly. Yet there is much more to do to see this project to a successful completion.

Other committees that need support are, Development, Marketing, Restoration Construction, Historic Oversight and Special Events. April 18th Ought Six, that's 2006, is coming and we would like to reach some significant milestone in the restoration of the clock tower by that date. It's About Time!

JOHN MITCHEL

Chair: *It's About Time*

For more info contact John at
jrkmitchel@sbcglobal.net

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PRESERVATION CELEBRATION 2005



Remembering Frontier Village & the Wild West

Saturday, September 24, 2005

5:00 PM to 10:00 PM

History Park, 1650 Senter Rd

Dig out those chaps and fringed jackets, those pointy cowboy shoes and 10 gallon hats because at 5:00pm on September 24th, the 6th Annual Preservation Celebration rides into San Jose's History Park, located at 1650 Senter Avenue. Our theme this year is "Remembering Frontier Village and the Wild West". Our honored guest is Mr. Jack Douglas, who will receive PAC*SJ's lifetime achievement award for his efforts in preservation and local history. We are also honoring all past and present City of San Jose Historic Landmark Commissioners.

Children are encouraged to attend this event as we have many entertainments planned for cowpokes of all ages. The trolley will run throughout the park and several re enactors from Frontier Village will attend to entertain us with their roping skills and quick draw artistry. There might even be a bank robbery ! Memorabilia and photos of Frontier Village's charming setting will be displayed.

Our much anticipated live and silent auctions will be overseen by square dance instructor, Ms. Diane Gaskill. One of the highlights for our guests to bid on is a lunch for 8 at Casa Grande followed by a tour of the Quicksilver Mines County Park with Ms. Kitty Monahan.

So save the date: September 24th Invitations were mailed in August or you may reserve your bench now online at www.Preservation.org.

Reserve by September 12, 2005 and receive the Early Bird discount: \$50 for PAC*SJ members and \$60 for non- members. After September 12, all adult tickets are \$65. Or become a Celebration Hero for \$100. Children's tickets are free for those under 7 years of age and \$10 for 7 — 14 years of age.

The California Pioneers of Santa Clara County

Founded in 1875, the Pioneers are the County's oldest-established heritage society. They collect and preserve historic artifacts, publish the quarterly newsletter "Trailblazer", and try to communicate to future generations a faithful and correct impression of pioneer history.

You can join the Pioneers if you are a resident or descendant of a resident of California for 35 or more years, or show an exceptional interest in the history of the County. The Pioneers meet at 11:30am for lunch on the first Saturday of March/ June/ September/ December at Lou's Village.

If you want to join, please call Melita Kelly at (408) 292-2385.



THE DOG



There's a whole lot'a movin' goin' on in our ol' town...some keeps my tail whirlin', some gets my hackles up. Most interestin' is watching those two-legged city people traipse down the avenue on their way to new digs in San Jose's very own Taj Mahal, growlin' all the way because they can't find a place to park. Easy long-term solution, park up by the 'former' city hall and take the light rail just like the rest of us ol' dogs.

I've been snoopin' around that new symbol of municipal prosperity and doggoned if it isn't pretty impressive, at least from the outside. They don't allow dogs inside, but I'll find a way to sneak in, at least for the first council meeting...my first (and probably only) chance to look down on our esteemed leaders!

The Gonzo Dome will open and be occupied later...which will be a nice change considerin' the original Gonzo Dome seems to be a bit empty! Even an ol' dog like me would join all those other cities determined to improve the environment. Yeah, it might be tough or impossible to reach all the goals, but it's a start and San Jose could polish up its leadership role by supporting those accords and settin' a strong example of what can be done eventually if you take one bite at a time.

And our vaunted leaders do need to do something to polish up our image, it's a bit tarnished lately. Might say even cartoonish what with His Honor in the garbage can, comin' on the heels of the Cisco fiasco! Is this the image we want to project now that San Jose is the 10th largest city in the good ol' USofA?

Speaking of Cisco, what dirty secrets are going to surface when the former city chief information officer's civil suit hits the courts? Wandzia Grycz lost her job in that scandal, but doesn't plan to roll over and play dead.

