



CONTINUITY

Newsletter of the Preservation Action Council of San José

Volume 4, Number 1, January/February 1993

Annual Membership Meeting Set for January 18

The third annual membership meeting will be held on Monday, January 18, at 7:00p.m. at Mother Olson's Inn, otherwise known as Le Petit Trianon, 72 N. 5th Street. We will hold elections, and Cherilyn Widell will make a presentation on the topic of her Fulbright scholarship year in Japan. The regular board meeting will follow the program of the annual meeting and refreshments.

Elections

The ballot for board of directors this year includes the following: Karita Hummer, President, Greg Casella, Treasurer, Betsy Mathieson, Kitty Monahan, Scott Montoya, Sharon Heinrichs, Bonnie Bamburg, Tom King, Keith Watt, Linda Larson, April Halberstadt, and Theo Van Dyne. Their board terms will last for two years, from January, 1993 to January 1995. Karita's presidential term will be for one year, but her board term will be for two years. Greg's board and treasury term will be for two years.

Those board members whose terms are ongoing for another year are: Marvin Bamburg, Paul Bernal (Vice-President), Patricia Massey, Craig Mineweaser, and Cherilyn Widell.

Two members of the board have just resigned, Nancy Newlin and Bill Zavlaris. We are very grateful to both Nancy and Bill for all they have given to the organization, and we will greatly miss them on the board. Nancy has done marvelous work throughout the last year in setting graphic standards,

and doing graphics and the brochures, developing exhibits and, very importantly, editing the newsletter. She did an excellent job of co-chairing the San Pedro Square Open House, planning everything out and executing everything with the utmost detail and highest quality.

Bill Zavlaris has helped us out extensively by writing articles on a variety of topics, for supporting our efforts on behalf of the Scheller House, and for co-chairing a major Preservation Week (1991) panel event for members and the public on the topic of historic theatres.

Presentation by Cherilyn Widell

Cherilyn Widell's presentation and slide show is based on her experience this past year in Japan where she studied and was involved in Japan's preservation efforts as a Fulbright scholar.

Cherilyn has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Preservation Action Council for over two years and was the facilitator of our first organizing retreat. A member of the Board of Directors of the California Preservation Foundation, she was the former Executive Director of the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions. She has conducted training programs for Historic Landmarks Commissions throughout the country.

In addition to her Fulbright scholarship in Japan, Cherilyn has been a Smithsonian Fellow, has served at the request of the Secretary of the Interior on the Commission to Review Criteria for Placement on the National Register

of Historic Places, and has testified before both houses of Congress on Historic Preservation. She is now a private consultant in Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation. Recently, she has begun to examine the ways to foster cultural conservation, in addition to historic preservation.

Her presentation on historic preservation in Japan is sure to be most interesting.



Resource Center Development Underway

Elizabeth Cooney, a librarian at the Cooperative Library System and Services, is chairing a committee to develop a resource center and library for historic preservation and architecture to be located in our offices at 40 N. First St. She wants to pull together a collection of books and resource materials that can be used by building owners for design and restoration/preservation planning, and by the general public for information on the topics of preservation and architecture. Her committee envisions reaching out eventually to Silicon Valley businesses for in-kind contributions. The committee, which consists of Leslie Masunaga and Beth Wyman, welcomes assistance in planning and implementing this project. They are especially interested in contributions

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Resource Center

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of books and resource materials for the project. Elizabeth also serves as the senior editor for the California Database of Serials (LCSA) Project.

To assist or to make a contribution, call Elizabeth at (408) 295-5497.



Holiday Party at Mission Court

On December 13, the Preservation Action Council of San José held its first holiday party at the beautiful Mission Court Apartments, 460 North First Street. Many thanks to Robin Bigger for chairing this very successful festive event, and for making it possible for our members to socialize in such a superb setting. She did a great job!

We want to give a special thank you to our hosts, Antonio Castellucci and his family and to the resident manager, Sue Oleson, for inviting us to their building and for guiding us through it.

Many of us have admired the exterior of the Mission Court Apartments, but we had no idea what was inside the main building—a Victorian mansion built in 1893! We learned all about the history of the mansion from April Halberstadt as we stood in the elegant foyer, sheathed in mahogany wood, in front of a beautiful fireplace and mantle.

Mr. Castellucci and his family came to be with us for this event. He told us about his venture to preserve the building and upgrade the apartments, then gave us a guided tour. We were shaken by his recounting of the close call the building had when another potential buyer for the building had considered tearing it down for another

development. It is fortunate for our city that Mr. Castellucci appreciated the full beauty of the building and would not think of destroying it.

