

# THE MUSEUM TRUMPET



Vol. 2, No. 2

The Official Newsletter of the San Jose Fire Museum

July 2011

## **President's Message**

By John McMillan

### **Museum Activity Updates for the Summer, 2011**

Hello from the San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) Board of Directors. A lot has happened over the past 3 months, so we want to update you on our activities.

We have elected a new Board of Directors. The process always starts every April when nominations open for all 11 Board positions. Then, in May, a vote takes place to elect the new Board. I am happy to say that the Board's composition has not changed for 2 years in a row. This consistency has allowed the Board to maintain its focus.

That being said, we currently have a vacancy for the position of Secretary. However, at the June Board Meeting, a nomination for Eileen Townley (step-daughter of retired Firefighter Joe De Lise) was received. Action will be taken at the upcoming July Board Meeting to vote on the nomination.

Our By-Laws mandate that elections be held annually and anyone who is nominated can run for a position. Also, our By-Laws state that we will always have a majority of six active or retired San Jose firefighters on the Board. Just a reminder, our Board Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month from 9:00 A.M. to 12 noon. Everyone is invited.

Donations from our retirees keep increasing each month. We now have 64 retired San Jose firefighters making an average monthly donation of \$17 per month. The individual donations range from one dollar to \$100 per month. We also have individual retirees who have made one-time donations ranging from \$25 up to \$400.

*...Continued on Page 3*

## *SJFM News Update –*

### **Fate of “Old Fire Station One” Under Fire**

Once again, we seem to be at a crossroads over the future of Old Fire Station One.

A few weeks ago, San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed directed the Redevelopment Agency (through his 2011-2012 Budget Message) to sell Old Fire Station One. The RDA is the current owner of the building. For the past five years, the San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) has tried to negotiate a long-term lease with the City of San Jose and its RDA to occupy Old Fire Station One – all to no avail. Recently, a number of significant events have occurred that has left the fate of Old Fire Station One in limbo.



It all started when representatives of the SJFM first met with the RDA's Director, Harry Mavrojenes, in 2007.

At that meeting, a proposal was made by the Museum to lease the building from the RDA. There would be no financial liability to the RDA or the City. Mavrojenes was very clear in his response, saying that the Agency's strategy was to tear down Old Fire Station One and allow a developer to build a high-rise structure. A Development Proposal was released later that year to the private sector and then the RDA promptly pulled it back.

Then, on March 7, 2008, the Historic Landmarks Commission unanimously nominated Old Fire Station One as a City Landmark. A public hearing was scheduled for the June 9 City Council meeting and was cancelled – to be rescheduled for a later date. The hearing was finally scheduled about a year later, only to be cancelled again. As it stands, there has been no action by the San Jose City Council on the matter for 3 years, now.

In the meantime, the SJFM has continued to solicit public support, met with City Council members and built up a long list of developers, businesses and significant groups who endorse the Museum's proposal.

But, in June, a window of opportunity opened. Governor Jerry Brown announced that he wanted to dissolve California's RDAs – including that of San Jose. When the SJFM Board found out about this, it was decided to take the fight to the next level.

Under Brown's proposal, Old Fire Station One (as an RDA property) could potentially become the property of the State by July 1, 2011. So, the SJFM started to have community meetings and met with some City Council members. The SJFM had a very good discussion with downtown City Council member Sam Liccardo and it appears that he is on board with the downtown fire museum concept. Meetings were also held with

*...Continued on Page 3*

# Firefighters Car Show Is A Huge Success!



On Saturday, June 18, the San Jose Fire Museum sponsored the “6<sup>th</sup> Annual San Jose Firefighters Car and Motorcycle Show”. The event was held in the beautiful surroundings of San Jose’s History Park. Although called a “Car Show”, the event is primarily designed as an opportunity for families and friends to get together for a relaxing day of viewing beautiful cars, eating great food and listening to live music.

This was by far the largest show ever as over 500 people, including active and retired firefighters and their families, came out to view the 125 antique, classic and street rod vehicles and motorcycles.

The event included judging of the vehicles and motorcycles. This year, we were privileged to have as our judges: San Jose Fire Chief Willy McDonald, former San Jose Chief and current Gilroy Fire Chief Dale Foster, current Fire Museum President and retired Assistant Chief John McMillan, retired Deputy Chief Dana Reed and Deputy Chief Gary Gallasso.