Not all is lost, and one of the best news lately is that the ol' Civic Auditorium might finally gain some respect. This Mission-style building is a real gem, designed by local architects Binder and Curtis, and built on land donated by San Jose's own T.S. Montgomery, the original instigator of making San Jose a city of note! Opened in 1936, the Civic Auditorium was San Jose's main event venue for many years. Now it may regain its status under the leadership of Team

San Jose, the group that plans to update the interior and expects to book several shows a week. A three-bark salute for Team San Jose!

My undercover agents have been nosin' around tryin' to find out what the Japantown leaders recommend for the prime property vacated by San Jose's corporation yard. What with all the new housing Japantown looks great, but it's time to add some really spectacular cultural character. How about a serene garden...dogs love gardens, and wouldn't a typical Japanese garden be nice? And speaking of wide open space, how about a new town square as a memorial to the defunct only downtown hospital.

Welcome to the Black Sea Gallery, now open in the ol' Woolworth building, one of my favorite haunts and another impressive reuse of an historic building. If the contributions roll in as hoped, another great project will begin with plans to recreate the clock tower on the 1892 San Jose Post Office building, now home to the San Jose Museum of Art. Get out your checkbooks and support the 'It's About Time' project through the Museum of Art.

What with the successful joint City/University library, and the beautiful Scheller House, San Jose State University has a good foundation for a mix of new and historic structures. Now if the University would just survey, identify and designate its historic structures, and give them some protection, that would be a real accomplishment! A university heritage commission could appoint a community representative and that would create a true city/university partnership!

Can't help but whimper at PAC*SJ's loss of Alex Marthews as their Executive Director. When Alex first yanked my chain a couple years ago, I thought "who is this brash, young whippersnapper!" And he was British to boot, and we all know the Brits are different. Turns out different ain't necessarily bad. Once we adjusted, the organization actually grew and improved! I think we learned a lot from Alex during his sojourn in San Jose, and that he also picked up some pointers from us. Now Alex's wife, Catherine, received her PHD from Stanford, and was immediately offered an assistant professorship at MIT. Pretty impressive! And Alex also showed his mettle, walked right into the leadership of a corporation focused on affordable housing. And you gotta' respect a guy who says "I love San Jose, and my job with PAC*SJ, but I love my wife more!" So it's off to Boston and another phase in life's great adventures.

HAPPY TRAILS ALEX AND CATHERINE!

THE DOG

San Jose's Last Family Winery

(Continued from page 1)

selling wine in bulk, except for small quantities bottled for tasting by those who visited the winery. By 1957 the Mirassou Vineyards had a capacity of 330,000 gallons of wine from their 400 acres of grapes nearby. The Vineyard expanded to Monterey County in 1961 and Mirassou wines were mass marketed throughout the country. By the 1990's the Mirassou Winery was the third largest winery in Santa Clara Valley and the last winery to remain in the family of its founder.

The winery consists of the original residence (1924) of Peter Mirassou, the aging cellars, the wine tasting room, storage/distribution warehouse, and winemaking equipment. The residence is now known as the Heritage House, and is a wonderful example of Mediterranean Revival architecture with a tile roof and stucco siding.



Mirassou Winery Tasting Room (built in 1937)

Inside the house the kitchen has been enlarged and upgraded to accommodate catering banquets and receptions. The original winery building (1937) is a long concrete warehouse trimmed with fired roof tile. It most recently housed the wine-tasting room, offices, bottling line and laboratory. Enlargements of the warehouse structure were made in 1947 and 1954. A second concrete structure built in 1973, primarily serves as a wine cellar. A lovely patio and wine garden graces the area between these two warehouses. Other structures at the site include grape processing equipment, storage tanks, a scalehouse, 3-car garage, a small office building and a reception building, which was the previous (1940) wine-tasting room and maintenance shop.

The 1993 Environmental Impact Report concluded that "based on the integrity of the winery complex and the long history of the Mirassou family's involvement in the winemaking business in Evergreen, the residence and the 1937 winery building achieved a point value of 87, making them eligible as Candidate City Landmarks."

