



CONTINUITY

Newsletter of the Preservation Action Council of San José

Volume 5, Number 2, March/April 1994

Japantown Open House May 7

Betsy Mathieson

Although the midwives, gangsters, and Japanese stage performers have long since gone, the buildings they occupied and the history they represent are still very much a part of San José's Japantown. On Saturday, May 7, this rich cultural and community history will be celebrated as San José's Japantown becomes the site of a historical building open house. Between 1 and 5 p.m., visitors will be able to walk through a bit of San José's history as well as enjoy the festivities of the day.

As visitors guide themselves through several of the buildings, such as the Buddhist Church Betsuin (normally closed to the public), the old Dobashi Market, George's Service Station, and the Cuban Restaurant, docents will be on hand to describe the historical significance, answer questions, and offer interesting anecdotes about the buildings. An ongoing reception will be held at the Issei Memorial Building on Fifth Street which will include exhibits about the history of Japantown itself, a sampling of food from the area's Japanese restaurants, ikebana (Japanese flower arrangements) displays, and performances of traditional Japanese koto music. On Sixth Street, Aikido of San José, originally known as Okita Hall, where Japanese stage performances were held, will have demonstrations of martial arts

throughout the day, and the cut-flower growers of Japantown's weekly farmer's market will be set up in the center of town selling their colorful assortment of flowers. A photo essay of everyday life in Japantown from morning to night will also be on display.

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Grand Opening for Peralta Adobe and Fallon House

On Saturday, April 23, the Peralta Adobe and Fallon House Historic Site will officially open to the public in a free celebration from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at W. St. John and San Pedro streets in downtown San José.

The Historic Site includes the 1797 Peralta Adobe, the last remaining structure from El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe. The two-room Adobe has been painstakingly restored and furnished as it would have been in the days when Spain and Mexico ruled California and when Luis Maria Peralta was the Comisionado of the Pueblo of San José.

The Italianate architecture of the adjacent 1855 Fallon House typifies a grand home of that early American period. Originally the home of Thomas and Carmel Fallon, it has 15 beautifully appointed rooms, complete with Victorian furnishings and accessories drawn largely from the



Craig Mineweaser and Ellen Garboske assume the offices of co-presidents of PACSJ.

collections of the San José Historical Museum.

Both historic structures were restored by the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San José with oversight by the San José Historical Museum Association (SJHMA). The SJHMA has done an incredible, thoroughly professional job of furnishing both buildings.

The Peralta Adobe and Fallon House are complemented by *The City Store*, an on-site gift shop featuring a unique assortment of books, paper goods, and gift items relating to the history of San José and the Santa Clara Valley operated by SJHMA.

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Ellen Garboske and
Craig Mineweaser, AIA

For the first time since PACSJ's inception in 1989, there is a different name at the head of this column. Actually, there are two names, two people to carry on the tasks set forth by our founding president, Karita Hummer.

As we sit here struggling to write this column, our admiration and respect for Karita shoot even higher. Reading back over some of her columns, we find them warm, passionate, and informative. Her leadership has been phenomenal! Thank goodness her passion for preservation has not ebbed, and the community and PACSJ will continue to benefit from Karita's participation and expertise. As you can see, it takes two of us to even begin to fill Karita's shoes.

• In a few short years we have come a long way in pursuing the dream Karita had for a preservation support group and the first fledgling days of our organization. Under Karita's extraordinarily energetic leadership we have had tremendous growth, and our organization is now recognized across the state as one to emulate. Due to this growth, a change has been made in the structure of the Board which will allow us all to be more effective at our jobs. We now have standing committees for Administration, Fundraising, Community Relations, Education, Action Committee, and Government Affairs. At each

Board meeting we will be receiving reports from those committees in which there was activity during the previous month.

• Our Board recently suffered a happy loss. Cherilyn Widell left us to become the new State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). We will of course miss her experienced and reasoned viewpoint on the Board, but we are thrilled that Cherilyn was chosen for this position and proud that she is from both Santa Clara County and the Preservation Action Council. You can read more about her elsewhere in this issue.

• Funds to support PACSJ's historic preservation and education efforts continue to be one of our biggest problems. As preservationists, each of us would like to concentrate on Task Force Projects, rather than fundraising. Unfortunately, funds are needed to cover basic organization costs such as postage, stationery, rent, telephone, printing, etc. The upcoming Japantown Open House, an event showcasing historic structures within Japantown, is an important educational event for the public, but it takes funds to publicize and present an event of this magnitude. As we begin our new terms, we will seek innovative funding sources. All suggestions are welcome.

