



## Scheller House Future Still Undecided

By Tom Simon

The Scheller House, spared from certain demolition last September by PAC-SJ's successful legal action, remains unused on campus as San Jose State University decides what to do with it. Although a court order requires environmental review if SJSU decides to destroy the building, the university's new president, Robert Caret, is evaluating alternatives.

On-site renovation would be the most cost effective option and would eliminate damages that would occur if the house were moved. However, the university states that the house occupies land needed for a new \$50 million science building. The science building is, in the most optimistic estimates, at least five years away from being built, and the proposed foot print only overlaps the Scheller House by two feet. The science building could be designed to accommodate the Scheller House, since no site planning or architectural work has been done yet.

Funding remains an issue, and PAC-SJ is working with

San Jose State University to identify any possible funding opportunities. Currently, the building does not get any budget money for maintenance or capital improvements because SJSU has categorized it as "temporary." Ironically, the court has ruled the building as a historic site, and the university's policy states that historic buildings cannot be temporary. Therefore, the university should remove the temporary designation.

PAC-SJ would like to see the university benefit by making the building an active part of the campus again. It could house some of the many collections the university hosts, accommodate visiting scholars, or provide a site for meetings, exhibitions, fund raising events or student clubs. Clearly the voice of the community can influence the outcome. Anyone interested should contact President Caret's Office at (408) 924-1177 or fax 924-1199, or write to him at One Washington Square, San Jose, CA, 95192. ☞

## Annual Preservation Awards, Arts and Crafts Lecture to Mark Preservation Week

Preservation Action Council of San Jose will join with the Victorian Preservation Association of Santa Clara Valley and the San Jose Historical Museum on Thursday, May 18, to celebrate National Preservation Week.

PAC-SJ's annual preservation awards will begin the event. (Award recipients will be selected at our April 17 open board meeting; call Betsy Mathieson at 408-293-5852

if you wish to nominate a structure or person.) Guest speaker Kenneth R. Trapp, Curator of Decorative Art at the Oakland Museum, will discuss "The Arts and Crafts Movement in California; Living the Good Life." Mr. Trapp is the editor of a recent book with the same title.

Many of you may have seen Mr. Trapp's extremely popular Oakland Museum exhibit on the Arts and Crafts style. The 1993 exhibit, which emphasized pottery, furniture and metalwork,

later was displayed at the Smithsonian Institution and in Cincinnati. The City Store, the museum gift shop in the Pacific Hotel Building, will be open 6 PM to 7 PM. Several local history book authors will be present during that time to autograph book purchases.

The May 18 awards presentation and lecture will begin at 7:00 PM., upstairs in the Empire Firehouse at the San

Jose Historical Museum, 1600 Senter Road, San Jose. Entrance to the museum will be through the Phelan Avenue gate, and parking is allowed on the museum streets. Refreshments will be served. Limited seating is available, so make your reservations early. Please send your check for \$5 per person to: PAC-SJ, P.O. Box 2287, San Jose, CA 95109-2287. Entry will be allowed from reservation list at the door. ☞

### Tour of First Unitarian Church Included in April Meeting

PAC-SJ has been invited to hold its April 17 Open Board Meeting at the First Unitarian Church, 160 North 3rd Street. A tour of the Church, a historic landmark built in 1892, will begin at 6:30 PM, with the business meeting to follow. All PAC-SJ members are invited to attend. We need an advance count, so place your reservation by calling 947-8025. Leave your name and number of attendees, then join us for an interesting tour and meeting. ☞



# From the President

By Ellen Garboske

The rains came down, everyone felt damp and soggy (read that as irritable), and River Street lived up to its name. We regret the loss and suffering of the area's residents, and thank all the volunteers who helped sandbag and clean up. Hopefully, the floods won't recur this year, and the flood control project will move forward quickly.

The River Street project is heating up, in spite of the damp and cold. PAC-SJ task force members have been meeting with city officials, the Army Corp. of Engineers and the Santa Clara Valley Water District in efforts

to save structures in this early working-class neighborhood. Special thanks to Council members Trixie Johnson and David Pandori, and the San Jose Planning Department staff for their support.

I keep hearing "what's happenin' with the Scheller House?" Dr. Robert Caret, San Jose State University's new president, met with PAC-SJ on March 29 to discuss the future of this historic house (see page 1.) We'll have the whole story for you at the April open board meeting.