In 2002, the Mirassou family sold the brand and inventory to Gallo and re-named their San Jose facilities La Rochelle Winery, after the French region where the Pellier brothers grew up. Production at La Rochelle Winery has ended and will move to Livermore by September, where a sixth generation Mirassou runs a winery. At present, negotiations are taking place to sell the remaining 14.6 acres of the Mirassou Winery property in San Jose. It's uncertain at this time what the fate of the Heritage House and original winery building will be, but the Trustee has told PAC*SJ that "the Trust and developers will be sensitive to the historical issues."

ON THE RADAR



Del Monte #3

Most of the buildings will be demolished. The water tower and two parts of a façade will be saved. An historical exhibit is planned to commemorate this significant industrial structure of Santa Clara Valley. KB Homes' plan is for affordable housing

Hitachi

PAC*SJ supports the retention of Buildings 9 and 11 for possible community center. They also would like the funds and location for the historic exhibit identified.

North San Jose

PAC*SJ has requested that the evaluations of the historic structures be done now as part of the EIR (Environmental Impact Report), and not be postponed until a project is proposed for a site with a historic structure on it.

Hangar 1 at Moffett Field

The Navy has responsibility for cleaning up the PCB/asbestos/lead contaminants for Hangar One at Moffett Field. NASA Ames Research Center owns the building. The ¼ inch metal siding contains a mixture of asphalt, asbestos, PCBs, and lead paint that in 1932 was considered the best of fireproof and durable materials. The Navy has told the public there will be an

engineering/cost analysis report out September 16th describing their multiple remediation options which includes encapsulation (various types of coatings), removal of siding, remediation of the contaminants by chemical or physical means, leaving the Hangar as is and monitoring the environment or demolishing the structure. The structure is contaminated inside as well as externally. In case this historically significant structure is demolished, documentation by oral histories, pictures, artifacts, and information is being collected for history preservation as required by the National Historic Preservation Act. There will be a 45-day comment period for the public after the report is issued. If anyone has historical information concerning the Hangar, please get in touch with Sandy Olliges at 650-604-3355 or send an e-mail to solliges@mail.arc.nasa.gov. For information on "Save Hangar One Committee" go to <http://www.savehangarone.org>. The loss of this unique historic structure would be a heavy blow to the Bay Area communities.



USS Macon being moved into hangar 1: 1934



USS Macon in flight over hangar 1: 1933

Alum Rock Stables

Dave Mitchell, Park Planning Manager for the City of San Jose, assigned Cindy Rehban to be the Park and Recreation 'point person' for the Alum Rock Stables. The BABTT (Bay Area Barn and Trails) has retained an attorney to work with San Jose's city attorney on acquiring the Stables. BABTT believes that by saving the property from demolition it would protect scenic hillside vistas and wildlife habitat while simultaneously saving an historic barn, re-establishing public boarding and trail riding, and providing a neighborhood history and community center.

Restored Water Tower

Diridon Station Water Tower

The Diridon Station Water Tower is now at its new location at 699 Park Avenue in San Jose as of June 26th, 2005. This Water Tower is historically significant because it was a visual connection with the Diridon Station. The Tower was in the



Before Relocation and Repair

path of the light rail alignment, so it was necessary to disassemble it and store it on Auzerias Avenue until the construction of the Vasona Light Rail Project was completed. The new location is approximately 900 feet from where it previously stood.

The Valley Transportation Authority issued a contract to Anderson Pacific Engineering for the restoration, including lead abatement, structural reinforcement, and painting, prior to replacing it back near the Station.

The Federal Transit Administration and the Measure B Transportation Improvement Program provided funding for the relocation and repair of the Water Tower.



After Relocation and Repair



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PAC*SJ CALENDAR


- September**
- 11 Sunday, **Haunting of Winchester Musical** , 12pm Reception, 2pm Curtain
San Jose Repertory Theatre, 101 Paseo de San Antonio, San Jose
 - 19 Monday, PAC*SJ Board Meeting, 6 - 8 pm. Le Petit Trianon, 72 N. 5th Street, San Jose.
 - 24 Saturday, **2005 Annual Preservation Celebration—"Remembering Frontier Village"**
Honoring Jack Douglas 5 - 10 pm History Park, 1560 Senter Road, San Jose
- October**
- 17 Monday, PAC*SJ Board Meeting, 6 - 8 pm. Le Petit Trianon, 72 N. 5th Street, San Jose.
- November**
- 21 Monday, PAC*SJ Board Meeting, 6 - 8 pm. Le Petit Trianon, 72 N. 5th Street, San Jose.
 - 29 Tuesday, **Founder's Day Movie Night** , Le Petit Trianon, 72 N. 5th Street, San Jose.