• Drives to increase our membership will be emphasized in 1994. Each PACSJ member can help by promoting preservation in general and our organization in particular with business contacts, family, and friends. Board members are exploring ways to find corporate sponsors and forming alliances with local businesses to raise funds for preservation. We

are beginning to utilize volunteers with grant-writing capabilities. We are always looking for new ideas and encourage each of you to become actively involved.

• Another important issue for PACSJ in 1994 is the pending sale of the building which houses our office. This location in the core of historic San José has been very beneficial, and we hope we can continue our presence in this area. We need an office area, meeting room, and storage room for booth and display materials. They do not necessarily need to be in the same location. One possible solution would be to join with other area preservation/historic groups to establish a joint office and resource center. We welcome your suggestions for a possible solution to this space problem.

We appreciate the faith PACSJ members have placed in us by electing us Co-Presidents. We pledge to do our best to continue the important task of supporting historic preservation and educating the public to the importance of preservation within a growing, dynamic community. We are looking forward to this new year and the chance to work with all of you.



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Japantown Site for Open House Event

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The Japantown Open House is sponsored jointly by PACSJ and the Japantown Business Association in an effort to increase awareness of the need for preservation of historical areas and to showcase Japantown as it was and as it is today. The tour also kicks off the local celebration of National Preservation Week.

Japantown is easily accessible by San José's light rail at the Japantown-Ayer station. Located just one mile north of downtown, it is centered between Highways 87, 880 (17), 101, and 208/680.

Tickets for the tour are \$10 in advance and \$12 on the day of the event. To order tickets, send \$10 per ticket and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Japantown Business Association, 565 North Sixth Street, Suite G, San Jose, CA 95112. For more information, contact the Japantown Business Association at 408/298-4303.

Interpreters Needed

Building interpreters are needed to staff the 12 buildings open to the public during the Japantown Open House, Saturday, May 7. The buildings will be open from 1 to 5 p.m., and interpreters are needed for the two shifts: 1 to 3 p.m. and 3 to 5 p.m. Our open house events are always well attended and interpreting is an enjoyable, rewarding task. Volunteers will attend a training session about a week in advance where photos and written information provided. *If you are willing to donate two hours of staffing time and about two hours of training time to help with this*

important event, please phone PACSJ's office at 408/947-8025, and leave your name and phone number on the answering machine. A committee member will return your call with further information. Your participation is important, rewarding, and greatly appreciated by PACSJ and the Japantown community.

Governor Appoints Cherilyn Widell

April Halberstadt

How would you feel if your sister just won the lottery? You would probably feel the same way we feel at the news of Cherilyn Widell's appointment as the state Historic Preservation Officer. We are extremely proud of her accomplishment and concerned for her well being under the enormous responsibility she has undertaken – yet we know she'll do a superb job. Cherilyn Widell, a founding member of the Preservation Action Council, has been appointed by Governor Pete Wilson to the highest preservation office in the state of California.

The office of State Historic Preservation Officer is a state position that is required by federal statute in order to help maintain our national heritage. In this role, Cherilyn serves as executive secretary for the California Historical Preservation Commission, as well as functions as the chief administrative officer of the State Office of Historic Preservation. It's a big job!

PACSJ has been extremely fortunate to have had Cherilyn's guidance and counsel for the last few years. Cherilyn was the

facilitator at the first all-day workshop and retreat held in San José. She was instrumental in forming the organization we know as PACSJ. Over the years she has served as a critical resource to the organization, generously providing technical assistance.

During 1991 and 1992, Cherilyn was a Fulbright research scholar in Japan, assisting in a project to preserve the structures built by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright's Japanese buildings are threatened with destruction and Cherilyn served as a historic building rehabilitation consultant. Earlier this year, she had the opportunity to follow-up on her project. She was invited by the president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, DC, to visit Japan as a member of the delegation accompanying President Clinton on his recent visit.

Cherilyn is a graduate of Hood College in Maryland, and was executive director of the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions in Washington, DC, from 1982 to 1987. From 1988 to 1991 she was self-employed, serving as a historic building rehabilitation consultant. She and her husband will continue to live in Palo Alto, and Cherilyn will stay in Sacramento during the week. Her new responsibilities include lots of travel, so we will probably not be seeing much of her, even when she is close by.

