



# CONTINUITY

Volume 31, No. 4

*Preservation Action Council of San Jose*  
Dedicated to Preserving San Jose's Architectural Heritage

Winter 2020

## COVER STORY

### 1 EIR Identifies Historic Sites

## PRESERVATION ISSUES/NEWS

- 2 Executive Director Message
- 5 Digital Billboards Proposal
- 6 Pig Sign Featured at Neon Conference
- 7 Scheller House Ready for Use
- 7 PAC\*SJ Board Opening
- 8 SJ Chooses New HPO
- 8 Christmas in the Park at History San Jose
- 9 Lick Observatory Survives

## PAC\*SJ NEWS

- 10 On the RADAR
  - Diridon Station
  - Former Bank of America
  - W. San Carlos Project
  - 4th St. & St. John Project
  - Former City Hall
- 11 PAC\*SJ Calendar
- 12 PAC\*SJ Successful Fall Sale
- 12 PAC\*SJ Holiday Boutique
- 13 The Naglee Mansion
- 16 In Memory of Liv Ames
- 16 Notable Quotable

## PRESERVATION ARTICLES

- 17 Exploring San Jose Landmarks
  - Towne Theatre
- 19 Membership Form
- 19 Legacy Giving
- 20 Board Roster

## EIR Identifies Historic Sites

The 1350-page Draft EIR (Environmental Impact Report) for the 81-acre Downtown West Project proposed by Google has identified only nine historic resources under CEQA within its boundaries. The report was released in October 2020. Here is a summary of those nine historic sites.

1) The first resource is a grouping of three historic homes on one parcel, appearing eligible for Candidate City Landmark status at **559, 563 and 567 W. Julian Street**. They were all built between ca. 1883 to 1892 and are described as Folk Victorian houses that historically were occupied by working class residents. Character-defining features include wood channel drop siding, front facing gable with bay window, spindle-work, decorative wood trim, and prominent front entries.



*567 W. Julian Street—one of three homes.*

2) The next historic resource is the 1941 Advance Metal Spinning Building at **343 N.**



*343 N. Montgomery Street.*

**Montgomery St.** with an attractive Streamline Moderne style. Features include horizontal decorative elements (speedlines), horizontal paned multi-lite windows, recessed entry, full-width transom, and smooth stucco cladding.

3) This third structure (1944), Circus Ice Cream, next door to the building above, sits at **345 N. Montgomery St.**, and is also an industrial building with a Streamline Moderne design. This building is physically connected to 343 N. Montgomery and also features horizontal speedlines, a front awning, stucco cladding, and typical windows of the Streamline Moderne design. Both these buildings were constructed by machine shop owner Edwin B. Pray. Previous analysis determined that both 343 and 345 buildings are eligible for City Landmark designation because of the architectural elements and

*(Cont'd p. 3)*

# Message from our Executive Director



**Ben Leech,  
E.D., PAC\*SJ**

"Cities need old buildings so badly it is probably impossible for vigorous streets and districts to grow without them.... Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings." —Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1961.

San Jose stands on

the brink of immense change, as anyone following development news in the city over the past few years can attest. Even in these uncertain economic times, major development proposals are plowing forward, led by Google's ambitious plans for the Diridon Station area (see this issue's cover story). But as San Jose eagerly awaits the promises of this 21st-century downtown expansion, it would be wise to remember an "old idea" that writer and urbanist Jane Jacobs first put to paper nearly sixty years ago. Cities need old buildings too. Not because they are passive reflections of the past, but because they inspire new ideas and sustain vibrant cultures in ways that places built from scratch do not.

Thankfully, Google's plans for the Diridon area *do* recognize the potential for at least a few of the buildings currently surrounding Diridon Station, including the landmark San Jose Water Company on Santa Clara Street and two former metal/iron works (Kearney's and Hellwig's) along S. Montgomery Street. But the vast majority of existing structures across the 81-acre site—more than 30 buildings in total—are currently proposed for demolition. The Sunlite Baking Company, an Art Deco gem that gave rise to KNTV? Gone. Patty's Inn, one of the city's oldest taverns? Gone. Poor House Bistro, the popular restaurant and live music venue? Gone. Democracy Hall, a mid-

century modern icon and labor landmark? Gone. At least seven Victorian and Craftsman workers' cottages? All gone, unless Google and the City reconsider their current plans and recognize the immense potential of these places in sustaining and fostering culture. Some, but not all, of these threatened buildings are officially recognized as historic resources, but that is beside the point. For Google's Downtown West vision to succeed, it must recognize "old buildings" of all stripes as indispensable assets in creating a vibrant, engaging, and resilient city.

Unfortunately, the biggest threat to the Diridon area is not even Google or its surrounding development. In a slow-motion train wreck of poor city planning, Diridon Station itself, the beloved Italian Renaissance Revival train depot that has served as the symbolic gateway to San Jose since its construction in 1935, could very well be lost, too. Located just outside Google's development area, it is threatened instead by grandiose plans for an ultra-modern station expansion to accommodate high-speed rail and a new BART station. While explicit demolition plans have not been announced, no effort has been made to ensure that the National Register-listed landmark be

(Cont'd p. 5)



is published quarterly by the

## **PRESERVATION ACTION COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE**

The opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of PAC\*SJ.

Editor: Gayle Frank

Please submit your letters and comments to [info@preservation.org](mailto:info@preservation.org), 408-998-8105 or to 1650 Senter Rd., San Jose, CA 95112-2599

© 2020 Preservation Action Council of San Jose

**PAC\*SJ is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization**



# Historic Sites (Cont'd)



**345 N. Montgomery Street.**

as good examples of the WWII/post-war era neighborhoods.

4 ) Moving south, fourth on the list is **40 S. Montgomery St.** along with 55 and 57 S. Autumn St. to the rear, all comprising the former Kearney Pattern Works and Foundry.

The site contains

attached buildings built between 1922 and ca. 1993. There are entrances on both Montgomery and Autumn Streets. The oldest of the buildings from 1922 faces Montgomery, has a wood-frame, a gabled roof, and wood/corrugated sheet metal cladding with various windows. This structure, plus an outbuilding (1938) and southern addition (1948), are considered eligible for National, State and/or City historic listings because the nearly 100-year old company played “an important role in producing specialized tools and equipment” for the agricultural and defense industries through WWII. Alfred Kearney established the business in 1922 and it stayed in the family until sold in late 2019.