Built by William Dougherty, once “the lumber king of Santa Clara Valley,” Spanish-style apartments were added around the building in the thirties, entirely obscuring the interior of the mansion. Approximately thirty-four apartments are available for rent, some containing elegant rooms of the former mansion, which are in a good state of preservation. A really lucky find for a tenant!

The apartments feature all new electric kitchens with oak cabinets and spacious walk-in closets and the building has new laundry facilities. Mr. Castellucci promotes the building as “elegant living in Historic Downtown San José” and indeed it is! This is a model preserved building in San José, the story of which we hope will be repeated many times over.

Thank you Mr. Castellucci for preserving such a fine building for San José.



Karita Hummer

As always, we are knee deep in activities that should challenge us well into the New Year!

As a concurring party to the Memorandum of Agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the River Street historic district, we will be a resource, monitor, and reviewer for the study that will be conducted for the district. This will be a big effort.

Concurrently, we have plans to

develop an exhibit on the history of River Street and how elements of it could be incorporated into the design of the Guadalupe River Park. We hope to present design sketches and to conduct educational workshops throughout several areas of the city. All of this is dependent on getting funding, of course, which we are exploring.

April Halberstadt and I developed the conceptual aspects of the educational project. Leslie Masunaga made some excellent suggestions for the project as well, and April is preparing a proposal for a designer and educator for the project. All of these efforts are the work of the River Street Committee, and new participants are welcome. This project remains our most challenging and most complex, so everybody's ideas and help are welcome.

José Theatre

We put together a very ambitious proposal for technical assistance from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for the José Theatre and the block surrounding it. We submitted it through their Community Initiated Development Program, funded by a matching grant to the National Trust by the Knight Foundation, which is to be used solely in Knight-Ridder newspaper cities.

Unfortunately, we did not get the grant, which would have provided us with \$100,000 worth of consultation and training and access to a loan guarantee for the main project site. We received feedback from the National Trust that our application was viewed quite positively, but that lack of professional staff, a small budget, and the newness of our organization ruled us out as finalists.

This project was the enormous work of a great number of us: Lisa Goebel, Project Coordinator, April Halberstadt, Patti Massey, Franklin

Maggi, Gary Parks, Scott Montoya, Wallace Whittier, and myself, with the additional assistance of a number of other consultants.

For approximately a month, we recruited a project director who would have developed a financial and real estate plan for the block and who would have transferred the technical expertise into the group for our own growing sophistication. We got some excellent applicants for the project director role—which would have been a volunteer job of eight hours a week for three years!

Yes, we are deeply disappointed, but not down! We're certainly not going to walk away from the José Theatre and surrounding block because it is one of our highest priority concerns. Moreover, we will be calling a meeting together of the José Theatre Task Force, the committee who wrote the grant proposal, and any of the applicants who may wish to come. We will be considering how we might still fund elements of the grant and obtain some of the expertise that we might otherwise have received. We believe the block, known as the Century Center Block, is of utmost importance.

The José Theatre is a landmark building and it, along with a number of other buildings on the block, are part of the San Jose Historic Commercial District, which is part of the National Register of Historic Places. This is one of the city's treasure blocks, and with handsome infill, could become one of the city's brightest spots. We have to keep trying to make it happen! Many thanks to everyone who put so much effort into this project.

(Note: The good news on the grant is that a San José group has become one of the finalists. The Japantown Businessmen's Association's project is to focus on the economic and real

estate development of historic and infill buildings in Japantown.)

Transportation Act

We continue to facilitate the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act consortium that we established with community and government representatives in an effort to put proposals together for funding for preservation-linked enhancements under the law.

Three subcommittees have been formed: Buildings, Facades, and Historic Districts; Railroads and Trolleys; and Trails. Approximately six projects will likely be submitted for the first go-round, resulting from the ideas that have been generated by this group: The Alameda as a focus; the county fairgrounds railroad projects, including moving the roundhouse; a trolley linking parts of Kelley Park and the fairgrounds; a map of historic sites in the county; historic trails along Pacheco Pass; and historic trails along Los Gatos Creek.

These projects will be submitted by local government groups and most of the projects that have been stimulated by this consortium will be reviewed by the county's Historical Heritage Commission on behalf of the County Board of Supervisors. Our whole project has been dubbed Destination Cities: Historic Preservation and Transportation. It is not too late to hop on board.

