



## CITY COUNCIL APPROVES ALTERNATIVE PLAN FOR JOSE THEATRE

### All But Facade and Lobby to be Demolished

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by Sarah Sykes

On October 28, 1997, San Jose City Council delivered another serious blow to preservation. At a specially scheduled hearing, Council Members listened to the final arguments from both sides of the issue, and finally voted in favor of the developer's revised project to demolish and replace the city block between San Fernando, Santa Clara, Second and Third Streets, downtown San Jose. Parts of this block are within the San Jose National Register Downtown Historic District and include the Jose Theater, a San Jose City Landmark, and the Hong Kong Market, both contributing structures to the district. The developer's original plan called for saving just the facade of the Jose Theater as an entrance to a private courtyard for his upscale housing complex. Last month, after listening to hours of impassioned testimony from preservationists, neigh-

bors, business owners, artists and representatives from local performing arts groups, the mayor instructed her staff to get together and work out a "win-win" solution to this problem. The "compromise" plan came out of those meetings; which rather than a "win-win" solution does in fact seem to compromise all parties involved. Unfortunately, neither PACSJ nor the consultants we hired were invited to attend the meetings or consulted. This revised plan calls for restoring the lobby of the theater to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and drastically altering the auditorium for an unspecified use. The floor of the theater will be leveled to allow room for an extra twenty-five parking spaces beneath it, and the ceiling will be lowered to accommodate a roof garden above. A replica or simulation of the proscenium arch and stage

See JOSE THEATRE page 8

### *Important Dates: Please Mark Your Calendars and Attend!*

EACH SESSION IS HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND IS A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FAIRMONT EXPANSION AND DEMOLITION OF THE HISTORIC MONTGOMERY HOTEL.

**November 19, 7:00PM:** Planning Commission certifies DSEIR

**December 10, 7:00PM:** Planning Commission hearing for DEIR

**December 16, 7:00PM:** City Council to adopt Mitigation Plan and Appeal on EIR

**December 18, 1:30PM:** City Council/RDA adopt DDA on Fairmont expansion

**January 14, 1998, 3:00PM:** Planning Commission considers conditional use permit for Fairmont expansion

For further information phone Franklin Maggi at 408-297-2684



# From the President

by *André Luthard*

VIVA JOSÉ — After the many months of preparation and meetings by our Friends of Jose Theatre Task Force, PACSJ Board of Directors and members, the vote on whether to save the Jose Theatre and potentially the entire Historic Downtown Commercial District, finally occurred on October 28. We presented our arguments like we have done so often over the last six to nine months in a vain attempt to sway the city council. Karita Hummer really shined in one of the most pointed and expressive testimony I have ever heard from her. Kudos for bringing in Chevron at the last minute to add weight to our arguments! All of us owe a special measure of appreciation to all of the task force members; Karita, Tom Simon, Natalie Wells, Carl Lindner, John Olson, Phyllis Howell, Judy Stabile, Olga Enciso-Smith, Pauline Sortor, Gerry Grudzen, Lydia Vargas, and others who met almost weekly for over a year. THANK YOU for all of your dedication. You deserve more recognition than the hollow words spoken by the Mayor at the end of the meeting. You can read the details of the hearing in Sarah Sykes' account elsewhere in this issue. Special thanks also to the entire Historic Landmarks Commission for their dedication to the District and to the City Landmark Jose Theatre. PACSJ looks forward to their continued leadership when it comes to San Jose's historic resources. I would also like to recognize Planning Director Jim Derryberry and his staff for their strong stance on the issues surrounding the Jose and the importance of the Historic Commercial District. With the power of all three organizations marshaled as one, I am hopeful for a different outcome for the grand Montgomery Hotel.

Speaking of the Montgomery, I thought it would be appropriate to comment on a couple of things. Thanks to the path beaten by the Jose effort, the SEIR on the Montgomery is quite good. In it are identified at least two alternatives that meet the same goals as the proposed Fairmont expansion without demolishing another vital building to our downtown fabric. However, several key points made in the SEIR are incongruous and cause for concern. First, the SEIR asserts that the proposed 10 story project "is similar in character to the predominant high-rise development along Paseo de San Antonio and South First Street in the vicinity of the project site. As Tom Simon wrote in PACSJ's comments to the SEIR, this statement is utterly false and misrepresents the character and setting of the project. There are only four building as tall as the proposed structure within eight square blocks of the site, and only one, the Fairmont, on the Paseo. All of the remaining neighborhood development is two to four stories. Second, the City's own historic preservation

policies are being violated by this project, and yet the SEIR asserts that the Fairmont Hotel expansion conforms to the adopted general plan. How can this be? Certainly if the city were to propose a project that did not spur economic development, reduce blight or increase housing, then the city's general plan policies would be violated. There seems to be some sort of double standard in which certain city policies carry more weight than others. While this is not stated anywhere in the SEIR, the conclusions of the analysis bear this out. Finally, as many people know, the Montgomery has been owned by the Redevelopment Agency since the 1980s. In several instances, the SEIR points to blight removal and the hotel's poor condition as justifications for demolition. What is incredible to contemplate is that much of the current condition of the Montgomery is directly a result of the RDA's lack of maintenance and proper stewardship of a publicly owned building.