Three bands provided the day’s entertainment, headlined by our own Steve Alvarado family band – The Rhythm Merchants. The music fit the atmosphere as the bands played a combination of oldies along with more modern hits.

Food was provided by Peggy Sue’s and Louisiana Territory accompanied by wine, beer, soda and water. Car Show T-shirts were also on sale and, if you missed the opportunity, some shirts are still available



*This row of beautifully restored vintage vehicles and hot rods is just a sample of the classic cars, antiques and motorcycles in attendance*

for sale at the Fire Museum. Additionally, a silent auction, raffle and 50/50 raffle were held – with the big winner taking home \$316.00! Proceeds from the day’s activities will directly benefit the activities of the San Jose Fire Museum.

Due to the event’s success, organizers are currently planning for next year. Visit the Museum’s web site and click on the link to the “Firefighters Car and Motorcycle Show” ([sanjosefiremuseum.com](http://sanjosefiremuseum.com)). The date of next year’s show, along with photos of this year’s event, will be posted.



*The “Best In Show” title was awarded to Pete Revalin and his bright red, ‘67 Chevelle SS*

## **Tour Time:**

### **Museum Hosts Multiple Gatherings**

The San Jose Fire Museum has recently been the host for a variety of group outings.

In March, a large group of scouts and their parents gathered at the Museum warehouse for a tour. Led by den leader Ken Wright, the boys of Cub Scout Pack 226 were given a tour by SJFM volunteer John Whitaker and and vice president Jim Carter.

Sponsored by Achiever Christian School, the den’s field trip satisfied a rank advancement requirement by visiting an historical place. The scouts showed a keen interest in the collection by asking a number of questions during the tour and posing for photographs.

The Museum was also the site of the General Membership Business Meeting of the California Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire Apparatus in America (SPAAMFAA).

Founded in 1958 at Syracuse, New York, SPAAMFAA was organized with the purpose of preserving and displaying antique fire apparatus and promoting an appreciation of fire service history all across America. So, what better place to hold a meeting than surrounded by our world-class collection?

The California Chapter was the second SPAAMFAA chapter ever to be granted a charter, with local collector Leonard Williams (an active SJFM consultant) serving as the group’s first chapter president.

During the event, the SJFM took advantage of the opportunity by holding a “fire sale” of surplus fire accessories and equipment.

Another event that has taken place since the last newsletter was a BBQ for the San Jose Fire Department’s administrative staff. The free, lunchtime meal was offered as a way of saying “thank you” to staff members who have often helped out the Fire Museum.

In attendance was SJFD Chief Willy McDonald and members of his senior staff.



*Cub Scout Pack 226 poses for photo during tour*



*SJFM President John McMillan personally thanks SJFD’s Administrative Staff at BBQ*



## **President's Message:**

*Continued from Page 1...*

Our biggest donation challenge today is creating an easy and effective donation program for active San Jose firefighters. We hope to have a new, simpler program in place this fall.

In the private sector, we continue to see one-time donations come in and have a number of substantial commitments for donations at a later date.

These donations are important because this is what keeps us going as far as preservation and restoration of our history. The collection keeps growing and funding

is what makes the difference in our effectiveness. Furthermore, our hopes of taking control and maintaining Old Fire Station One will depend on how many donations are received.

As always, we need your help. There are over 600 retired and 700 active firefighters who can help -- but fewer than 10% are currently contributing. Please consider the San Jose Fire Museum as a choice when making your annual contributions. Remember, we are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and all your donations are fully tax deductible.

The other critical element to our success is volunteerism. Over the past few months,

we have noticed more volunteers donating their time on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On these days, the Museum warehouse is open from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. We have different clean-up chores and projects available. If you have an interest in forming a team of friends to take on an apparatus restoration project, we welcome you. Finally, we want to thank those new volunteers who are showing up and encourage others to participate.

There are some additional articles in this newsletter about the status of Old Fire Station One, and the restoration of an early 1800's 4-wheeled hose cart, that I hope you take time to read.

## **Restoration Round-up:**

### **What Is A Hose Cart?**

By David Wood

In the early 1800's, hand-drawn hose carts were pulled by a team of firemen to the fire scene. The cart's hose was a vast improvement over the slow and labor-intensive bucket brigades for getting water onto a fire. The carts carried up to 300 feet of hose, a nozzle and a couple of axes to give the fire crews the tools they needed.

Hose carts had two or four wheels and had a pull rope to allow several people to drag the hose cart down the street. Firemen would later use the hose carts to compete in fire musters trying to set record times for laying hose. Many old carts were used into the early 1900's only to be replaced by motorized hose wagons.