**40 S. Montgomery Street.**

5) Fifth on the list is the San Jose Water Works building at **374 W. Santa Clara St.** This 1934 City Landmark is “a distinctive type of office building for its period,” and is described as both Moderne and Spanish Colonial Revival design. The handsome two-story rectangular structure was designed by prominent San Jose architect, Ernest N. Curtis, and built in two phases in reinforced concrete with red terra cotta tile roofs. Ornamentation includes frieze bands, diamond and chevron panels, and

water related themes in bas-relief patterns. The sculpture above the entrance features a ship’s bow plowing through waves.

The Water Works (pictured right) is the oldest privately owned water utility in California, established in 1866 and therefore its history and architecture deter-

mine that the building is eligible for National and State historic listings. The complex was designated a City Landmark in 1991 and was featured in the Fall, 2013 *Continuity*, pages 20-22.

6) The sixth resource, the former Hellwig Ironworks two-story building (below), sits at **150 S. Montgomery Street** where the street meets S. Autumn at Park Ave. Ironworker Harold Hellwig built the structure ca. 1934 with an addition in 1944, using clinker bricks, adding brick window-sills and brick door trim. A plaster shield (symbolizing ironmongery) on the west façade reproduced a centuries old sign announcing to the public that here, metal fabrication took place. Other features are, large steel-sash industrial windows allowing good natural lighting, circular air vents, an open interior design, and simple gable roofs. Navlet’s Flowers occupied the building from 1970 until 2005. Taiko Drumming currently occupies the space. Historic evaluations determined the building is not eligible for National or State historic listings, but is eligible for

(Cont'd pg. 4)



# Historic Sites (Cont'd)

City Landmark designation as a good example of a non-typical industrial building constructed during the early twentieth century with the use of distinctive building materials.

7) Across the street from Hellwig's, the Sunlite Bakery (below) was built ca. 1936 at **145 S. Montgomery Street**, constructed with board-formed concrete. The striking façade



illustrates Art Moderne (also referred to as Streamline Moderne) design with its scalloped cornice, stepped entrance with a fluted rounded canopy, fluted pilasters separating recessed windows, and glass bricks at the south bay wall.

Well-known and accomplished architect Ralph Wyckoff designed the building. The Gilliland family built the bakery but sold it in 1966, focusing their interests in their KNTV station and Gill Cable. The structure is eligible for National and State historic listings and/or City Landmark designation because of its association with a prominent local family and its Art Moderne design by a local notable architect.

8) Just north of the former Sunlite Bakery building stands the famous **Dancing Pig/Stephen's Meat Products Sign**, with which most PAC\* SJ members will be familiar after our two-year campaign to



repair and relight it. Its history and 2019 restoration have been well documented in past *Continuities*. The neon sign has now been identified as a contributor to a Commercial Signage Discontiguous Historic District. It is listed as a Contributing Site Structure on the San Jose Historic Resources Inventory.

9) Finally, the former one-story union hall at **580 Lorraine Avenue** (below) is composed of two components, one a rhomboid shape, the other a trapezoid. Each section has a shed-like slanted roof and constructed with concrete brick. The main entry, surrounded with glass, faces north. Built in 1961 and designed by Harry Hill and John Kruse, the site, also known as Democracy Hall, was a dispatching and meeting hall for the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. Later the building



**580 Lorraine Avenue—Democracy Hall** (Photos: Gayle Frank)

was occupied by a church but has been vacant since 2007. The structure is eligible for National, State and/or City historic listings since it is a rare non-residential example by master architect Hill and associate Kruse, and is the only known extant Hill design in San Jose.

What is proposed for these nine historic resources in the transformation of Google's 81 acres? The Draft EIR suggests that the former Kearney Pattern and Metal Works could be relocated on site. The Water Works is currently being renovated for adaptive reuse and the Hellwig Ironworks/Navlet building is to remain; however of concern, one or more additions are proposed to create an arts/cultural center. (Cont'd p. 5)



---

## ED Message (Cont'd)

---

preserved in the new station layout. Dozens of cities across the globe have successfully incorporated their historic stations into modern new transportation hubs, including Denver's recent award-winning Union Station restoration and expansion. Ironically, a photo of Denver's new station graces the cover of San Jose's recently-released Diridon Station Area Plan (<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=65897>), but with the historic Union Station itself cropped out!

Intentional or not, it is an apt illustration of the fact that Diridon Station is being treated as an afterthought. Quite literally, planners only plan to think about the station *after* all the other pieces of Downtown West—Google, high-speed rail, BART, etc.—are in place. By that time, there will likely be no room left.

So let's listen to Jane Jacobs and her 60-year-old wisdom, before it's too late. San Jose needs old buildings, *especially* in our new downtown.

— Ben Leech,  
PAC\*SJ Executive Director

---

## Digital Billboard Proposal

---

The City of San Jose is considering amendments to its sign code to allow animated digital billboards along freeways, and building-mounted digital signs downtown or in North San Jose. Digital advertising on bus shelters and other street furniture citywide could also be permitted. These amendments would reverse a 35-year ban on new billboards in the city, with potentially dire impacts on historic structures, residential neighborhoods, public safety, and the environment. We urge residents to join PAC\*SJ in opposing these dangerous and misguided proposals, which are also opposed by the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, and others.

If the City plans are approved, major billboard companies will be able to construct large, bright, electronic advertising panels that will affect our community by lowering property values, which damages homeowners and reduces property tax rolls in the long run; negatively impacting historic buildings and neighborhoods; degrading the appearance and character of the city; posing a safety hazard through driver distractions; and harming local ecosystems through light pollution, causing significant disruption to wildlife and impacting human health.

Hundreds of American towns have banned billboards and some states have banned billboards statewide. The billboard companies give nothing back to the community but we suffer the consequences of these billboards. ☹

---

## Historic Sites (Cont'd)

---

The Dancing Pig sign will be relocated, but if a site is not established at the time of the relocation, then the sign would be stored indoors for up to ten years!