Weir Building

The Weir Building has our strong attention. April Halberstadt testified in city council on behalf of the building and on promoting a good new design for the proposed Keystone Housing development. As a result, April, Franklin Maggi, and myself met with the Redevelopment Agency and Sobrato Development Company's representatives to discuss how the Weir Building might be saved and to

review the design of the overall Keystone project. Unfortunately, we did not receive any sense of conviction about the importance of the Weir building for the site nor were we especially pleased with schematics for the overall design of the project. (For our taste, it appeared too suburban, and too uniform in design for a project of its scale.)

We expressed great concern that we are losing yet another opportunity in San Jose to build a site with great architectural distinction, and that soon there hardly will be any land left in the core to do stellar architectural design. (Citing its historic, archaeological and cultural significance, city planning staff has submitted a recommendation to the Historic Landmarks Commission for approval of the Weir Building as a historic landmark, to be reviewed by the city council on February 9 at 1:30 p.m.) Presumably, the new design will be reviewed by the Urban Design Review Committee but our experience thus far is that few buildings undergo major changes at that point.

Landmarks of the Future

In fact, we are so concerned about getting new buildings in the city that will indeed become "Landmarks of the Future," we have begun to devote more attention to this endeavor. Chuck Volwiler has headed some of these efforts. He is submitting a book list to the San Jose Museum of Art on architecture, modern and preservation topics, with the input of our architects and others. He has begun to make inquiries for us regarding the IBM site downtown. We want to encourage quality design there that is innovative and respectful of its context, the Guadalupe River Park and the Children's Discovery Museum in the background.

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President
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Our concerns are a lot like some of those expressed so well by Alan Hess in a recent article in the *San José Mercury News*. We cannot afford to tolerate mediocrity in our architecture any longer. Ours is a special area with special potential. We should live up to our aesthetic potential. (Besides, good architecture doesn't have to be more expensive, just imaginative! Moreover, we think good architecture is infinitely more marketable for housing or commercial purposes and believe that developers should factor in design quality into bottom-line economics. Indeed, we don't think we are so unique, and we think that our tastes do reflect at least some part of the market!) Help us out in this endeavor. Call Chuck Volwiler (408) 297-5970 or Karita (408) 971-0940.

Bernal-Joice Ranch and First Church

Returning to more specific preservation projects, we will be continuing our efforts on behalf of the Bernal-Joice Ranch in the Santa Teresa area and building a trust fund for that purpose. The project director for the Bernal-Joice Ranch project continues to be Paul Bernal (408) 842-0206. Call him to lend your support.

We plan to reconvene the Former First Church of Christ Ad Hoc Committee, under the leadership of Linda Larson. The effort will be to extend the work and recommendations of our own feasibility study conducted by Jerome King, AIA. Call Linda Larson to get involved (408) 249-2902.

Good Wishes to Judy Stabile

We wish former Councilmember Judy Stabile well. We'll miss her in City Council. We could always count on her to be fighting the good preservation fight. As a result, we have so many things to be grateful to her for:

the Hayes Mansion, the Plan for the Past, the Fallon House, for a lot of work at the San Jose Historical Museum, her work on the City's Unreinforced Masonry Program of incentives, and for so much more! She was great! Judy Stabile was awarded one of the Preservation Action Council's annual Preservation Awards during our Open House on October 5, 1991. Thank you, Judy. We'll look forward to working with you in the future.

Preservation Leadership Training

During the week of January 4 through 12, I represented the Preservation Action Council at a week-long leadership training program sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program included sessions on community leadership, board development, organization and financial planning, fundraising, economics of preservation, public relations, preservation law, hand-on design, and a field project.

It was an incredible week of learning, for which I received the Bill Delvac Award for conscientiousness! In all seriousness, I'm sure our efforts will be greatly enhanced by the ideas I gathered at this program. Many thanks to the board and Cheryl Widell for a matching donation that made my participation possible.

Wishes for 1993

Now I have just a couple fantasy wishes for the New Year!

One would be for us to establish an Endowment for Architecture to encourage architects to design exciting new buildings for San José and to utilize preservation architects to solve some of our most pressing preservation problems.

Another great wish, perhaps a fantasy again, would be for us to establish a revolving fund to assist the purchase

of endangered historic buildings for purposes of preservation and restoration.