We will be sure to keep our membership informed about the progress of the Montgomery Hotel, and we will call on you to assist our preservation efforts. Please call 947-8025 if you can volunteer in any way.

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## MEMBERSHIPS DUE FOR RENEWAL

Thank you to all our members who renewed for 1997 or joined us as new members this year. Please review in your mind the intense, ongoing projects that PACSJ has been working on this year, and consider whether you could make an additional, tax-deductible donation before the end of December. You can renew by using the form in this newsletter or when you receive the renewal notice which should reach you by early December. We also need NEW members, and would appreciate your call to PACSJ at (408) 947-8025, giving the name and address of prospective members. **PROMOTE THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP** and the **BENEFITS OF PRESERVATION** to your friends and colleagues. And don't forget to check with your company personnel office for matching funds!

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## Watchdog Report

The DOG is AMAZED at how you preservationists have been relentless these last few months...even the *News* and *Metro* have gotten into the ACT. Great fodder for my future book on the PAST. I'm calling it the SHAPES OF TIME. So... anyway the DOG doesn't need to bark at you about the *Jose* and the *Montgomery* and the *Agnews*. Besides there was enough barking in "Bark in the Park", one of my favorite festivals (I'm festival co-Chair with Lassie). So if you want to know what else is going on besides these BIG DEAL preservation knock-down fights, listen closely.

First off, down in *Gilroy* hot things have been happening. The **Save Our Strand Committee** has been working with the **Theater Angels Art League** to buy and fix that great little small town theater for the people of *Gilroy*. Down there they see fixing up their theater as good ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Maybe SJ's RDA needs to learn from the little guy here. They should call **Bill Lindsteadt** at 408.847.7611. Up in *Los Altos Hills* preservationists led by **Nancy Mason** are still relentlessly holding onto the *Griffin House* at *Foothill College*. It's got a new roof now paid with money raised by the "Save the Griffin House Committee", and now they just need a tenant that can finish fixing up the lace.

Unfortunately, closer to home, we got all excited when *County parks* honcho **Paul Romero** decided to BUY the *Casa Grande* in *New Almaden*. That early 1850's mansion has been begging to be a museum. But those people at the county have not been tuned into the Secretary of the Interior Standards yet, because the 1850's flooring got ripped out and put into a \$99 DUMPSTER because they decided to FIX the building. Geezzze.

I still got some WORRIES about some buildings in downtown San Jose. Particularly that great *Sherwood Apartments* building on *Devine Street* that nobody succeeded in discovering whether or not **Frank D. Wolfe** was the architect who designed it. I think it would be the PERFECT building for my new Project the **Heritage Resource Center** of San Jose and the Greater Santa Clara Valley. (Now there's a catchy name). Keep tuned on this one. The DOG has got an idea here that is going to STICK TO YOUR EARS.

I also am worried about those buildings on *5th Street* that RDA wants to TRASH to build their shiny new *City Hall*. There's a secret early 1850's cottage stashed away on that site that NOBODY BUT ME KNOWS ABOUT. Keep trucking you TIME SHAPERS; I got to leave for a while to go down to BAKERSFIELD. Their Economic Development Director **Jake**

**Wager** looks like he got his training in CINCINNATI and has been tangling with **Chris Baker**, the great-great-grandson of **Col. Thomas Baker** on what constitutes a PROGRESSIVE CITY. Next thing you know they will try to change their name from BAKERS FIELD to SILICON FIELD.

*Your bad bad bad doggie!!!!!!*

Dear Watchdog:

I certainly enjoyed your Summer issue of *Continuity*. It was jam-packed filled with interesting information.

The last item of your "Watchdog Report" was of considerable interest to me. During my college years at the University of Santa Clara, I lived in the lower right, east corner, first floor apartment with my Grandmother, **Bessie C. Smith**, proprietor of **Smith McKay Printing**. This was during the War years of 1940-43 and then again 1946-47. The apartment house was correctly known as the **Sherward Apartments**, and the managing owner was **Mae D. Ward**. This was located next door to the **Ward Undertaking Company**. **Dan Gray** married **Gertrude Ward** and the **Gray** family lived upstairs above the funeral home. The City directory of 1915 shows that the **Ward Undertaking** business had moved from their **South Market Street** address. **Wm. B. Ward** was president and **Mrs. M.A. Ward** was the embalmer (I believe the first woman embalmer in California). They lived in the **Sherward Apts**.

It was only in recent years when the building was remodeled as an office building that someone changed the name to the **Sherwood**. I guess any owner can call a building anything they want, but it was originally the **Sherward Apartments**, named for the **Ward Family**.

Sincerely,  
**Leonard McKay**  
**MEMORABILIA OF SAN JOSE**  
250 W. St. John Street

### PACCSJ'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

PACCSJ members, families and friends are invited to the annual "penny-rolling" party on Sunday, December 7th at 6:00 pm, at the **Hochburg Von Germania**. Join this casual, fun celebration and help raise money for preservation at the same time. Bring your family, friends and pennies (or other loose change), and enjoy a good meal. For reservations leave your name and phone number on our answering machine at (408) 947-8025 by December 1st. **Mark Your Calendars!**



Montgomery Hotel Interior in its "Glory" days

## CITY COUNCIL DENIES LANDMARK STATUS FOR MONTGOMERY HOTEL

by Ellen Garboske

After years of delaying the issue, on October 21st San Jose's City Council voted 6-5 to reject landmark status for the historic 1911 Montgomery Hotel. Despite pleas by San Jose's own Historic Landmarks

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MAYOR HAMMER STATED "...I'M SUPPORTIVE OF TEARING THE MONTGOMERY DOWN..."