So congratulations, Cherilyn! Thanks for your presence and support at our recent tea dance. And thanks for your guidance, affection, and enthusiasm over the years. We're proud of you ... and we're here to help.

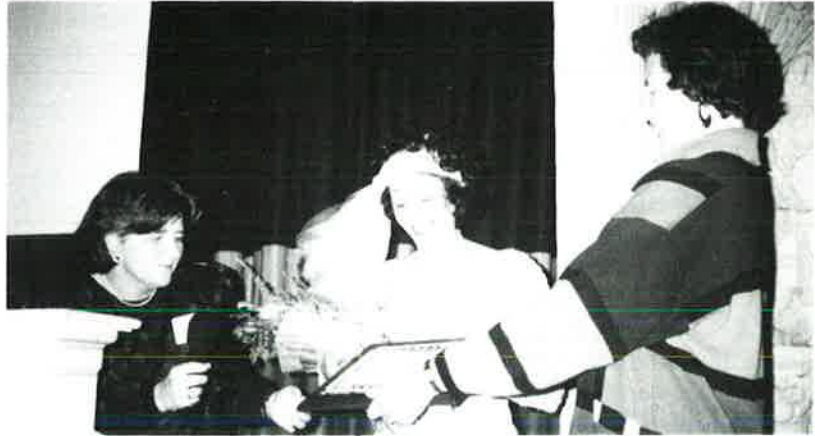
Preservation Awards Presented

Betsy Mathieson

PACCSJ recently honored three outstanding individuals, one organization, and one building at its annual preservation awards ceremony. The presentations were made on February 13 at the gala tea dance at the San José Athletic Club.

Santa Clara County Supervisor Mike Honda was honored for leading the successful effort to save the last significant piece of Rancho Santa Teresa. Last June, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, at the urging of Supervisor Honda, purchased the two-acre "Lot 9" as an open space park for the enjoyment of all county residents and visitors. This single site is significant through five periods of California history: Native American, Spanish, Mexican, early American, and modern American. Bernal Intermediate School has adopted this new portion of Santa Teresa County Park, and there are hopes for an interpretive center at the site in the future.

San Jose City Councilmember David Pandori was honored for his work to preserve the Scheller house on the San José State University campus. The house was the home of Victor Scheller, the youngest district attorney in the state. Scheller founded the San José Chamber of Commerce in 1900. The unique structure was built around 1904 in the Colonial Revival style. Councilman Pandori successfully negotiated to obtain money from the County of Santa Clara to move the house to an as-yet-unidentified park.



Cherylyn Widell, Karita Hummer, and Betsy Mathieson admire a plaque.

Barry Swenson, of Barry Swenson Builder, was honored for his willingness to pursue a preservation solution for the 1904 José Theatre. The building awaits seismic upgrading, asbestos removal, and renovation as the home of El Teatro Campesino. Swenson, part owner of the theater building, agreed to preserve the structure and is now working with the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San José as renovation planning proceeds.

Matt Levine and the San José Sharks were honored for San José's "Preservation Idea of the Year" – showcasing local historical scenes on the 1993-94 Sharks tickets. The award was presented by San Jose City Councilmember Margie Fernandes. Levine is the Sharks' vice president for development. This year's Sharks tickets use scenes from San José's agricultural, transportation, and architectural past to honor the citizens of San José and represent this year's marketing theme of "Coming Home to a New Beginning."

Jeff Davenport and the Renaissance Conference Company were honored for San José's "Building of the Year," the

renovated Hayes mansion. The award was presented by former San José City Councilmember Judy Stabile. Since last May, the Renaissance Conference Company has been renovating the 1905, 64-room, 41,000-square-foot Hayes mansion in the Edenvale district. Renaissance Conference Company won the right to develop and operate the conference center for the City of San José, the property owner, in a competitive bidding process. The mansion and a new addition in the rear will be a corporate meeting center, special events facility, and destination restaurant. The mansion will be open to the public for Sunday brunch on June 5.

Finally, **Judy Stabile** herself was honored for protecting San José's "Building of the Year," the Hayes mansion, until it could be renovated for reuse. David van Etten of the Renaissance Conference Company described Judy as the "Patron Saint and Angel of the (Hayes mansion renovation) project."

PACCSJ congratulates these award recipients and hopes that the examples they set will inspire others to preserve and protect our architectural heritage.