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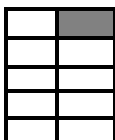
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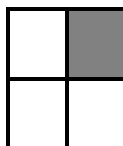
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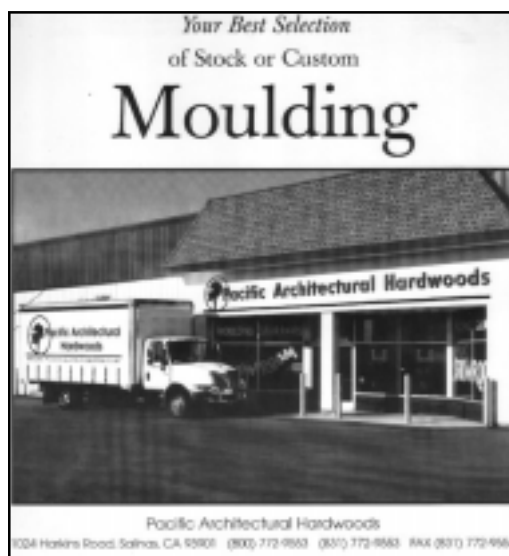
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2005 MEMBERS

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS: Ellen Baron, Carlton Craighead, Marilyn Dorsa, Pam Marks, Irene Miles, John Mitchell, Lynn Robinson, Dianne Saichek, Elizabeth Stearns, and Studio S Squared

RENEWING MEMBERS: Thank You!

Harriett Arnold, Pat Baio, Lorie Bird, Mike Borbely, John and Christine Davis, Kay Marie Gutknecht, Edna Harrison, Susan Hartt, Leslie Levitt, Patti Massey, Donna Miguelgorry, Don and Joyce Mirassou, Julia O'Keefe, Pat Olson, Lisa Hettler-Smith, Rebecca Smith, Mary Beth Train, Evelyn M. Ucovich, Audrey Unruh, Nancy Valby, Gordon and Marcia Vosti, Joseph and Edith Walter, Shaun Welch, Benton and MaryLou White

LIFETIME MEMBERS: Susan Brandt-Hawley, Greg Casella, Tom Simon & Keith Watt



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PAC*SJ Loses Executive Director



Alex Marthews

projects moving forward.

Alex informed the Board that he would be leaving because his wife, Catherine Tucker, who recently received her PhD from Stanford, had accepted an assistant professorship in the Marketing Department at MIT. Alex and Catherine have moved to Boston and bought a beautiful home that was built in 1926. Alex is now Executive Director of the Waltham Alliance to Create Housing (WATCH), a non-profit community development corporation (CDC) founded in 1988 to preserve and promote affordable housing and to promote economic opportunities for low and moderate income residents.

Alex came to us with a wealth of experience in improving California cities having served as the Public Education and Outreach Director for Housing California, and as the Executive Director of a nonprofit specializing in historical theater. He holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy from UC Berkeley, focusing on city and regional planning, and Master's and Bachelor's degrees in English from Cambridge University in the UK. Alex and his wife Catherine resided and worked in the Bay Area for six years, and were dedicated advocates of preserving the historic fabric of the Bay Area's unique and beautiful cities.

Our thanks to Alex for his outstanding service to PAC*SJ and the community. We wish Alex and Catherine the best of luck and much happiness with their new and exciting positions!

Good luck Alex and Catherine!