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Commission, local preservationists and the general public to consider only the issue of whether the structure qualifies, under City ordinance, for landmark status, Mayor Hammer and her majority voted against the request.

Planning Director Jim Derryberry presented an alternative plan which would add much-needed hotel rooms while still preserving the architecturally and historically important Montgomery Hotel. Stan Ketchum, Planning Department staff, explained the rating system which was used to determine the merits of conferring landmark status on this structure. The Montgomery received high marks, qualifying it for landmarking, but the council majority ignored both the alternative development plan and the merits of designating the Montgomery Hotel a landmark.

At the end of public testimony, and in response to

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"THIS BUILDING HITS ON ALL CYLINDERS, IT TRULY DESERVES THE DESIGNATION OF LANDMARK"

— Councilmember Trixie Johnson

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Councilmember Pandori's motion to designate the Montgomery Hotel as a landmark and bring together interested parties to look at some of the options, Mayor

Hammer stated "...I'm supportive of tearing the Montgomery down...that building is a mess, it's expensive, it's got asbestos, it's structurally unsound...". She went on to say "...there were some buildings in San Jose which never should have been torn down..". It is PACSJ's belief that tearing down the Montgomery Hotel would add another building to that category, and *that* mistake will be credited to the current council.

Councilmember Fiscalini supported conferring landmark status on the Montgomery, the only issue before the council at this time, even though the building might be demolished in the future. Mayor Hammer stated, "I have absolutely no interest in spending the next 2-1/2 months...trying to work out some re-use of the Montgomery Hotel...I don't want to send any message other than that I want a hotel there."

Councilmember Dando pointed out that asbestos removal would have to be done whether the building was demolished or renovated. In response to Councilmember Diaz's question on asbestos removal, Redevelopment Agency representative David Gazek stated "There has not been a full analysis of how

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"MUCH HAS BEEN STATED THAT THIS BUILDING IS A MESS, THAT THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH IT. WELL, WE'RE THE LANDLORD, AND WE'VE ALLOWED THINGS TO HAPPEN IN THIS BUILDING THAT WE WOULDN'T ALLOW A PRIVATE LANDLORD TO GET AWAY WITH, AND WE SHOULD BE ASHAMED."

— Councilmember Trixie Johnson

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much more money it would cost to save the Montgomery Hotel..." Gazek responded to Dando's question regarding comparative costs of asbestos removal during demolition versus cost if the building was restored, "I don't know whether it would be approximately the same cost..." The logical response to this statement is to question why that analysis was not done, and why they don't know the comparative costs of asbestos removal.

Councilmember Trixie Johnson put the whole issue into perspective in her statement to the council. "...This building hits on all cylinders, it truly deserves the designation of landmark...if we choose not to designate it, we're making a mockery of the entire process we've set up." Johnson continued, "Much has been stated that this building is a mess, that there are problems with it. Well, we're the landlord, and we've allowed things to happen in this building that we wouldn't allow a private landlord to get away with, and we should be ashamed. I think the new development is an unacceptable mess, it is out of scale with the current Fairmont, the Twohy, the Paseo, it will make a miserable place to walk, between those two tall buildings...I urge you to seriously consider the landmark designation. Not to do that

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is to abandon the process we've used on every other historic building in the city, and that is wrong."

The council voted 6-5 (Pandori, Johnson, Diaz, Dando, Fiscalini voting in favor of the motion), defeating Pandori's motion to confer landmark status and form a group to study the options. Councilmember Powers then made a motion that

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"I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO INTEREST IN SPENDING THE NEXT 2-1/2 MONTHS ...TRYING TO WORK OUT SOME RE-USE OF THE MONTGOMERY HOTEL...I DON'T WANT TO SEND ANY MESSAGE OTHER THAN THAT I WANT A HOTEL THERE."

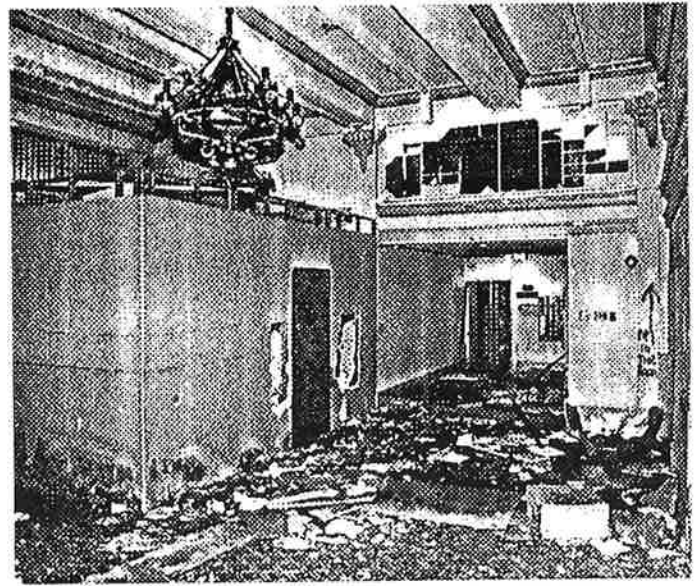
— Mayor Susan Hammer

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the council not designate the Montgomery Hotel and site as a city historic landmark. This motion passed 7-4, with Pandori, Johnson, Diaz and Dando opposed.