Relocation or demolition appears to be the two options for the remaining sites at W. Julian St., N. Montgomery St., and the Sunlite Bakery (partial) on S. Montgomery; 580 Lorraine St. is destined for demolition.

The Draft EIR also describes 14 non-CEQA structures that are listed on or are eligible for the San Jose Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) that are in or nearby the proposed Downtown West project. Only four of these identified as Structures of Merit are within the boundaries of the proposed project site and are recommended for demolition. They are: Puccio Machine & Welding Works (1941) at 357 N. Montgomery St.;

residence at 35 S. Autumn Street (1880); Poor House Bistro (1910) at 91 S. Autumn St.; and Patty's Inn (c.1890) at 102 S. Montgomery Street.

The Diridon Station plans, of which preservationists are extremely concerned, are not included in the EIR since it does not fall within the Google property. Its fate, to be determined by the Diridon Integrated Station Concept Plan, is still unknown at this time.

The Downtown West Project is a huge undertaking and the Draft EIR is overwhelming. Plans can change and analysis for approvals will take time. As always, PAC\*SJ will fight for saving as much of the Diridon Area historic fabric as possible. ☹

— Gayle Frank

# Pig Sign Featured at Neon Festival



Left, pages in the 16-page 'Neon Speaks' Souvenir Booklet' featuring San Jose's Dancing Pig Sign.

Below, cover of the 'Neon Speaks' souvenir program.

The *Neon Speaks Festival & Symposium* held virtually the last weekend in September and the first weekend of October 2020, featured our own Dancing Pig Sign on S. Montgomery Street.

The Co-Producers and hosts of the neon festival were Al Barna and Randall Ann Homan from *San Francisco Neon*. Forty-nine presentations over the span of five days included interesting videos and chats from all over the country.

On Opening Night, for the Preservation Forum, PAC\*SJ presented its video on the successful story of the Pig Sign restoration due to the enthusiastic community support.

Later, PAC\*SJ President André Luthard spoke and answered questions.

The Pig Sign video presented at the Symposium can be viewed at [www.preservation.org/neon](http://www.preservation.org/neon).

The Souvenir Booklet was mailed to participants after the festival. Two pages in the 16-page Souvenir Booklet also features the Pig Sign (pictured above).

Participants seemed very interested in our story and ordered our Pig Sign t-shirts and buttons.

Fans of the Dancing Pig Sign and other vintage neon should visit [www.preservation.org/neon](http://www.preservation.org/neon) in early December for an exciting new line of PAC\*SJ enamel pins, great for stocking stuffers! ☘





# Scheller House Ready for Use



*The SJSU Scheller House at 10th & San Antonio Streets.  
Final resting place—brought back to life after  
a challenging move in January, 2019.*

*(Photo: Gayle Frank)*

The 1904 Scheller House at San Jose State University was relocated on campus in January, 2019. The major move to its new home at S. 10th and San Antonio Streets was quite a feat to watch. Its new location is more fitting for such a handsome house. The last of its transformation and landscaping appears to be completed and the Scheller House is finally ready for business as offices for the Associated Students as soon as SJSU returns to normalcy.

The house is a rare example of the prominent architect Theodore Lenzen and is described as California Colonial Revival style with an unusual asymmetric façade.

The Scheller House is special to PAC\*SJ since we fought to save it in the 1990s. It finally was restored, rotated and then occupied as the offices of Associated Students by 2000. It sat just north of the Duncan Hall Science Building on the SJSU Campus. Kudos to SJSU for a job well done! ☘

## Opening PAC\*SJ Board of Directors

The members of the Board of Directors are the core of PAC\*SJ. They formulate the overall strategy, secure PAC\*SJ's financial stability, and contribute their ideas, expertise and resources to make San Jose a better place.

If you might be interested in serving on a committee, attending a monthly Board meeting and events, and promoting historic preservation to the general public and city officials, please go to [www.preservation.org/volunteer](http://www.preservation.org/volunteer) to review the Board member expectations and application. If this sounds like a good fit, email your application to [info@preservation.org](mailto:info@preservation.org). We will contact you to discuss the next steps.

## AMAZONSMILE BENEFITS PAC\*SJ

For **eligible** purchases at AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the customer's selected charitable organization.

Go to [preservation.org](http://preservation.org) and click the Amazon link. Select your items and complete your purchases as you normally would.

---

# City of San Jose Chooses New HPO

---

The San Jose Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement has employed a new Historic Preservation Officer, Vicrim Chima, who began his position in San Jose on October 19th.

Vicrim was born and raised on a farm in Yuba City and attended the University of California at Berkeley, studying political science and history. Then in Pasadena, he specialized in Urban Design, Historic Preservation, and Long Range Planning for nearly a decade.

This work inspired Vicrim to pursue his graduate degree, and he was awarded a scholarship to Villanova University in Philadelphia, where he studied History and Material Culture (the theoretical basis of Historic Preservation). He also spent a semester studying American Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design.

Vicrim returned to his hometown in California during the summer of 2017, when he was awarded a fellowship to work with faculty at UC Davis to produce a National

Register Nomination for Nagar Kirtan, a religious festival and procession that annually draws tens of thousands of visitors to Yuba City from around the world.

Since graduating, Vicrim has served as a planning manager and consultant for Yuba City. He has over 13 years combined experience in Planning, Historic Preservation and Design.

On a personal note, the Planning Department tells us Vicrim's additional interests:

- ⇒ He is a huge sports fan (he apologizes in advance to all Stanford and Giants fans because he is a Cal and Dodger fan).
- ⇒ He played baseball and tennis growing up.
- ⇒ He has three sisters, two of whom are twins.
- ⇒ He has been to over 300 concerts on three continents.
- ⇒ He paints and is a published poet and author.
- ⇒ The coolest thing he's ever done is run with the bulls at the Festival of San Fermin in Pamplona, Spain. ☘

*Source: San Jose Planning Department*

---

## “Christmas in the Park” at History Park

---



History San Jose is excited that “Christmas in the Park” and History San Jose have teamed up this year to create “Christmas in the Park – A Drive Thru Holiday!” at History Park, 635 Phelan Avenue.