Festival to Feature Ceramic Tiles

On Saturday, April 23, "A Festival of Ceramic Tiles," the largest "tile only" exhibition and sale in America, will be held at the San José Historical Museum. Celebrating the ceramic traditions that have brought so much color and beauty to the Santa Clara Valley since the turn of the century, it takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and admission is \$5 (\$4 for seniors; \$2 for children).



David Pandori accepts his award.

Antique tile collectors and dealers, as well as contemporary tile makers from throughout the United States, will gather to show and sell their wares. Historic tiles like Rookwood, Grueby, Moravian, and American Encaustic will be available; also California Faience, S&S, Malibu, and Catalina, as well as English and Dutch imports will be sold. Contemporary art tiles produced by many of the finest artists, studio artisans, and smaller manufacturing companies from around the country will be there.



Judy Stabile is surprised by her award.

The tile show is unique in the antiques world – the show sites differ each year and are selected to be near famous tile installations or close to renowned manufacturing locations. Last year, the show was held in Zanesville, Ohio, the birthplace of tile manufacturing in the United States, where two of the largest tile companies in the world grew from infancy. San José was chosen for this year's show because the Santa Clara Valley has become one of the largest producers of clay products in Northern California.

From 1920 to the present, the region has been host to a variety of tile manufacturers, from Solon & Schemmel (now Stonelight Tile) to Fireclay, Handcraft, and Kraftile, in addition to a number of studio tile makers and artists all in operation today. The historic traditions of the area are infused in the decorative tiles which have inspired hundreds of architects, designers, and homeowners over the years.

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Peralta Adobe and Fallon House to Open

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The museum association is forming a board to direct the operation of this complex. We support them in this new endeavor and are excited about the linkage they see for tourists to also visit the San Jose Historical Museum at Kelley Park and better understand San José's history.

Grand opening festivities will include costumed interpreters to facilitate tours of the site; living history demonstrations, including bread baking in the outdoor oven at the Adobe; festive entertainment, and light refreshments. For more information, call the San José Historical Museum Association at 408/287-2290.



The tea dance crowd listens intently while the awards are presented.

Japanese Garden Tour May 15

Gail Gauvin

The Bay Area Lupus Foundation (BALF) is hosting a tour of Kotani-En Japanese Gardens, one of the finest local examples of traditional Japanese architecture and gardens, located in Los Gatos. BALF is the first charity to host an event there since the 1989 earthquake.

Kotani-En, designed by Takashima, an architect from Kyoto, is now the private residence of William G. Robson, a local engineer. He opens his doors occasionally to selected local charities to share the beauty of the gardens, so this is an event not to be missed.

At Kotani-En, you are transported to ancient Japan the moment you walk through the entry gates. The trees, many of which are over 200 years old, were gifts from the city of Kyoto or the Emperor of Japan at the time. The tea house was built in the Shinden style by craftsmen from Japan who employed architectural techniques and tools of the 12th century. Not a single nail was used, only pegs and dowels!

The event takes place Sunday, May 15, from 1 to 6 p.m. Admission, which includes a self-guided tour, refreshments, and entertainment, is \$20 per person or \$35 per couple, payable at the door with cash, personal check, VISA, or MasterCard. This donation is tax deductible. A convenient shuttle bus will pick people up from the West Valley College parking lot at 14000 Fruitdale Avenue in Saratoga every 10 minutes, starting

at 1 p.m. (BALF regrets that the grounds are not accessible by wheelchairs or strollers.)

A call to BALF at 408/954-8600, to say how many will be attending would be appreciated.

Successful Tea Dance— A PACSJ First!

Betty Antrim

The fourth annual presentation of the PACSJ recognition awards and annual meeting took place February 13 at the San José Athletic Club. A tea dance was chosen as the first special event to highlight the presentation of the awards. It is hoped that we will have a special program each year for a brief annual meeting/election and awards presentation.

The San José Athletic Club was an ideal backdrop for the tea dance. Our thanks to them for their commitment to preservation by providing us with a great space in their landmark building, terrific food, and fantastic staff for a minimal amount, and even donating one of the raffle prizes. Also thanks to all of the PACSJ members who helped make the event so successful by helping, by buying tickets, and by participating.

If you have any suggestions for next year's awards presentation and/or would like to assist in planning, please contact Betty Antrim at 408/448-2165. Your ideas will be appreciated. We can consider continuing the tea dance theme or explore other venues. As a start towards establishing a format for PACSJ's Annual Recognition Awards Presentation, this year's

initial event was a successful venture.