Adding the final insult to the issue of historic preservation, Mayor Hammer

closed the hearing with this statement, "We appreciate all that you do for our city and we will continue to work with you." (This is the same exact statement Hammer made at the end of this week's Jose Theater hearing [Nov. 28, one week later] when the Mayor and her majority voted to save only the facade and lobby of the Jose Theatre.)



*The City of San Jose purchased the Montgomery Hotel in the 1980s, used it as Transit Mall office space, pronounced it a viable restoration project in 1991. This decision was supported by engineering reports detailing viability and methods of restoration. RDA later decided to allow the building to deteriorate while under RDA's stewardship, as illustrated in this photo. That is unlawful "Demolition by Neglect" of city-owned (taxpayer-owned) property! Note that most of the destruction appears to be on partitions and additions which were installed for office use. Ceilings, original architectural details and walls show beauty and structural soundness of this venerable historic building.*

## CITY OF SAN JOSE WILL BE THE LOSER IF JOSE ISN'T SAVED

FROM THE SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS OF 10/20/97

The plan of the city of San Jose to save only the facade and lobby of the Jose Theatre building, while drastically altering its interior vintage features, is economically counter productive for the city. It doesn't safeguard the theater status for the National Register of Historic Places nor that of the historic district, as a whole. By disregarding state and federal guidelines, the city stands to lose major economic benefits for both.

Tax credits of \$2 million could be lost for the theater alone. For the district, an additional \$15 million could be lost from tax-exempt funding for affordable housing, housing tax credits, small business development loans, economic development planning grants and Community Reinvestment Act loans. Were the Redevelopment Agency to invest the same \$10 million into the theater and surrounding retail, instead of using public funds to help one private developer, the total funds leveraged would amount to \$25 million. As

our consultants testified, a restored theater for multi-cultural performing arts, administration, arts education space and outside commercial performing venues would spawn great vitality. With the already restored Zanotto's, Inca Gardens and LaStrata Restaurant, the district would become economic dynamite.

Two recent studies cited advantages for greater job growth, greater benefit for retail, increased tourism, and greater improvement in property values through preservation ("Dollars and Sense of Historic Preservation," National Trust reprint of National Study and the Center for Urban Policy Research, 1997).

Other California cities have reaped such rewards through preservation, notably San Diego, San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento, Monterey and Pasadena. Why can't we?

Karita Hummer  
and Gerald Grudzen  
*Friends of the Jose Theatre*



## NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS THREATENED BY DEVELOPMENT

by Ellen Garboske

Current Redevelopment Agency (RDA) proposals for development within downtown San Jose pose a possible threat to the status of two of San Jose's most important historic districts. Saint James Square Historic District and the San Jose Downtown Commercial Historic District are both listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The square itself and nine structures which face the square are also individually designated San Jose City Landmarks. The Commercial Historic District is comprised of approximately thirty contributing structures which represent the remaining vestiges of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial structures in the downtown core area.

RDA proposals to build housing in each of these districts requires demolishing one or more structures which contribute to the historic district, and may trigger re-evaluation and/or cancellation of the National Register designation. Following is a brief explanation of how historic districts are formed, their importance to the economic and cultural well-being of the community, requirements for historic district status, and current development plans which endanger historic structures within the two districts.



*Montgomery Hotel, Hub of the City*

**HISTORIC DISTRICT AND NATIONAL REGISTER DESIGNATION:** According to the San Jose City Ordinance, any geographically defined area can be nominated as a city historic district by the city council, the historic landmarks commission, the planning commission or by application of persons who own sixty percent of the land proposed to be included. To be viable a proposed historic district must reflect a particular period of design or architectural style, or reflect developmental patterns of growth in the city. Significance is derived from a grouping of structures viewed as a whole rather than from the importance of an individual building. Following a lengthy but appropriate evaluation by

the planning department and the Historic Landmarks Commission, if the application is found to have merit the nomination then goes before the city council for public hearing and vote by the councilmembers. If approved, inclusion in a historic district brings city, county and state recognition to the structures or sites involved and provides the opportunity to apply for tax incentives.

If the district is approved, application can then be made to the State Historic Preservation Officer for the district to be evaluated and considered for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Criteria for evaluation is the significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture present within the district. The sites, buildings, structures and objects must possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and must: a) be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or b) be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or c) embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or d) yield, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation, and is administered by the National Park Service under the Secretary of the Interior. This listing brings nationwide recognition, and the district becomes a destination point of interest which draws tourists to the community. The property (or district) is listed on maps and in publications used by businesses or the general public in choosing locations for conferences or conventions, or in planning trips. The district is recognized as a property of significance to the nation, the state and the community, and is given consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects. The properties become eligible for federal tax benefits, and qualify for Federal Historic Preservation Grants when funds are available.