Speaking of the April open board meeting, it will be held at the First Unitarian Church, with an interpretive tour of this important historic structure preceding the meeting. You're all invited, so make your reservation, and don't miss this one! (See page 1.)

PAC-SJ has been asked to host the California Preservation Foundation in San Jose in spring of 1996. This is quite an honor and we are pleased to accept. We'll be looking

for local organizations to help out with this event, and will keep you posted.

San Jose Union School District is scheduled to present plans on April 3, 1995, to sell Old Hoover School. Evidently, this magnificent historic structure will be sold to a local developer with plans to either demolish it or turn it into housing. We need to keep our eye on this to be sure it's not demolished. Hopefully, consideration will be given to restoring it and using it either as a school again, or as a community center or other public structure.

Beginning with this issue,

CONTINUITY has a new editor, Kerstin Plemel. Kerstin is new to San Jose, holds a degree in communications, and is looking forward to editing and publishing our newsletter. A big job — we appreciate her enthusiasm and look forward to seeing her imprint on our publication. Heather Meza, a graphic artist and native of San Jose, has volunteered to "spruce up" the newsletter's overall look, and we thank her for the contribution.

Linda Larson Boston has done an outstanding job as newsletter editor, which has grown in size and professionalism under her guidance. However, by relinquishing her newsletter duties, she'll now have time to work on task forces. Thanks for all your hard work, Linda!

As you can see, there's lots going on, and we urge each of you to pick a project and get involved! Call us at 947-8025, leave your name and number and we'll be in touch! ❧

*"The River Street project is heating up...efforts to save structures in this early working-class neighborhood."*

## Palo Alto's Varsity Theatre Threatened

by Natalie Wells

The majestic Varsity Theatre in Palo Alto, constructed in 1927, has continuously played an important roll in the community's cultural life. The Varsity was designed by the distinguished firm of Reid & Reid, whose works also include San Francisco's Cliff House, Fairmont Hotel, and Call Building. The Reid brothers also developed Monterey's State Theatre, Oakland's Grand Lake Theatre and San Diego's internationally renowned Hotel Del Coronado.

The Varsity is the only Mission Revival courtyard theatre in North America. Patrons would enter the courtyard, which was lit by Spanish lanterns, stroll past the fountain and into the ornate Spanish Renaissance lobby and then into the Mission Revival auditorium. The auditorium featured immense wrought iron chandeliers, tall wall niches lined with gold, twilight blue ceiling and rich lavender and purple tapestry stage curtains.

For almost seventy years, the Varsity has shown films and has been the venue for many world-class live performances, charity benefits and other community events. Now this historic landmark structure is targeted for use as a retail chain bookstore, with plans of gutting the interior of this magnificent building.

Friends of the Varsity Theatre is a group formed to preserve the neglected cinema for its original use. The Palo Alto Planning Commission will review the draft EIR on March 29, 1995, at 7:30 p.m., and the City Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, May 22, at 7 PM in the council chambers. Preservationists can help by attending these hearings or contacting the Friends of the Varsity Theatre. ❧

# Beatrice Building, Facts or Fiction

By Ellen Garboske

Mention the Beatrice Building and reaction is usually a blank look. Refer to the building as Teske's Germania Restaurant, located in the Beatrice Building at 255 N. First Street, and recognition is immediate.

Giovanni Raggio, an Italian grocer who arrived in San Jose around 1890, constructed this two-story brick building around 1895. Evidently, Raggio was not a "poor" immigrant when he located in San Jose. In 1891 he commissioned architect George W. Page to design "brick stores and a residence" on First Street, at a cost of \$6500, no small sum at that time. It is thought, but not proven, that this commission was for the Beatrice Building. Page was also the architect for several of San Jose's finest historical buildings, including the Knox-Goodrich Building and the First Unitarian Church on historic St. James Square.

Various retail grocers occupied the street level floor of the Beatrice building from the 1890s through the 1940s. A paragraph from an undated publication (appears to be from around the turn-of-the-century) extolling the virtues of San Jose's grocers, describes the Beatrice tenant as follows:

"The store of F.B. Heath on the corner of First and Devine streets is one that attracts the attention of

all lovers of choice groceries. The stock is the cleanest and freshest in San Jose, and prices within the reach of all. Immediate delivery is one of the things the firm guarantees, and none but courteous and efficient clerks are employed. Their customers are always sure of getting what they order, of generous weight and full measure."