The event is taking place from November 27 through January 3, from 4:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Tickets (required) are on sale now. **Visit Christmas in the Park's website, [www.christmasinthepark.com/](http://www.christmasinthepark.com/)** for more information and to reserve tickets. ☘



# Lick Observatory Survives

The rare lightening storm that assaulted Santa Clara County on August 16th started multiple California fires (SCU Lightning Complex fire). By August 19<sup>th</sup> the historic Lick Observatory was one of the near victims—the fires coming close to damaging the historic buildings, the telescopes and their domes and the scientific equipment.

Cal Fire and other organization crews worked tirelessly day and night to reduce the threats. Over a dozen fire engines and about 60 personnel were on site. Flames of 150 to 200 feet encroached. A strike team was stationed for

days after the threat was reduced to ensure no further flare-ups. Lick Superintendent Kostas Chloros remained on site to coordinate the fight against the fires. Kudos to all who helped saved the historic Observatory.

One unused residence was burned to the ground and several other residences were damaged. Observatories around the world sent messages of concern to the members of Lick Observatory, the world famous 1888 astronomical research facility. ☼



*Above, Lick Observatory Camera showing the smoke and fire encroaching on the facility on August 20, 2020.*



*Left, a week later showing surrounding ground, charred black after burning.*

*(Photo from Matt Radovan, Lick Observatory)*

# ON THE RADAR



## Diridon Station

The draft amended Diridon Station Area Plan (DSAP) was released to the Public in October. PAC\*SJ has repeatedly requested information on preserving the historic Station, but apparently none exists. There are 17 objectives in the Plan. The 11<sup>th</sup> and only objective dealing with the Station states, “Expand and redesign Diridon Station to create a well-integrated center of architectural and functional significance.” Other references on page 23 mention that one of the Plan’s major projects is the Diridon Integrated Station Concept Plan (DISC) to “expand and redesign Diridon Station to create a well-integrated center of architectural and functional significance.” Further on page 23, the Plan states, “Partner Agencies...developed a spatial vision for a new and expanded station.” Perusing the 135-page DSAP Plan, occasional references to the Station offer little insight on the future of our historic Diridon Station. We keep asking but get no answers.

## Former Bank of Italy/Bank of America Building

PAC\*SJ submitted correspondence to the San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission stressing our strong support to rehabilitate the historic former Bank of America Building, a City Landmark and contributor to the San Jose Downtown Historic District. However, we feel strongly that the project must conform to the Secretary of Interior’s Standards when modifying its design. Our concerns include: 1) Removing and replacing the windows, decorative cast metal mullions and granite window bases at ground level on First Street. 2) Adding clerestory windows into the historic terra cotta entablature at attic level which would remove historic fabric, alter the appearance and damage nearby elements. 3) Potential loss of historic interior features such as the historic banking hall and office lobby. 4) Addition of an exterior stair tower that is not compatible with the buildings historic character. This stair structure does not respond to any of the building’s existing historic elements and obscures views of its details. In addition, PAC\*SJ encourages the developers to commission a comprehensive historic structure analysis report, and repair weathered, damaged terra cotta elements.

## Hotel Project at W. San Carlos Street

A proposal for an eight-story hotel requires demolishing a historic tank house on Josefa Street and a corner store/residence and business next door at 491-499 W. San Carlos Street. The historic report states that the two together (tank house and corner structure) are a Candidate City Landmark. PAC\*SJ would like to see more research on local tank houses to determine how rare this tank house is, and that alternatives to demolition be explored. These assets are a reminder of San Jose’s agricultural past and vernacular construction traditions.

## Fourth & St. John Streets Project

PAC\*SJ supports, with modifications, the Fourth and St. John Student Housing project for a 23-story apartment tower. The parcel holds two historic homes. The project proposes to relocate the two structures from 146 and 152 N. Fourth Street onto N. Fifth Street where there is an empty lot. The two homes will be rehabilitated by the developer and will sit just to the east of the proposed project.

## Former City Hall, N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street

Santa Clara County owns the former San Jose City Hall on N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and is proposing to demolish the iconic mid-century structure, a symbol of San Jose’s growth and its status as a world metropolis at that time. PAC\*SJ feels it is premature to raze the historic building when no plans are proposed for the development of that site. Demolishing this building and leaving a vacant lot would set an adverse precedent. The cost of removing the building is estimated at \$5 million and far exceeds the annual maintenance costs for many years. PAC\*SJ has submitted its concerns to the County. ☘

## PAC\*SJ is Still Keeping An Eye On—



- Century 21
- Graves House
- Winchester Ranch Park
- St. James Park
- Wehner Mansion



# PAC\*SJ 2020-2021 Calendar

- Nov 27** **Christmas in the Park** at History Park, 635 Phelan Ave., San Jose. Drive through only.   
thru Jan 3 Must make reservations. \$10-\$20 per car. Runs through Jan. 3, 2021. See page 8.
- Dec 14** Monday, PAC\*SJ **Annual Meeting & Board Meeting**, 6:30—9:00 PM. Zoom meeting. Check website for link. Final vote for Board of Directors positions. Look for your e-ballot soon and vote!
- Jan 25** Monday, PAC\*SJ Board Meeting, 6:30—8:30 PM. History Park, 2nd Floor Firehouse.\*
- Feb 22** Monday, PAC\*SJ Board Meeting, 6:30—8:30 PM. History Park, 2nd Floor Firehouse.\*
- Mar 15** Monday, PAC\*SJ Board Meeting, 6:30—8:30 PM. History Park, 2nd Floor Firehouse.\*
- Mar 27** Sat. 10 AM. PAC\*SJ **Walking Tour** of St. James Historic District. Reserve spot at [www.preservation.org](http://www.preservation.org) after March 1. Limited space. \$10 members, \$15 non-members.
- Apr 19** Monday, PAC\*SJ Board Meeting, 6:30—8:30 PM. History Park, 2nd Floor Firehouse.\*
- Apr 24** Sat. 10 AM. PAC\*SJ **Walking Tour** of City View Plaza/Market St. Reserve spot at [www.preservation.org](http://www.preservation.org) after April 1. Limited space. \$10 members, \$15 non-members
- \* Board meeting may take place online or meet at a different location. Call to confirm.*

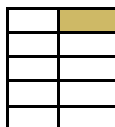
## PAC\*SJ During the Pandemic

Since the Covid-19 pandemic has descended upon us, PAC\*SJ has had to curtail its fundraising events, walking tours, member events, and most other get-togethers. We hope to bring back our activities in 2021. So stay tuned to our Eblasts, Facebook, website, postcards, and newsletter as we are able to move ahead with our events. It has been a sparse year and we are eager to get back to some kind of normal.