Designation and preservation of historic properties brings a sense of identity and stability to the city, and increases the local economy through tourism and tax incentives. It is an honor to our community to have historic properties entered in the National Register. A great deal of time and effort was expended in successfully applying for this listing. The application was reviewed and evaluated by experts in the field and the two districts were deemed worthy of listing on the National Register of Historic Places. San Jose can never regain this listing if it is lost through demolition of contributing structures. The RDA is chipping away at these districts by removing one building at a time. We must protect our historic districts.

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**ST JAMES SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT:** This is the only remaining public square in the City of San Jose. First surveyed by Chester S. Lyman in 1848, St James Square Historic District is comprised of the St. James Park and nine surrounding structures. The nine structures are the 1866 Santa Clara County Courthouse; the 1933 United States Post Office; the 1863 Trinity Episcopal Cathedral; the 1891 First Unitarian Church; the 1924 Scottish Rite Temple; the 1893 Sainte Claire Club; the 1904 First Church of Christ Scientist; the 1880s Letcher's Garage; and the facade of the 1909 Eagles Hall.

*Historic District Listing in Jeopardy:* The current threat to historic district status is a planned housing development that would surround the First Church of Christ Scientist on three sides, requiring the demolition of Letcher's Garage (the former Oasis Nightclub). The developer has committed to the preservation of the church, but has stated that Letcher's Garage must be removed to make the project viable. In 1985 all but the facade of the historic 1909 Eagle's Hall was demolished to make way for a ten story office building, which stands as an insult to the historic square. With the district comprised of only nine buildings and a park, loss of another structure could nullify the National Register listing.

**SAN JOSE'S DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT:** This district is composed of approximately 30 of both architecturally and historically significant buildings. Dating from the 1870s to the early 1940s, the district represents the remaining vestiges of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial structures in the downtown and continues to serve as a major financial and commercial center for San Jose. The district is composed of two city blocks located between East Santa Clara Street to the north, East San Fernando Street to the south, South Third Street to the east and South First Street to the west, and also includes the south side of East Santa Clara Street between South Third and South Fourth Streets. Some of the more notable structures included in the district are the 1886 New Century Block; 1883 Odd Fellows Building; 1895 Lawrence Hotel; 1913 YMCA; 1925 Bank of Italy (Bank of America); 1889 Knox-Goodrich Building; 1930s El Paseo Court; 1890s Letitia Building; 1892 Ryland Block; and the 1904 Jose Theatre. The rest of the buildings are equally important architecturally in defining the history of downtown San Jose and in fulfilling the requirement that a district be viewed as a whole.

*Development Endangers Historic District Status:* The RDA is into the advanced planning stages of a housing development which would save only the facade and lobby of the Jose Theatre. The Jose is San Jose's oldest extant theater, and is one of the nation's oldest theater buildings constructed specifically for vaudeville. Consultants have shown that it can be restored for use by small performing arts

groups, a venue badly needed in San Jose. The developer and the RDA insist that saving the complete Jose Theatre can not be done and still have a viable housing development. Again, consultants have shown that a viable housing development could be constructed and still save the Jose Theatre. PACSJ has always agreed that housing is badly needed in the downtown area, but that it can be planned in existence with historic structures, or placed on other available land. The Hong Kong Market building was constructed in 1919 to house the John Bean & Sons Rubber Works, a business which still exists on Tenth Street. It is a contributing structure to the Historic District. Despite public outcry, Costa Hall, another contributing structure, was demolished by the RDA in 1995. Again, the RDA keeps nibbling away at our history and San Jose (THAT'S US, FOLKS!) is in danger of losing this important historic district designation and listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

**IN CONCLUSION:** A previous mayor and council understood the importance of historic structures to our community, and voted to form these two historic districts. The current mayor and her council majority have chosen to disregard the efforts of past city officials to preserve the fabric of San Jose's history. They vote in favor of demolishing historic structures which stand in the way of "progress" (i.e., whatever RDA Executive Director Frank Taylor proposes), even when viable alternatives are presented. Their refusal to seriously consider that there may be another, perhaps even better, way of developing needed housing than what is planned behind closed doors by Taylor & Company, and their narrow view of what constitutes a great city, could mean the demise of these two Historic Districts and other city historic landmarks.

**Will future generations remember this council as the one that built unremarkable office and housing, and as the council that encouraged the demolition of some of San Jose's most historic and architecturally interesting landmark structures?**

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## OFFICER AND BOARD ELECTIONS APPROACHING

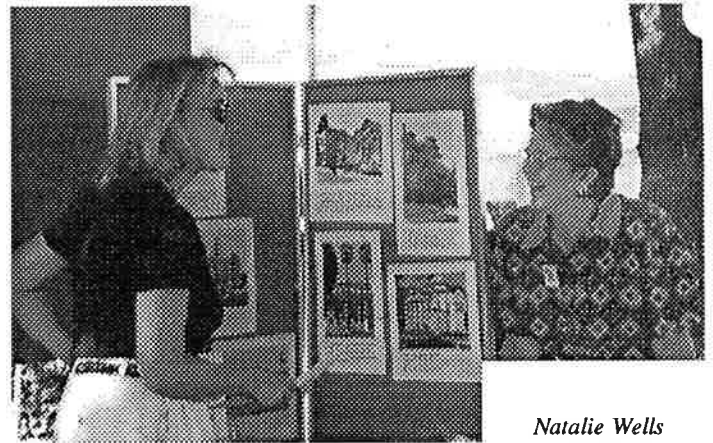
PACSJ members will receive board and board officer ballots by early December. Elected for an alternate two-year term, half of the board positions will be up for election this year. WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS. Prospective new officers and new board members, or people with suggestions for nominations, should call PACSJ at (408) 947-8025 by November 20th. Leave your name and number and your call will be returned. Our organization has become very active and effective. WE WOULD LOVE TO SHARE THIS EXCITEMENT WITH YOU!