BOARD AND STAFF REPORT

PAC*SJ Welcomes Our New Office Manager



Kathleen Pinna

Kathy is a native San Joséan who has seen the Santa Clara Valley change from a place of orchards and farms to a place of industry and innovation and in the process becoming one of the largest cities in California. As a child she lived in the middle of a peach orchard in Cupertino and has also resided in Willow Glen,

Cambrian Park, and Saratoga. While she is proud of the Valley's growth, she is especially proud of the efforts that we have taken to preserve the unique character that has always been a part of San Jose. She found that taking her son to visit historical sites such as the Peralta Adobe, the Fallon House, History Park, Prusch Farm, New Almaden, and the Ainsley house when he was young instilled in him a reverence for the past that is rare in young adults. She says "I would very much like him to be able to take his own children to places that I knew and loved growing up, thus seeing first hand what San Jose was like 'in the old days.'"

Kathy is an amateur history and archaeology buff. She, her sister (PAC*SJ member Pam Marks), and her son Daniel Pinna co-founded a website, www.AncientFaces.com, that allows people to share pictures of their family history for free. (Check out the site and view a great picture of a blacksmith shop in San Jose - Michells Blacksmith Shop. Or, perform a search for San Jose and find a picture of the Cottle Sisters circa 1900 in front of their Evergreen home.)

Kathy has an extensive background in office management, has owned and run several small businesses and possesses excellent computer skills – especially in website development and the creation of marketing materials. She attended the University of California at Berkeley. Her organizational skills, local connections, and diverse business background will be a benefit to PAC*SJ.

Welcome aboard Kathy!!

Our New Board Member Sherry Hitchcock



Sherry Hitchcock

Sherry Hitchcock is a broker associate with Alain Pinel Realtors. She and her husband, Albert, a general contractor, enjoy restoring vintage homes. They have just completed the restoration of a Victorian house. Sherry is chairperson of the Service Learning Partnership, a program sponsored by PAC*SJ that helps neighborhoods inventory their homes in preparation for qualification as

conservation or historic districts. This program uses volunteers from local colleges who work in conjunction with historic consultants. In addition, Sherry is interested in encouraging homeowners to use the Mills Act to obtain property tax reductions for historic properties. You may meet Sherry in your neighborhood speaking on the results of studies nationwide, showing that historic conservation status is good for property values.



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TAKE AN HISTORIC TOUR OF YOUR OWN HOME

Have you ever visited a house museum or taken an historic house tour? Touring a house museum or historic house can take one back in time to the period the house was constructed. It can show us all the changes the house has undergone as styles changed and innovations were incorporated into the house. We are often in awe of the quality of "common" hardware or the artistic craftsmanship found in the construction of old houses. These are the same items currently sold as antiques or "custom made." Each of our houses holds interesting items. Each of our homes also has a history. Take a look around, there's another world surrounding your daily life.

Your house is a style related to a specific period in time. It could be a Queen Anne Victorian of the late 1890's, an Arts & Crafts bungalow of the 1920's, a colonial revival of 1910, 1940 or the 1970's, each with elements particular to the time of construction.

Every element found on or in the house is a clue to the time of construction. Each element was designed with a specific purpose and constructed of a material that was suitable and available for that purpose. The funny cabinet in the kitchen with slotted shelves could be an old cooling cabinet that vented to the fresh air outside and kept the fruits and vegetables fresh. That "popcorn" ceiling shows a cost savings in labor, added insulation and gives the room a contemporary feel (at least in the 1960's). Yes, these are the things that end up in house museums.

If your house has any age on it, many of its interesting features may be hidden under layers of paint or covered in newer materials applied to cover that "out of date" style. The brass ball tipped hinges may be hiding under all that beige paint. Today you can buy them in salvage yards or pay a premium price through a high-end retailer. Many of the fanciful historic window styles or even the "plain" wooden door styles are only available today when custom made. Unfortunately, today's custom made wood products rarely have the quality of old growth wood.

Floor plans were designed with a purpose. Understanding the purpose may allow you to adapt "today's lifestyle" to the existing plan versus destroying



*PAC*SJ Vice-President Joe Melehan's home in Willow Ranch as seen on the Willow Ranch House Tour.*

Size and ornamentation are not requirements for a historic house tour: even the smallest houses have the same components of the largest mansions. Take a look around, you are living in an historic house. Show off what you own. You'll be surprised at the increase in value your house will gain and the enjoyment you will have just by keeping it the way it was when it was built.