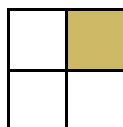
Be assured that PAC\*SJ is still meeting as a Board and with the Planning Department online or by phone. We continue to monitor and act on threats to our historic assets. We are still submitting letters to the city and keeping in touch with developers and partners. We have not gone away. PAC\*SJ wishes all of you well and hope you stay safe during the holidays. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

## ADVERTISE IN CONTINUITY!

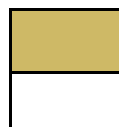
*Continuity* is distributed to over 500 San Jose preservationists, homeowners and decision-makers. It's a great way to get your message out to your best potential customers! For ads larger than the business card, you must supply camera-ready artwork, or PAC\*SJ can provide it at an additional charge.



**Business Card**  
Single issue \$50  
3 issues \$120



**1/4 Page**  
Single issue  
\$100



**1/2 Page**  
Single issue  
\$200



**Full Page**  
Single issue  
\$375

## Successful Fall Sale

Our September Treasure sale earned PAC\*SJ \$8000. It was a great sale with nice shoppers and quick-learning new volunteers. We ended up spreading our wares over four houses on Friday and Saturday.

We sold the tiny house, in the image of the San Jose Woman's Club landmark, to a family in the East Foothills as a chicken house. Thanks to Betty Sleeth for working with the bidders as well as chief cashier. And thanks to the San Jose Woman's Club for selecting PAC\*SJ as the recipient of the tiny house.

We sold most of the donations by Saturday afternoon; remainders were taken to Savers. We were given several boxes of ladies' clothes after the sale and delivered them to the Felton thrift store and fire station for donations to fire victims.

Many thanks to all our host houses and volunteers. We are a well-oiled machine! Our Volunteer Heroes: Sandy Swirsky, Lyle Merithew, Lucille Boone, Robert Carter, Marjorie Bennett, Mary Lou Mason, Marianne Salas, Lisa Wangsness, Gabrielle Solleder, Leslie Masunaga, Wini Leeds, Linda Faulkner and Dave, Ben Leech, Alice Gosak Gary, John Frolli, John Fioretta, Marilyn Messina, Betty Sleeth, André Luthard, Sylvia Carroll, Pat Rupel, Ron Hagen, Tom Aldridge, Jim Norvell, Rebecca Evans Acton, Rosie Gallipeau, Connie Folley, Rebecca Smith, Tim McAuliff, Steve Cohen, Dev Rendler, Efrat Shahar, Jan McDaniel, and Kaden Golda. ☿

—Patt Curia ,  
PAC\*SJ Donations Chair

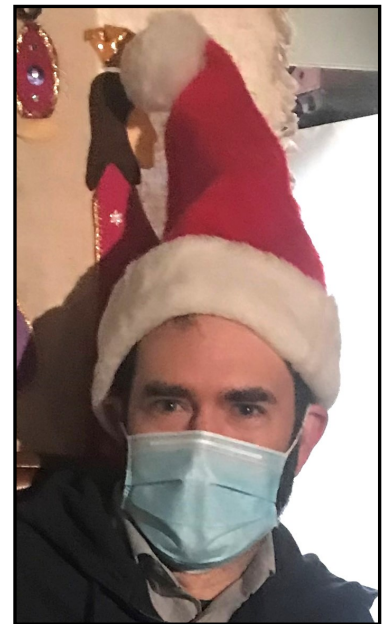
## PAC\*SJ Holiday Boutique

PAC\*SJ held a Christmas Boutique Sale on S. 15th Street on Nov. 20th and 21st. A 'Members Only' preview and sale was held on the Thursday, Nov. 20th from 4-7 pm. Cassie Kifer, author of "Secret San Jose," attended Thursday and Saturday to sign her books.

Gifts and Christmas decorations from beautiful to silly were for sale. It was enjoyable to see our members on the Thursday evening and then neighbors and friends on Friday and Saturday since we haven't had social events this year.

A special thanks goes to Lynda Sereno as our hostess who allowed us into her backyard for the week. Also thanks to Patt Curia's neighbors for allowing the remainders of the sale stored in their backyard for sorting.

The Nov. 20-21 Holiday Boutique earned over \$3100. We emptied the storage locker of all of the Christmas décor but that is being filled up with new donations! Volunteers included: Sandy Swirsky and Lyle Merithew, Gabby Soellerder, Ted Essy, Efrat Shahar, Lisa Wangsness, Rosie Gallipeau, Rose Vandomelon, MaryLou Mason, Marianne Salas, Rebecca Smith, Lynne Stephenson, Sylvia Carroll, John Frolli, Tim McAuliff, Steve Cohen, Leslie Masunaga, Lynda Sereno, Marilyn Messina, Walter Soellner, Ben Leech, Kathy Bunce Flood, Dev Rendler, Gary Hubbard, Cassie Kifer, Deborah Mills, Margie Bennett, Lucille Boone, Gayle Frank, Kayden Golda, Will Matlack, and me!



*Ben Leech, E.D., PAC\*SJ  
at PAC\*SJ's Christmas Boutique*

On a sad note, I report the death of Robert Carter's wife who passed away in early November. Robert is the "man with the truck" few people met as he preferred to deliver tables and boxes from storage before the sales. We miss Robert during this sad time but anticipate his return to the rummage sales next year. ☿ —Patt Curia

*Cassie Kifer offers signed copies  
of her "Secret San Jose"  
books at the PAC\*SJ  
Christmas Boutique.*



# The Naglee Mansion By April Halberstadt

The Naglee Mansion, one of Santa Clara Valley's most important historic houses, is located on the corner of 14th Street and San Fernando Street. It is one of a handful of Santa Clara Valley residences, along with the Gonzalez-Peralta Adobe and the Fallon Family Home, that tell an important story about early California life and people. The house is frequently called a mansion, but it is a rather modest structure.