### *JOSE THEATRE from page one*

have been proposed, to remind us of the theater's original use, but the theater will never again be useable as a performance space. Upon closer inspection, this plan shows its many weaknesses. The planned alterations to the theater will not only not meet the Standards for Rehabilitation, but will in fact serve to make the building ineligible for listing as a contributing structure to the district. This was pointed out clearly to the Council by State Historic Preservation Officer, Cheryl Widdell in a letter directed to the planning staff. The removal of the Jose Theater and the Hong Kong Market from the district leaves only 31 of an original forty contributing structures, which as Cheryl Widdell also points out, jeopardizes the entire district's status as a National Register Downtown Historic District.

The meeting continued with relative decorum, however, it seemed clear that this was held merely as a matter of procedure, and that the councilmembers had already decided which way to vote. During the public hearing portion of the meeting, Jim Fox, the developer for the project, his architect Bruce Ross, and Barry Swenson spoke in favor of the project. Several members of PACSJ spoke out eloquently and passionately against it. Karita Hummer used the clever pun of the "Redevelopment Agency fox catching its chicken." She spoke strongly to the inadequacies of this compromise, and the lack of consideration of alternate proposals by the council. A second impassioned plea came from Olga Enciso-Smith, who left the bedside of her seriously ill husband to speak to the council. Much to the surprise and sadness of all in attendance, Olga Enciso-Smith informed the council that both she and Pauline Sorter had talked seriously of closing their respective businesses in downtown San Jose due to the poor treatment they feel small businesses receive from the city council. Olga Enciso-Smith owns both The Machu-Picchu Gallery and Museum of the America's and Inca Gardens Restaurant; Pauline Sorter owns The Two Virgins. Following the public hearing portion of the meeting, several councilmembers made comments outlining their decision for voting either way. Mayor Susan Hammer and councilmembers Charlotte Powers and David Pandori all mentioned that to choose between a valuable piece of San Jose's history and much needed housing was a difficult decision to make, but that they felt the housing need was more pressing. Apparently, you can't have both. Councilmember Frank Fiscalini seconded Charlotte Powers motion to accept the proposal, and added a lengthy amendment. The amendment includes saving and restoring several historically relevant details of the theater, including replacing the pressed tin ceiling on the new lowered ceiling, and recording the stencil work on the original walls under the plaster and replacing it on the new walls. It is interesting to note that these, and other, details were considered unimpressive, unimportant, and certainly not worth restoring a theater for in previous discussions. Councilmember Trixie

Johnson then spoke passionately in favor of saving the theater, reminding the council of why the district was created originally, and that once lost, it can never be replaced. She spoke of the inappropriate closed door handling of this plan, and that the city council was not listening to or treating its constituents fairly. Councilmember Pat Dando also spoke angrily to the council of their treatment of this issue and apologized to the audience that the Council may have alienated yet another commission trying to argue for the city's best interest. The final vote was three to eight, with John DeQuisto joining Johnson and Dando as a "no" vote. To the PACSJ members in the audience the result came as no surprise, but was disheartening nonetheless. During his comments, Councilmember David Pandori assured us that he spoke for the entire council in taking responsibility for their actions. This was a difficult decision to make, he reiterated, and announced that the council is fully aware of the consequences of their actions, and the threatened loss of the National Register Downtown Historic District. We hope so. PACSJ is saddened by this decision, but will not give up the fight just yet. **Our next move will be to look into possible legal action regarding the procedures followed in handling this issue.**



*Natalie Wells  
discusses  
preservation with visitors at the Alameda History Days*

### **PACSJ PARTICIPATES IN THREE LOCAL EVENTS**

Preservation Action Council members set-up and staffed booths at Tapestry In Talent, Alameda History Days, and Pumpkins In The Park, adding up to a "frantic fall schedule" for the organization. Booth visitors showed a great deal of interest and support for our efforts to preserve the Jose Theatre, Montgomery Hotel, River Street and local history and preservation in general. A big thank you to all our members and friends who worked so hard to help raise awareness and support for our projects.



## DALE MAJORS COORDINATES SALVAGE ON MEDICAL CLINIC HOUSES

by April Halberstadt

The San Jose Medical Clinic will soon be gone and construction of a new housing project is already underway on the site at 16th and San Fernando Street.

When it became apparent that it would not be possible to save the remaining historic homes, the project developer, Classic Communities proposed that members of the San Jose historic preservation community help coordinate a salvage effort.

Neighborhood members of the Preservation Action Council and the Victorian Preservation Association as well as the Campus Community Association were organized to assist.