Join me in upcoming issues of Continuity as we take the historic house tour of your house.

NORMAN FINNANCE,



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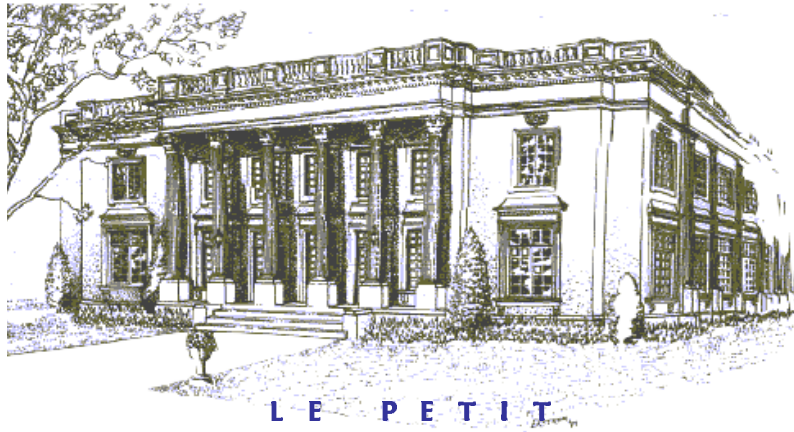
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Editors: Don Carloni, Gayle Frank, Dawn Hopkins & Kathy Pinna

Please submit your letters, comments and suggestions
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THEY LEFT THEIR MARK: JOSEPH O. MCKEE, SAILOR/ARCHITECT

Joseph O. McKee was a pioneer architect who came to designing buildings after years as both a sailor on the Bay, and a farmer in East San Jose. Born in Cromwell, Connecticut on May 7, 1831 to a sea-faring family, J.O, as he was called, had the standard education of the time, followed by two and one-half years as a cabinet maker's apprentice.

In 1849, after hearing of the California gold strike, he joined his ship captain father in a voyage around the Horn to California, arriving in May of 1850. After several attempts to find diggings, they decided instead to make their fortune delivering goods by schooner to cities around the Bay. One of their jobs was moving the state capitol from San Jose to Vallejo.

The senior McKee sent for the rest of his family, but he died before their arrival, leaving the responsibility for their care to his twenty-one year old son. J.O settled on, and later purchased, a portion of the Josiah Beldon ranch that was just east of Coyote Creek and on a road that is now named for the McKee family. He found success in the propagation and growing of fruit trees, and the sale of his produce to San Francisco markets. He was also the first to introduce the cast iron plow to the valley.

In the 1870's, J.O. opened a carpenter shop and lumber supply store at Santa Clara and Second Streets. Soon he was taking contracts for building homes and commercial buildings. In the early days most builders were their own architects: McKee didn't advertise himself as an architect until 1881.

Considering what we know of his accomplishments, we can easily deduce that he was a master of the art. Among his structures that still exist are the commercial buildings on East Santa Clara Street behind the old Bank of America tower. These are soon to be restored with the help of a Redevelopment Agency grant. One of the buildings still has the antique Firato Delicatessen sign. He also designed the old Farmer's Union Building and structures on Fountain Alley.



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JOSEPH O. McKEE



Rucker Mansion is located 418 S. 3rd Street.

Rucker Mansion and Yacht Club

J.O. McKee's greatest gift to the city and the most brilliant example of his skill is the ornate Queen Anne mansion on South 3rd Street that was built for the Rucker family. The cabinet maker's skills are evident in the many delicate exterior details of the balustrades, friezes and porch columns. This gracious home has been well-maintained by the owner.

Contact Jack at
jackdouglas@earthlink.net
for copies of his new book,
Historical Highlights of Santa Clara County!

J.O. never gave up his love for sailing, and he became a founder of the South Bay Yacht Club in Alviso. He built his own forty-two foot sailboat, the Camarada, and sailed it often on the Bay. He also designed and built the club house for the group. This 120 year old classic, which has been moved several times to make way for the ever higher levees, now sits doggedly atop the levee looking out over the Bay. Although there are problems getting in and out of the harbor, the club is as active today as in the past.