The house was built by California pioneer Henry Morris Naglee (1815-1876) as a country home. At the time, it was the garden that was designed to impress the neighbors, not the house. Naglee was a plant collector and bought trees from around the world. It was the Naglee garden that demonstrated Santa Clara Valley as the Garden of Eden; any plant in the world could flourish in California.

Henry Morris Naglee, a native of Philadelphia, was an officer in the U.S. Army. His father was a successful lumber merchant and young Naglee was raised knowing trees. Young Naglee attended school at the United States Military Academy at West Point and trained in civil engineering. Like most of his fellow graduates from the class of 1835, Naglee left the military for a career in railroad construction, the fastest growing industry of that time. He went back to military service during the Mexican-America War (1846-1848) and came to California with Stevenson's Brigade. Naglee arrived in California at age thirty-two.

Naglee arrived in California as a soldier in 1847 just before gold was discovered. He returned to civilian life in 1848. Unlike many Argonauts, Naglee did not rush to the gold fields. Instead, he organized the first bank in California. Partnering with a former Army paymaster, he formed the

company of Naglee & Sinton, an exchange service for gold miners. Gold dust and nuggets could be exchanged for currency or stored in their vault.

As early as 1847, California newcomers were putting pressure on the officials of San Jose to sell the grazing lands of the pueblo. The privilege to purchase local land was allowed only to registered members of the pueblo. Naglee

partnered with a registered resident, vintner Pierre Sansevain, and the two acquired over three hundred acres just east of the San Jose pueblo. Naglee's share of the acreage, approximately 140 acres, would become Naglee Park. Naglee, Sansevain and Sansevain's father-in-law also purchased the Los Coches Rancho, which is now the Rose Garden and some of Willow Glen. Naglee Avenue

marks the western boundary of that purchase.

Naglee was very busy during the 1850s. He is credited with building San Francisco's first permanent business building, his bank at the corner of Merchant and Montgomery Streets. He helped establish the First California Troop, now known as the California National Guard. He owned one of San Francisco's earliest theaters and helped organize the Mechanics Institute, the first public library in San Francisco.

Naglee's garden and house in San Jose were inspired by another Santa Clara Valley garden, the 25-acre estate of Maj. Samuel Hensley. Hensley began his garden estate in 1853, recruiting a notable English landscape designer, James Lowe, from Boston.

*(Cont'd p. 14)*

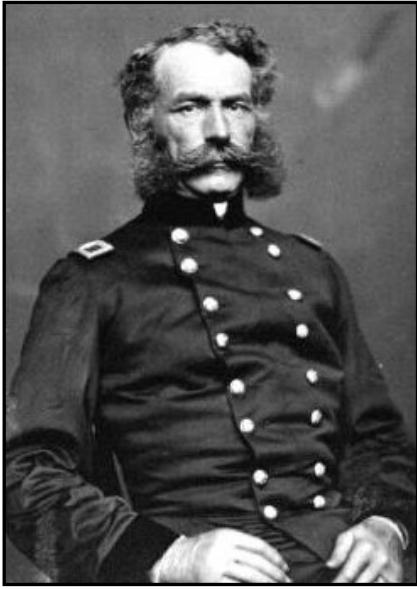


**The Naglee home in early years, Gothic style with much ornamentation. Built ca. 1865.** *(Photo: History San Jose)*

---

## Naglee (Cont'd)

---



**Henry Morris Naglee**

1815-1886 (Photo: Wikipedia)

After seeing the Hensley estate, Naglee also hired Lowe. During the 1850s, Naglee made several trips to Europe to acquire cuttings for his experimental vineyards. Early garden work included installation of an extensive irrigation system and acquisition of art work for the garden.

Historian Frederic Hall wrote in the *History of San Jose* that

there were seven artesian wells on the Naglee property, capable of supplying 100,000 gallons of water a day. One well fed an artificial pond and watered all of the Naglee vegetable gardens. The wells also supplied a decorative fountain and irrigated the vineyards. The experimental vineyard covered 75 acres, over half the estate. Naglee installed his vineyard beginning in 1858.

Site planning for a residence began in the 1850s but was interrupted by Naglee's participation in the Civil War (1861-1865). Naglee's first residence was probably a modest cottage, later used to house his workers. Naglee was fifty years old when the Civil War ended and he was able to return to his California home.

During the spring of 1865, Naglee began planning a larger home. He was to be married for the first time; his young bride was the daughter of a fellow West Point officer stationed in San Francisco. Marie Antoinette Ringgold was a vivacious brunette with impeccable social connections. Her family was related to President James Monroe. Naglee

was fifty years old; his bride was half his age. They were married in May of 1865 and moved to a stylish Gothic cottage in a wonderful garden.

Naglee chose an old friend, German-born architect Victor Hoffman to design and build his country home. Hoffman had designed Naglee's four-story bank and business office in San Francisco in 1851. The San Jose home Hoffman designed for Naglee's country estate was a highly fashionable Gothic Revival style cottage. The style was copied from the most popular pattern book for carpenters at the time, Andrew Jackson Downing's *The Architecture of Country Houses*.

Hoffman's offices were in San Francisco, but during the 1860s he also opened a small office in San Jose, with one draftsman. In addition to Naglee's house, Hoffman built the Reed Street School (Lowell School - 1870)) and the original Masonic Lodge. Although the Naglee house is not as imposing as many country mansions built in San Mateo County, at the time it was the grandest house in San Jose. Naglee also lived in an apartment in the Occidental Hotel in San Francisco and also had a home on his 30,000 acre ranch property near Stockton.

(Cont'd p. 15)



*Naglee Home at 99 S. 14th St. in Nov. 2020, much altered. It has been divided into apartments for many decades. (Photo: Gayle Frank)*



---

## Naglee (Cont'd)

---

The major entrance to the Naglee estate was on 11<sup>th</sup> Street. An imposing gateway opened onto San Fernando Street. Inside the gates, a long driveway curved toward the south, lined with Monterey cypress. This winding avenue, approximately 1000 feet long, formed the entrance to the house.