Dale Majors, a Naglee Park neighbor from 15th Street, stepped forward and volunteered to coordinate the salvage efforts on the houses that the Medical Clinic was planning to demolish.

Dale's effort is especially notable since he is not an official card-carrying member of any of the local preservation groups, but is an individual who has a longtime interest and personal commitment to preservation efforts. His own expertise is focused on historic electrical and telecommunication systems.

The salvage undertaking turned out to be one of those projects that grew larger and more complex as it went along. What was first planned as a small neighborhood salvage effort quickly turned into a big, complex, dirty job. We are very grateful for Dale's expertise and commitment in making this project workable for all concerned.

The salvage project was first proposed by the city and the community in order to save as much of these structures as possible. While it first seemed that Classic Communities /Mozart Development would assist us in our effort, it turned out that they were able to do little more than give their permission. Making arrangements for proper insurance coverage was the first stumbling block. It was necessary to post a liability bond of \$1 million to do any work. Then the effort to organize a work crew was hampered since only bonded individuals were allowed to enter the work site and remove salvaged items.

In addition the Medical Clinic had allowed tenants in two rental houses who were IV drugs users and their drug paraphernalia littered the site, making it dangerous to work. Classic Communities also insisted that all the salvage work

be completed within a very short deadline, allowing only about a week to clear all structures. Dale cheerfully met all the challenges and deadlines, working days and nights to salvage as many items as possible.

And then when it appeared that many of the salvage items were going to be in demand, Dale organized an auction in order to give everyone an equal opportunity. Seeing beautiful and functional houses destroyed is frequently very painful for the nearby community and Dale's work has eased a very sad situation.

Neighbors who bought salvage items from the auction have commented that the pieces were in beautiful condition. Salvaged items ranged from a pair of lavender sinks to redwood siding and included antique window sash, doors, molding and hardware.

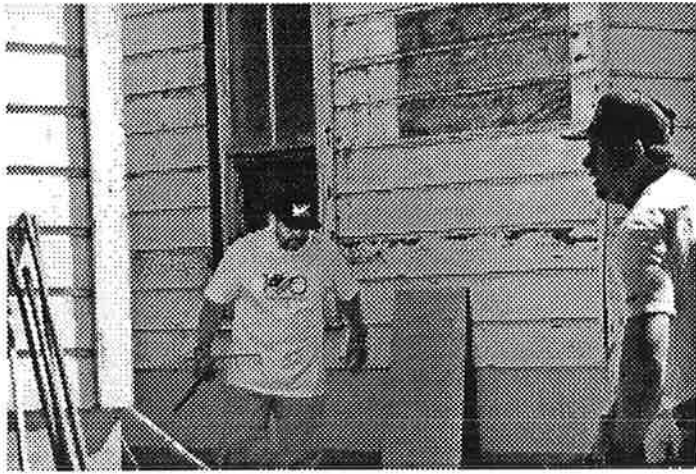
Proceeds from the auction, after expenses, are being suitably donated to assist the preservation efforts of other house restoration projects in the community. It is planned that the River Street restoration project will benefit from the money raised in the Naglee Park community. It is generous people like Dale Majors who make life in Naglee Park interesting and rewarding.



*One of the demolished houses from which pieces were salvaged*



*"There's Gotta be a Story Here"  
Steps of First Church of Christ Scientist*



*KPMG Partner Harvey Armstrong (left) directs clean up operation on River Street*

## **KPMG PEAT MARWICK CLEANS UP RIVER STREET**

*by April Halberstadt*

**O**n September 22, 1997, the River Street area was the site of a centennial celebration by the venerable accounting firm known as Peat Marwick. To honor the 100th anniversary of their founding, the entire company nationwide devoted the day to helping their local community. Here in San Jose the Guadalupe River Park was the beneficiary of their effort. Reportedly 20,000 employees across America participated in the project and about 600 employees of Peat Marwick in Santa Clara County helped. Employees came from the local offices in downtown San Jose and Palo Alto.

The Peat Marwick volunteers focused their attention on the Guadalupe River Park and nearly 40 adventurous souls chose to work at the River Street site. While they were anticipating working in a site clean-up effort, they were willing and able to handle a much larger and dirtier job. The volunteers performed a number of really dirty and somewhat dangerous jobs. Concentrating most of their efforts in the Wissman House, they cheerfully broke up concrete with a sledgehammer and removed it. Then they moved into three downstairs rooms that needed to have the plaster removed, tore out the old cabinets and removed the plaster on the walls and ceilings down to the lath.

All of the River Street houses had piles of bricks in the structures, bricks from the fireplaces and chimneys that were dismantled and placed inside each house when the buildings were moved. The Peat Marwick volunteers removed all the brick from all of the houses, cleaned the mortar from the bricks and neatly stacked them. They knocked down and removed the old drywall plasterboard from the Prindiville store. And they carefully removed all the old stucco nails from the 1872 store structure.

Finally they thoroughly cleaned the entire site, removed all the trash and beer bottles that had accumulated and cut down all the weeds and volunteer aianthus trees. The amount of work that they managed to accomplish in one day was truly amazing!