Perhaps on a more realistic note, we can at least hope for the restoration of the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (See National Trust article). Maybe, just maybe, we can influence decision makers, owners, builders, developers, and city agents to come up with economical preservation solutions instead of coming up with gold-plated restoration decisions that only end up giving preservation a bad name. In other words, let's save and preserve, but not always restore luxuriously, as if the building were just built the day before. Thus, we can afford to preserve a larger stock of our buildings. It's not gold-plated restorations that we seek; it's maintenance and preservation we want.

All in all, there are a lot of good things to look forward to in '93. Join us.

National Trust Seeks Restoration of Rehab Tax Credits

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is making restoration of the rehabilitation tax credits (as we once knew it) their top legislative priority.

Citing President-Elect Clinton's support during the campaign and Congresswoman Kennelly and Senator Danforth's enthusiasm for such a tax credit restoration, the National Trust believes that there is a real chance to succeed at this effort. (The 1986 Tax Reform Act's Income and Passive Loss provisions severely curtailed the effectiveness of the tax credit, which was originally enacted in 1976.)



Watchdog Report

April Halberstadt

The Watchdog Committee of the Preservation Action Council keeps an eye on historic buildings that may be threatened by insensitive rehabilitation, demolition, or neglect. The projects we are currently tracking include:

- The Redevelopment Agency's demolitions: we lost St. Joseph's school and rectory.
- We continue to receive calls about the *Scheller House* which sits on the San José State University campus.
- The *Autumn Street neighborhood* next to the new arena is now starting to bark. Planned for demolition to make way for the Guadalupe River Park is the pre-1870 bungalow of inventor A.C. Stowe on old St. Augustine Street and the old barn and several newer (circa 1920) bungalows along Autumn Court. The Martini House, located on Autumn Street is also scheduled for demolition. Joyce Martini still lives in the house where she has lived all her life. Her father bought the house when the street was called St. Mary's
- The Weir Building, a single story law office designed by Taliesen West architect Aaron Green, is scheduled for demolition by the Redevelopment Agency. The hearing is set for February 9.
- A planned city park threatens stone fences, a tank house, and barns of several historic farms in the *Evergreen* area.

- The demolition deadlines for Unreinforced Masonry (URM) buildings grows closer. URMs on First Street near San Fernando, adjacent to our National Historic District, are of special concern.

For more information about watchdog activities, contact April Halberstadt at (408) 293-2860.



Local Couple Wins National Trust Award for Home

Jeanne and Mark Lazzarini, Preservation Action Council members and active in the Victorian Preservation Association, received the National Trust for Historic Preservation Great American Home Second Prize award for interior rehabilitation. And they richly deserve it because their home is

beautiful, done with the utmost attention to detail.

The Lazzarini's home also was featured in *Victorian Homes'* Holiday edition for 1992. In that same issue, Jeanne Lazzarini wrote a story on San José's historic assets.

Congratulations to the Lazzarinis for this award for their beautiful home, and for bringing such honor to San José.

In 1990, one of our board members, Betsy Mathieson, and her husband, Scott, another preservation activist, received an honorable mention Great American Home Award for interior restoration. Like the Lazzarinis, the Mathieson's attention to detail produced marvelous results.

We have a great many such assets in our city, and we hope that many others will feel inspired to enter their homes in this contest.



Want a nice gift for a friend? Consider a membership in the Preservation Action Council. Use the enclosed membership form, or call our office for a brochure.



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

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 Greg Casella, Treasurer
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 Marvin Bamberg, A.I.A.
 April Halberstadt
 Sharon Heinrichs
 Tom King
 Linda Larson
 Betsy Mathieson
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 Leonard C. Ramirez
 Gil Sanchez, F.A.I.A.
 James A. Salata
 James C. Williams

Calendar

January

- 11 (Monday) Executive committee meeting. Karita Hummer's, 96 Fox Ave., 7:00 p.m., (408) 971-0940.
- 18 (Monday) Annual meeting, election, and open board of directors meeting. Le Petit Trianon, 72 N. 5th St., 7:00 p.m., (408) 971-0940.
- 25 (Monday) Finance and operations committee meeting at our office, 40 N. First St., 8 p.m. Greg Casella, (408) 998-5034.

February

- 8 (Monday) Executive committee meeting. Karita Hummer's, 96 Fox Ave., 7:00 p.m., 971-0940.
- 15 (Monday) No open board of directors meeting. Le Petit Trianon, 72 N. 5th St., 7:00 p.m., (408) 971-0940.
- 22 (Monday) Finance and operations committee meeting at our office, 40 N. First St., 8 p.m. Greg Casella, (408) 998-5034.

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