Naglee's house was built with all of modern conveniences. As an engineer who traveled widely, Naglee was aware of modern plumbing. Naglee's papers in the Bancroft Library in Berkeley have a tiny sketch of his house plan. The little plan notes indoor plumbing and a sophisticated heating system. The original buildings in Naglee Park included the house, farm buildings, caretakers' cottages, water tank towers, and sheds. There was a brandy manufacturing center and a distillery. There was also a long, brick storage building, used to age the brandy.

Naglee was one of the earliest San Jose employers to hire Chinese labor, and his workers were housed on his estate. This practice made Naglee a target in 1869 when his brandy cellar was burned at a loss of \$60,000. The newspaper story blamed the Ku Klux Klan for the fire, saying it had been set to protest the presence of Chinese laborers.

The family lived in its Naglee Park home for the next 15 years. The San Francisco-San Jose Railroad opened in 1864,

and the Naglee family often commuted to San Francisco where they stayed in their apartment in the Occidental Hotel. General Naglee kept an office nearby in his business building on the corner of Merchant and Montgomery Streets. The family also made frequent visits via steamer to their rancho in the San Joaquin delta.

Henry and Marie Antoinette Naglee welcomed the arrival of their first daughter, also named Marie, in 1866. A second daughter named Antoinette was born in 1869. The Naglee Park house and property were maintained by a relatively modest staff. The 1870 Federal Census lists the family members and seven household staff including a French cook, an Irish nurse for the girls, then ages one and four, a coachman from Denmark, a ranch foreman and several gardeners. Six Chinese workers lived in an adjacent house on the estate and their occupations are described as laundryman, waiter, and gardener. The superintendent of the Naglee estate, William Duval, lived in a large house near San Salvador Street.

Naglee's enjoyment of his new house and little family was short-lived. Naglee's young wife, always in fragile health, died several months after their second child was born. Naglee turned to Mary Burk, his widowed sister, for help in raising the girls. As Marie and Antoinette reached school age, a private governess was hired to instruct them. The girls were educated at home, tutored in French by their personal teacher, and prepared for education in boarding schools. As teenagers, both girls attended private schools in Baltimore and Philadelphia.

Naglee died in 1886 at the age of 72. His will specified the estate could not be sold until his youngest daughter reached the age of thirty. For the next fifteen years the estate was used by the Naglee family to raise their race horses. In 1899 the two daughters and their husbands formed a development company, Naglee Park Improvement Company (NPICo). They filed the first maps to subdivide the property early in 1902, and the properties sold quickly. The Naglee mansion was sold as a boarding house and has remained a multi-resident house since that time. ☘



*The Naglee Carriage House at 49 S. 14th St. and behind the Naglee home. It's eligible for National and State historic listing. (Photo: Gayle Frank)*

# In Memory of Liv Alterhaug Ames

1947-2020

Liv Ames passed on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, leaving her husband Larry Ames, three sons and family, and many friends, including those in the historic preservation community.

Born in Norway, Liv graduated with a Masters in Chemical Engineering, travelled and worked in Europe and arrived in the US in 1976. She met Larry in Madison, WI and they were married in 1977. Both soon found jobs in the Bay Area and bought a home in Willow Glen.

Liv loved biking, connecting with nature, cross-country

skiing, exploring all 50 states and dozens of countries, and photography. She volunteered as a nature center docent and led children's nature field trips.

Liv supported Larry's passions for community parks, trails and historic preservation. Many of the photos in the "Touring Willow Glen—Ten Walking Loops" book were taken by Liv.

Most of all, she loved her family and was much loved. She will truly be missed.

## Joan Bohnett Historic Neighborhood Preservation Fund

The PAC\**SJ* Joan Bohnett Historic Neighborhood Preservation Fund will support the efforts of neighborhood groups in protecting and celebrating their historic character, pursuing historic district status, or developing walking tours and other educational programs about their history.

Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution in

Joan's memory by donating online at [www.preservation.org](http://www.preservation.org). Keep Joan's passion for historic neighborhoods alive.

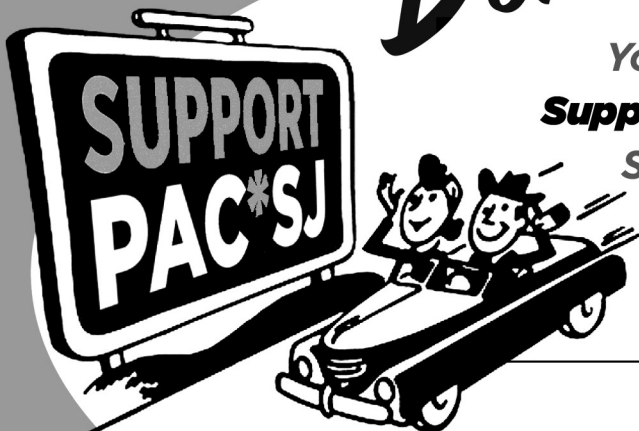
## Notable Quotable

"Every study of travel motivations has shown that an interest in the achievements of the past is among the three major reasons why people travel. The other two are rest or recreation and the desire to view great natural sights... Among cities with no particular recreational appeal, those that have substantially preserved their past continue to enjoy tourism. Those that haven't receive no tourism at all. It's as simple as that. Tourism does not go to a city that has lost its soul."

—Arthur Frommer  
*Preservation Forum* [1988]

# Donate your Car!

Your Vehicle Donation Will Help  
**Support PAC\**SJ* in Its Efforts to Preserve  
San Jose's Architectural Heritage**



PRESERVATION ACTION COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE

**DONATE YOUR VEHICLE**

**408-998-8105 • [www.preservation.org](http://www.preservation.org)**

**FAST & EASY • TAX DEDUCTIBLE • FREE-TOWING**



# Exploring San Jose's City Landmarks

Here is the next San Jose Landmark from the City list. Check previous *Continuity* issues for earlier landmark descriptions on our website.