Lack of academic training was never an obstacle for McKee, nor was it a deterrent for new young architects who needed a mentor. Both Frank Wolfe and Charles McKenzie, two of the most talented and prolific architects in San Jose, did their apprenticeships in McKee's office.

J.O. died on April 21, 1907. He was a true pioneer in every sense of the word.

JACK DOUGLAS



South Bay Yacht Club is located in Alviso.

Photo by Eric Carlson

HISTORY TODAY: Reprints of Mercury News Articles by Joanne Grant

TALE OF BURIED GOLD MARKS S.J. BIRTHDAY

Originally published Nov. 22, 1994

Juan Francisco Bernal was one of the men who helped get San Jose started back in the 1770s.

He didn't settle here, according to one of his descendants, but he was part of the group that helped establish the pueblo in late November 1777 so that the presidios in San Francisco and Monterey would have a reliable source of food. San Jose was California's first civil settlement. Peralta adobe is the only structure left from the Spanish pueblo period.



Peralta Adobe; the oldest and last tangible structure from early San Jose

While Juan Francisco Bernal didn't stay here, his coming to California was the beginning of a dynasty that survives today in his 10th-generation descendants. Several of his offspring did eventually settle here, with some of them owning land around San Jose's plaza. One of his children, Jose Joaquin Bernal, was granted the 9,647-acre Rancho Santa Teresa in the 1830s, several years after Bernal settled on it.

Santa Teresa, part of which is preserved today as a county park, was the subject of a series of fascinating

stories that have developed over the years. Most are believed to be true. One of the most intriguing is the tale of Changarra's gold.

Changarra was an itinerant French saddlemaker who came to the rancho in the early 1830s, just the right time for a man of his skill. The Bernals were breeding horses and a saddler's services were welcomed. Changarra fashioned serviceable saddles, not the fancy gold-and-silver-trimmed ones used by Spanish dons for special occasions.

He was apparently good at his craft. Besides supplying the needs of the Bernal family, Changarra made enough to sell elsewhere. He kept accumulating the money he made and, since there were no banks, he preserved it by burying it, relocating the cache from time to time.

Shortly before his last sales trip to Santa Barbara, Changarra dug up his \$10,000 hoard from under the floor of his cabin, reportedly to make a small loan.

Antonio Bernal watched and told the story to his nephew, Pedro, who repeated it to a reporter for a Mercury Herald story in 1934.