In 1970, retired SJFD Captains Sam Seibert and Joe Paradiso purchased a four-wheeled hose cart at the same time as our James Smith 1810 hand pumper. The pumper was quickly restored, but the hose cart took a little longer -- about 40 years!

In 1977, the cart frame was restored by the Sierra Conservation Corps, but the wheels were beyond repair. Last year, four new 59-inch wooden wheels were ordered and made by Master Wheelwright Tim Mylrea of Lincoln, CA. Tim purchased the hubs, spokes and steam-bent fellows from the East Coast. When the wood arrived in California, the material needed to adjust to our state's drier climate. The wheels arrived at the Fire Museum warehouse this past month and, after placement on the chassis, the hose cart is back on the road.

Thanks goes to Buck Kamphausen of the Neptune Society for his generous \$3,000 donation that made this project a reality.



*Dave Wood and Sam Seibert work on hose cart*

## ***SJFM News Update – Fate of “Old Fire Station One” Under Fire...***

*Continued from Page 1...*

Council members Kalra, Campos and Rocha who gave their full attention and understood the Museum's daunting challenge. They all agreed that the Museum's plan contained a lot of great logic for the reuse of Old Fire Station One.

The SJFM has also attended two meetings of the City Landmark Commission. Museum representatives were given the chance to express a desire to see Old Fire Station One once and for all go to City Council for a final discussion and, thus, complete the Landmarks process.

Now, based on the latest news from Sacramento, it appears that San Jose's RDA is safe for another year – or is it?

As the Mayor attempts to sell Old Fire Station One, apparently the State of California is moving forward with new legislation to eliminate the RDA and take over its assets (*San Jose Mercury News* report, June 17, 2011). Yet, no one in the City appears willing to consider the historic value of the building and step in to save it!

In any event, the bottom line remains – the SJFM needs to somehow save Old Fire Station One for its historic presence in the already existing Historic Walking District of downtown San Jose.

Stay tuned! There's bound to be further details coming down the road in this ever-changing saga.

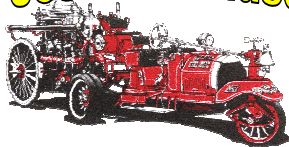
## **Chief Campbell Celebrates 104<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

On April 25, several friends visited retired SJFD Battalion Chief Lawrence A. Campbell to celebrate his 104th birthday. On hand for this special occasion were retired Fire Chief Bruce Staples, retired Fire Captain Dennis Madigan, retired Fire Captain Jeff Shackelford and his wife Sherry. The "Cake and Candles Ceremony" was shared with residents at his home in San Marcos, CA.

Campbell is the Historian Emeritus of the SJFM. His contributions to the preservation of our history have been remarkable and substantial. His several hundred pages of handwritten notes relative to San Jose's fire protection, gleaned from city records, were significant in the documentation of our Department's history. These notes were used in the writing and publication of the book "*Guardians of the Garden City*", a history of the SJFD.

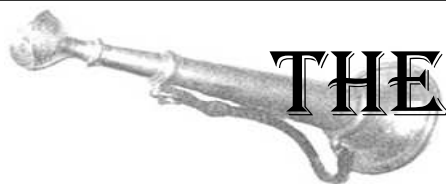
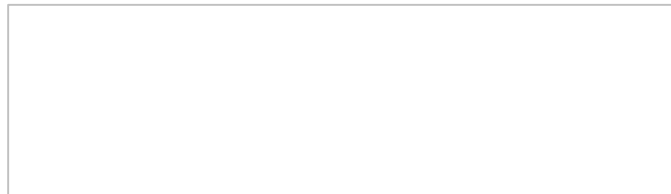


# San Jose Fire Museum



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*DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT*

### Calendar of Events

- August 6**      **Santa Clara Model T Club  
Tour of the San Jose Fire Museum  
1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.**
- Sept. 11**      **10th Anniversary of 911 Ceremony  
At San Jose Fire Station One  
255 N. Market Street  
San Jose, CA**
- Sept. 11**      **Antique Autos in History Park  
At Kelley Park, San Jose  
Noon to 5:00 P.M.  
Collection of Antique Autos, Including  
Antique Fire Apparatus**
- January 27**    **Annual San Jose Fire Department  
158th Anniversary Celebration  
At San Jose Fire Museum Warehouse  
5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.**

### "The Museum Trumpet"

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