## HS92-88: Towne Theater, 1433 The Alameda

The Towne Theatre pictured right, originally called the Hester Theatre, was designed by Binder & Curtis, a prominent local architectural firm in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They designed numerous San Jose landmark buildings though many have not survived. A few examples of those still remaining are: the Jose Theater (1904), Montgomery Hotel (1911), former YMCA building on 3<sup>rd</sup> and Santa Clara Streets, Civic Auditorium (1934), and the Petit Trianon (1923) on N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Binder was the first architect in San Jose to use iron or steel reinforced concrete construction in commercial buildings.

The theatre, opening in 1925, was designed for Victor A. Benson on the site of his garage. It was the first neighborhood theater in San Jose. Originally constructed of poured concrete, it was designed with a simple Spanish-style façade--its name "Hester" above and on each side of the protruding marquee. Inside, the proscenium arch appeared to have a Spanish theme, according to Gary Parks in his book, "Theatres of San Jose." In an early photo, a small ticket booth appears at the center of the exterior lobby. Later a ticket booth was replaced on the right side of the lobby but finally removed during a remodel.

A small pipe organ produced music for the silent movies but by 1930 a sound system was installed for the "talkies." The small stage was used for live acts when needed.

In 1952 the façade was increased in height to rise above the two story building next door to the south. A unique, Art Deco stylized floral sculpture spans the entire façade above the marquee. The addition of pink and green neon highlighted the sculpture.



Originally it had neon back-lighting. The marquee was also modernized, enlarged and with new neon added. The changed name, "Towne," still appears twice, on each side above the marquee.

The Towne showed adult entertainment during the 1970s-1980s until late in the decade when the San Jose City Council banned such businesses within 500 yards of a school. Hester Elementary School is directly across the street from the Towne.

In 1990 Camera Cinemas renovated the movie house giving it 650 seats and three screens.

(Cont'd p. 18)



## City Landmarks (Cont'd)

Independent and foreign films were shown. A Grand Wurlitzer organ from Chicago, and later moved to San Francisco, was installed behind the movie screen in the main 300 seat section—playing Sunday concerts and accompanying vintage silent movies.

By about 2000, the leased theater offered films from India. At present there are 'for sale' signs in the two front display windows of the closed theater.

Who was the man whose name graced the theater, the school, the street, and the neighborhood along the historic The Alameda? He was Craven P. Hester, born in Kentucky in 1796. He traveled with his family to California in 1849.

Hester was a highly respectable lawyer so after he arrived in San Jose he was soon chosen as District Attorney for the Third Judicial District in 1850. Later, appointed by President Lincoln, he served as a district judge. Hester died in San Jose in 1873.

— Gayle Frank

*Sources:*

— "The San Francisco Bay Region," by Bailey Millard, Vol. 3, page 215-216, *The American Historical Society, Inc.*, 1924.

— *Historic Resources Inventory Survey*, Glory Anne Laffey, 6/19/92.



*Above, floral sculpture with neon placed in front of sculpture. Below left, neon at point of marquee.*

*Below right, marquee. (Photos: Gayle Frank)*





# PAC\*SJ Membership Application or Renewal

## Preservation Action Council of San Jose Membership Application or Renewal

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

*Provide email address to receive timely notices of news, events and announcements. PAC\*SJ will not release your contact details.*

New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewing Member \_\_\_\_\_

**Please circle the level at which you wish to join:**

Individual	\$40
Family	\$55
Student or Senior (over 65)	\$25
Non-profit or School	\$25
Contributor	\$100
Patron	\$250
Benefactor	\$1,000

**Join at the \$100 level or above** and receive a special premium: a 20 x 30 Sunset Magazine Cover poster, a white Dancing Pig t-shirt (XL only), or the black t-shirt with 'San Jose' in neon letters. (M, L)

Please check if you would like to receive  
Sunset poster \_\_\_\_\_ or the black t-shirt \_\_\_\_\_  
or Pig t-shirt \_\_\_\_\_ or no premium \_\_\_\_\_  
or both poster & t-shirt at the \$250 level.

I am enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as an extra donation to

PAC\*SJ for a total amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in working with the following  
volunteer opportunities (*please circle*):

**Advocacy**  
**Fundraising**  
**Membership**  
**Newsletter**

**Programs/Education**  
**Events**  
**Board Member**  
**Public Relations**

**Complete and return with your check to:**

Preservation Action Council of San Jose  
1650 Senter Rd., San Jose, CA 95112-2599  
Phone: (408)-998-8105      info@preservation.org

## Legacy Giving

Did you know that Preservation Action Council of San Jose (PAC\*SJ) has a Legacy Giving Program?

Please consider a bequest to PAC\*SJ as part of your estate plan. There's no minimum amount required. In fact, you can specify any dollar amount, leave a percentage of your estate, or designate what remains after your estate has been settled.

Gifts of stock are possible at any time. If you are 70 1/2 years of age or over, a

qualified charitable donation can count toward satisfying your required minimum distribution from an IRA, helping to lower your taxes.

PAC\*SJ welcomes any donation you can make this year to further our advocacy, educational opportunities and event planning.

Please contact info@preservation.org for more information. PAC\*SJ is a 501c3 non-profit organization. Our tax ID is 77-0254542. ☼





**PAC\* SJ**

**PRESERVATION ACTION  
COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE**

History Park, 1650 Senter Road  
San Jose, California 95112



*Like Us On Facebook!*



NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT 384

Or Current Resident



## *Season's Greetings!*



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

We believe that **historic preservation is good for our quality of life, good for business, and good for the environment.** We aim to integrate a strong commitment to historic preservation into the land use and development decisions of the City of San Jose 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.

### **PAC\* SJ 2020 Board**

André Luthard, President

Michael Sodergren, V.P. Advocacy

John Frolli, Treasurer

Cindy Atmore, Secretary

Sylvia Carroll

Patt Curia

José De La Cruz

Gayle Frank

Marilyn Messina

John Mitchell

Gratia Rankin

Walter Soellner

Lynne Stephenson

**Staff:** Ben Leech, Executive Director

### **Advisory Board**

Bonnie Bamburg

Marvin Bamburg, AIA

Paul Bernal, Esquire

Heather David

Ken Fowler, CPA

April Halberstadt

Rusty Lutz

Franklin Maggi

Craig Mineweaser, AIA