Peat Marwick employees at the River Street site were organized and coordinated by Harvey Armstrong, whose official title is Partner in Charge of the local KPMG Peat Marwick operation. Kathy Muller of the Guadalupe River Park Task Force and David Pandori's Council District 3 office provided critical logistic support, supplying dumpsters, wheelbarrows and other essential tools. The entire group, sweaty, dirty but still smiling, met at the Arena Green in the afternoon for a terrific barbecue. We were extremely impressed by the amount of work accomplished by these enthusiastic volunteers.

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## **NEW LOCAL HISTORY BOOK AVAILABLE** *Willow Glen: Then and Now*

**T**here is a new local history book on the market, dedicated on the front page to all our friends in the local preservation community. Since so many

members of the heritage community seem to work with so little thanks, it seemed only proper that their



*The Maynard House*

efforts should somehow be acknowledged. The new book is titled *Willow Glen: Then and Now*, produced by two Preservation Action Council members, author April Halberstadt and publisher Nancy Newlin.

The book covers the development of Willow Glen from its days as the little community of La Abra in 1852, down to the relatively recent organization of the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association and the appearance of the annual Willow Glen Lifestyles House Tour.

This is the first book in a planned local history series about the development of local neighborhoods. Since Nancy Newlin is an ardent believer in supporting independent bookstores, the book is available at Willow Glen Books, Lincoln Avenue Books, and several other small local retail outlets. Retail price is \$11.95.

## PRINDIVILLE FAMILY INFLUENCES EARLY RIVER STREET DISTRICT

by April Halberstadt

The River Street Historic District includes several structures that date to approximately 1870. Several of the homes and the historic grocery store are an important part of the heritage of one remarkable family of Santa Clara County pioneers, the Prindiville's. The grocery store and its adjacent house were owned by the matriarch of the family Mrs. Hannah Prindiville, and as the family grew other members moved into houses nearby.

We have been in contact with one local family member, Mrs. Nano Prindiville Conway, and she has introduced us to her brother who is their family historian. Dr. Gerald Prindiville, a retired college administrator, lives in Carson City Nevada and sent us his notes on the Prindiville family history.

While Maurice D. Prindiville arrived in San Jose from Boston across the plains via covered wagon, his wife Hannah and two of the children crossed via the isthmus of Panama. The family was active in local business and in St. Joseph's Church. Mr. Prindiville was one of the founders of Calvary Cemetery and was reportedly the sixth person buried there. There were a total of five children in the family; Denis, James, young Maurice, George and one girl, Mame.

When her husband died Hannah rented out the grocery to widow, Mrs. Hart and it became known as the Hart Grocery. There were three children in the Hart family and they all lived in a small apartment at the rear of the store. The oldest boy, Laurence was an outstanding baseball player who eventually became foreman at the nearby Fredericksburg brewery. Young Maurice Prindiville was also a celebrated baseball player, a talented second baseman

for the San Francisco Seals, he was a champion batter in the Pacific Coast Baseball League in 1899 and 1900. He went on to play for both the Boston Red Sox and the Chicago White Sox. It was Maurice who was a booster for the establishment of "Lake Monahan", the short-lived recreation lake built on River Street. When he retired from baseball Maurice went to work for the San Jose Evening News which was located nearby on West Santa Clara Street.

James Prindiville was also an athlete but his interest was bicycle racing. He was also a champion in his chosen sport and impressed the neighborhood children with the number of bicycles in his collection. Jim joined the San Jose Police Department around 1888 and was promoted to detective. A lifelong bachelor, he retired in 1920.

George was the youngest child (1876-1959). He went to work at the San Jose Water Works on West Santa Clara Street, married in 1908 and moved into a house at 54 River Street with his new bride. About 1915 he founded the American Tire Company located on West Santa Clara just across from the waterworks. He then established a small finance company, the first local consumer finance business of its type, lending money for automobiles. The San Jose Finance Company became an immediate success.

George was also an investor in real estate and commercial properties, owning several lots on Lincoln Avenue and on Willow Street in Willow Glen. He sold one of the Lincoln Avenue lots to the Safeway Store when it was looking for a Willow Glen site.

The George Prindiville family included four children; Gerald, George D. (deceased), Helen and Nano. They are all very interested in the River Street project and have asked us to stay in touch.

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Membership Type:

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20        | <input type="checkbox"/> School/Non-Profit \$25 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (over 65) \$10  | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Business \$100   |
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ENCLOSED IS MY \$\_\_\_ TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION FOR:     LEGAL DEFENSE FUND     RIVER STREET

Please complete this form,  
enclose it with your check, and mail to:  
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P.O. Box 2287, San Jose, CA 95109

# CALENDAR

NOVEMBER
17 (MON) PACSJ OPEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING 7PM MOTHER OLSON'S INN, 72 NORTH FIFTH STREET
DECEMBER
7 (SUN) CITY OF SAN JOSE HOLIDAY PARADE DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE
7 (SUN) PACSJ'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATION, 6:00 PM (SEE NOTICE ON PAGE 3 FOR DETAILS)
15 (MON) PACSJ OPEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 7PM MOTHER OLSON'S INN, 72 NORTH FIFTH STREET
25 (THUR) <i>Merry Christmas!</i>
JANUARY
1 (THUR) <i>Happy New Year!</i>
19 (MON) PACSJ OPEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 7PM MOTHER OLSON'S INN, 72 NORTH FIFTH STREET



The Preservation Action Council of San Jose 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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