The Old Fashioned Club restaurant occupied the street level in 1950, a tradition that continues today with Teske's Germania. The second floor was designed as furnished rooms and in later years was used for offices. Teske's main dining room actually extended into the Beatrice Building's next door neighbor, the Tognazzi Building. The ceiling of the dining room was salvaged from the old Liberty Theatre and restored and installed by Dave Thomas, owner of the Tognazzi Building. Thomas said it cost \$12,000 to restore the metal squares, add gold leaf, and install it in Teske's. Thomas was also responsible for developing Teske's beer garden behind the building, where he did some rather unusual things, such as using reject tombstones (misspelled names, wrong dates, etc.) as underground supports for pillars, arches, and pipes.

During prohibition, local officials

suspected that a bootleg operation was located in the back room of the Beatrice Building. The local sheriff was instructed to raid the building, but reported that he found nothing. Twenty minutes later the Feds conducted their own raid, found a hidden door in the south wall of the current dining room, and found a large supply of booze. The story goes that the sheriff, suspected of collusion with the bootleggers, was fired.


Much of the information on the Beatrice Building is legend and conjecture. Further research needs to be done, and I challenge our readers to sharpen their detective skills and come up with answers to the following:

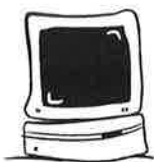
## 1. The Case of the Unknown

**Architect** - Was Page really the architect of the Beatrice Building? If not, who was? What year was it built?

## 2. The Case of the Crooked Sheriff

Is the prohibition story true? Was the sheriff crooked? Was he fired?

If your research is successful, put the information in writing, document your sources, and send it to PAC-SJ, PO Box 2287, San Jose, CA 95109-2287. Any additional information turned up on your search will be valuable to the documentation of this structure. The first person to submit proven answers to either or both cases will win recognition in our newsletter and a one-year membership in PAC-SJ. Join the fun, and good hunting! 




## Computerization for History Organizations Workshop Held at Local Historic Site

by Beth Wyman

A computer workshop for local historical organizations was held on Saturday, March 4, 1995, at the Hayes Renaissance Conference Center. The meeting, the first of what may become a series of educational efforts, was well received by its fifty participants.

The Don Anderson Fund of the Sourisseau Academy and the Heritage Council of Santa Clara County sponsored the meeting. Edith Butler,

an archivist and computer consultant from Eureka, was the keynote speaker. Local panelists included Kathleen Peregrine, Director of the California History Center, Julia O'Keefe, Archivist at Santa Clara University and David Lea, from Virtual Valley. Luncheon was held in the Silver Creek dining room with Nancy Newlin, author of The Hayes Family and the Gem of Edenvale, as speaker.

Guided tours of the 65 room, 41,000 square foot mansion were offered in the afternoon. The Hayes Renaissance Conference Center was created through the renovation and remodeling of the Hayes Mansion in San Jose's Edenvale District. The mansion, which is one of the South Bay's most unique and historic buildings, was designed by Architect George Page and was completed in 1905. 



# Watchdog Report

The Dog has been wet behind the ears for the last couple of months, so I haven't been able to cover as much ground in my nightly romps.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, I have been very concerned about all those friendly feral felines in the *River Street Historic District*. Where did they all go during the flooding? Does anyone out there know when the first non-native cat was brought into the Valley? Someone needs to do a book on local dog and cat history. I'm sure the Sourriseau Academy at San Jose State will help with a grant. Maybe my friend **Jack Douglas** will do it after he finishes his book about **General Naglee**. Or maybe **Ellen Garboske** could write it. She's always wanted to be an author.

Speaking of River Street, I was there at the breach over the Santa Clara Street Bridge the afternoon of March 10. A lot of people have been saying that trash was causing the river back-up. Believe me, there was just too much water to fit under that bridge—our city fathers knew

what they were doing when they named the street back in the 1860's. I say it's time to give River Street back to the River.

It's also time to get the name right for the historic district at River Street. San Augustine was the old name for West St. John Street before it was connected to East St. John Street in modern times. The old Italians I've talked to always refer to San Augustine when talking about Little Italy. I say name the place the *San Augustine Historic District*. Let's get it right before this thing evolves too far.