River Street Study Underway

Karita Hummer

The River Street Historic District Alternatives Analysis and Market Plan Study is well underway. In accordance with PACSJ's Memorandum of Agreement with the Army Corps and the Advisory Council Task Force on Historic Preservation, Preservation Action Council met with the Army Corps of Engineers, their architect, and the Water District on March 10 to review the outline for the upcoming report.

When the report is complete, alternatives to demolition are to be identified and a financial analysis of the marketability of the structures is to be provided. The study is to analyze the relocation feasibility and alternatives for each of the contributing buildings.

In addition, the study will review the experience of other historic districts in the state. The architectural team was urged to discuss the economic benefits of these historic districts in their review.

Financing resources for relocation and restoration are to be included in the study. The study will seismic and life safety retrofit cost estimates and a prioritization list. Priority will be placed on attributes of the buildings from the standpoint of age, historic significance, architectural style, condition, appropriateness as an example of its period, and cost to rehabilitate. A prioritization matrix will be completed as part of the study.



Watchdog Report

April Halberstadt

The Watchdog Committee of Preservation Action Council of San José keeps an eye on historic buildings that may be threatened by rehabilitation, demolition, or neglect. Every PACSJ member is an informal member of this committee, bringing items to the attention of the coordinator, April Halberstadt. Sometimes immediate emergency action is required, but sometimes we just keep watch.

Thanks to the watchful eyes who called to report that the Redevelopment Agency is planning on the demolition of some additional properties on Autumn Street to accommodate 426 additional parking spaces. Calls to the Agency elicited denial of any imminent plans, but our neighborhood sources tell us the Sharks' ownership is pressing for additional space.

Neighborhood associations adjacent to the Arena, however, keep up the pressure to limit parking; the existing lots are under-utilized, probably due to the \$10 parking fee. These associations, along with the Arena Oversight Committee, have made several worthwhile suggestions about parking expansion. Is anybody listening?

And other watchers report the imminent demolition of fire-damaged structures on First and Santa Clara streets. More parking lots?

We have also received calls and comments about the "re-muddling"

jobs that have been allowed in the name of the URM program. Buildings along Santa Clara Street seem to have had all their historic facades stripped and striped. Shades of the sixties! Many of the structures in this National Register District have suffered demolition by neglect; now we subject them to demolition by reconstruction.

This process is repeated over and over, and the effect is to change the character of downtown San José. We have tools, such as the "Secretary of Interior's Standards," and its "Environmental Review Process," but we need your help to ensure their use on each project. We need your help! If you care about the historic character of San José, call our office at 408/947-8025 and offer to get involved!

Tile Festival Scheduled

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Coinciding with the celebration of Earth Day in San José, there will also be a variety of hands-on tile making workshops where participants can get their hands into clay



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.

and carry away a tile of their very own. See tile-related demonstrations by California's finest tile artists and craftsmen from delicate handpainting techniques to the formation of massive paving tiles. Watch tiles being meticulously installed; see broken tiles turned into furniture; look on while world-famous muralists execute their grand designs; and survey the latest in tile making machinery. Then take a break with the numerous educational videos and exhibits as well as food and entertainment.

"A Festival of Ceramic Tiles" is part of a four-day educational symposium entitled "Tiles and Tradition: A Celebration of Color and Design," which runs from April 21 until April 24. The event is co-sponsored by the San José Historical Museum and the Tile Heritage Foundation. For more information, contact Tile Heritage, PO Box 1850, Healdsburg, CA 95448 or call 707/431-8453.

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Calendar

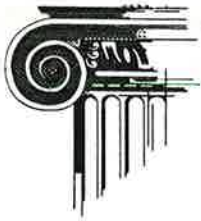
April

- 18 (Monday) Open board of directors meeting at our office, 40 N. First St., 7 p.m.
- 23 (Saturday) Peralta Adobe and Fallon House celebration (see separate article), 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., San José Historical Museum Association, 408/287-2290.
- 23 (Saturday) Ceramic Tile Festival (see separate article), 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tile Heritage, 707/431-8453.

May

- 7 (Saturday) Japantown Open House (see separate article), 1 to 5 p.m., Karita Hummer, 408/971-0940.
- 15 (Sunday) Japanese Garden Tour (see separate article), BALF, 408/954-8600.
- 16 (Monday) Open board of directors meeting at our office, 40 N. First St., 7 p.m.

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