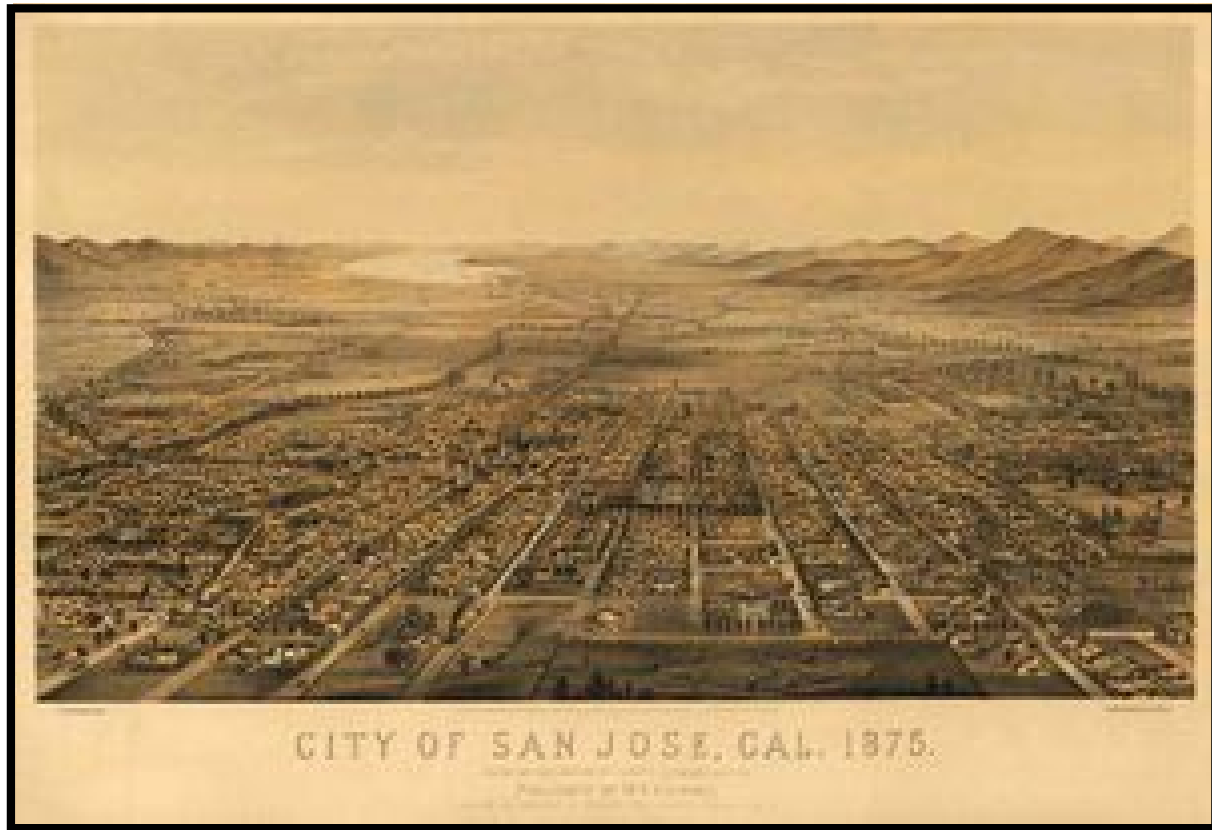
It was said that every time Changarra handled his treasure, he found a new hiding place for it, Pedro Bernal recalled. It is certain that he followed that tradition on this occasion. The problem was that he didn't tell anyone where he'd decided that new spot should be.

But Changarra never returned from that sales trip to the southland. He was on his way home when he was murdered as he slept beneath a tree, using his saddle for a pillow.

Pedro Bernal said Changarra did not have his \$10,000 in gold with him when he was killed. The question haunting treasure hunters since is simple: Where is it?

Over the years, the search has gone on. People with machines have tried. And tried. Pedro Bernal recalled

(Continued on page 22)



Post card of the City of San Jose in 1875.

(Continued from page 21)

one machine that looked like "a soldering iron suspended on whalebone springs" that he knew worked.

When the searchers brought the machine to the ranch, Pedro Bernal dropped a gold piece, covered it with dirt, then directed the hunt toward it.

"There was no mistaking the instrument when it was held over the 'treasure' I had dropped. Its gyrations roused the searchers to a fever of excitement," he told a reporter in 1934. As the searchers armed themselves with picks and shovels, Pedro Bernal quietly retrieved the gold piece. The digging went on for days. Other machines found scraps of discarded iron or steel, but none pinpointed the gold.

Some searchers who had only shovels sought the treasure, and Pedro Bernal remembered one who struck something -- rendering the searcher breathless

with anticipation. He redoubled his efforts, digging frantically until he uncovered an Indian skull.

Treasure hunters also sought the help of psychics in their search for Changarra's gold.

None of them ever found the gold, but there is a chance a later searcher did. Paul Bernal, a descendant of those early Bernals, said he received a call a few years ago from a man who would not identify himself. The caller told Bernal a friend of his had found the treasure in the late 1970s.

Bernal, a deputy district attorney, said he's never been able to verify the report.

JOANNE GRANT

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The Preservation Action Council of San José (PAC*SJ) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation dedicated to preserving San José's architectural heritage through education, advocacy and events.

We believe that historic preservation is **good for our quality of life and good for business.** We aim to integrate a strong commitment to historic preservation into the land use and development decisions of the City of San José that affect historic resources, as well as into the private decisions of property owners and developers. We try to bring owners and developers together to create historically sensitive projects that make economic sense.

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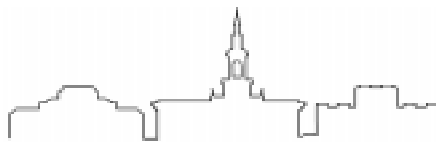
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