One last thing on this historic district thing. The Dog has heard that the **Open Space in Urban Centers League** will use a new argument in pushing their *Contract for a Uniform American Suburban Metropolis* in San Jose. (I think the group got started in the Bronx in the 50's.) Apparently, the flood control berm along River Street needs to be adjusted slightly to accommodate preservation of *Henry's HiLife* and the surrounding historic buildings. They are claiming that if the US

Army Corps are asked to adjust their design, they will just throw up their hands and kill the flood control project. The Corps only has a year left for design until the project is supposed to start, so I guess the League doesn't think they will be able to fit it in between coffee breaks. Personally, I think the US Army deserves more respect.

The **Fox California** energy is picking up. Michael Jackson, Ted Turner and Harrison Ford have been contacted to see if they are interested in investing in San Jose's last grand cinema. The **Save the Fox Adhoc Committee** has been meeting again over at Eulipia, and maybe this year something may actually happen! All you historic theater buffs should get ready to go down to the city council meeting later this spring to get this project off the ground. The Dog will be there.

One last thing. In my last column, I sort of took credit for noticing that there appears to be some original artwork hidden under the furred stucco walls in the *Jose Theater*. It actually was **Landmarks Commissioner Jim Salata** who first brought this to public light. He's the best bird dog man in town for finding hidden treasures within San Jose's old buildings. I wanted to ride over to River Street with him the other day to see what I could learn, but he didn't have any doggie tie-downs in the bed of his pick-up. Maybe next month. 🐾



## Book Review

By Jack Douglas

*The Gem of Edenvale: the Historic Hayes Mansion of San Jose, California*

The *Gem of Edenvale*, written by PAC-SJ's own Nancy Newlin, is a beautifully designed, well written volume. The six chapters cover Mary Hayes Chynoweth, architect George Page, the first Hayes mansion, the second (current) mansion, the Hayes Estate, and the restoration and reuse as a conference facility. Each chap-

ter is profusely illustrated including photos of the family, interiors of both houses, maps and architectural drawings.

The story of Mary Hayes and her two sons rivals the much better known Sarah Winchester in its quirkiness and would provide grist for a long TV miniseries. The chapter on George Page is particularly welcome as it fleshes out an important local architect for whom little was previously known.

Historic preservationists can take encouragement from the later chapters which describe the decay, near

destruction, and glorious restoration of one of the most unique buildings in California. Certainly one of our Valley's greatest preservation success stories, Newlin has given us a book to treasure. 🐾

### The book is available at:

- The City Store, Peralta Adobe & Fallon House Historic Site
- The San Jose Historical Museum
- The San Jose Museum of Art
- The book's publisher, Rensaci, PO Box 28338, San Jose, CA, 95159-8338 (408) 297-4084



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## Civil War Memorial Begins May 27

The San Jose Historical Museum and the National Civil War Association will present "Civil War Memorial," 10 AM to 5 PM May 27, 28, and 10 AM to 4 PM May 29 at Alma and Senter, as the south end of Kelley Park.

The event will feature authentic Confederate, Union and Civilian Camps, twice daily Battle Re-enactments, and over 2,000 costumed participants. Visitors can also enjoy a Grand Battalion March, an 1863 Ladies Fashion Show, and an 1860's wedding procession re-enactment.

Ticket prices are: adults \$6, seniors (65+) \$5, youths (4-17) \$4, and children (0-3) free. Call 408-287-2290 for more information.

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# CALENDAR

## APRIL

- 5 (Wednesday) San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission meeting, City Hall, Room 204, 6 PM
- 12 (Wednesday) CHARITECH Showcase of Community Involvement, San Jose Arena, noon to 8 PM
- 17 (Monday) PAC-SJ Open Board of Directors meeting at First Unitarian Church, 160 N. Third St., 6:30 PM Tour, 7 PM meeting

## MAY

- 13 (Saturday) Luther Burbank Jamboree, West San Carlos St. at Wabash, 9 AM to 4 PM Antiques, Crafts, Classic Car Parade, Tours, Food.
- 15 (Monday) PAC-SJ Open Board of Directors meeting, Mother Olson's Inn, 72 N. Fifth St., 7 PM
- 18 (Thursday) PAC-SJ Annual Preservation Awards Ceremony, Arts & Crafts expert Ken Trapp speaking on "Living the Good Life", San Jose Historical Museum, 1600 Senter Road, Firehouse Meeting Room., 7 PM
- 27-29 (Tue.-Thu.) CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL, Re-enactment, San Jose Historical Museum, 1600 Senter Road, all day (see article on page 5).

### CONTINUITY

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