

# THE MUSEUM TRUMPET



Vol. 6. No. 2

The Official Newsletter of the San Jose Fire Museum

June 2015

## **Save the Date — August 9, 2015**

# **SJFM to Hold Annual Car Show & Get-Together**

Hey! I recognize that car. That's the San Jose Fire Museum's 1905 Cadillac. But, where are those whacky firefighters going? Why, they're headed to a fun day at the 10th Annual San Jose Firefighters Car and Motorcycle Show.

Save the date — Sunday, August 9, 2015 between 9:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. Hosted by the San Jose Fire Museum, this year the show will be held at the San Jose Elks Club located at 444 W. Alma Ave. in San Jose. Based on past shows, the parking lot will be full of antiques, classics, hot rods, and some of the jewels of the Fire Museum.

Active and retired firefighters are requested to bring any vehicle they consider a classic car, collector car, hot rod, or motorcycle. And, as in years past, awards will be given out in various categories.

This event is a major fundraiser for the San Jose Fire Museum and all proceeds directly benefit the Museum. But, that's only one of the reasons the show is held every year. The original motivation to have a car show was to provide a "get-together" and fun afternoon for San Jose Firefighters along with their family and friends.

And, now in its 10th year, it seems that the show has been a success. A major success! Last year, over 500 people viewed approximately 80 gorgeous vehicles while enjoying a beautiful day with friends.

Music will once again be provided by our very own Fire Engineer Bryan Aquino. His help is greatly appreciated as his selection of music always matches the atmosphere of the event. Fun, fun, fun! And



to help make the day a little bit more enjoyable, food will be available for purchase.

If you're entering a vehicle before July 25, we are asking for a \$25.00 donation. To enter your vehicle before this date, you should go to our web-site ([sjfiremuseum.org](http://sjfiremuseum.org)), download the application, and mail it to the San Jose Fire Museum. However, if you choose to enter a car the day of the show, we are requesting a \$30.00 donation.

With your donation, you will receive a meal ticket good for a hot dog or a hamburger, along with a cold drink, and a bag of chips. Additionally, you will have your ride photographed alongside an antique fire apparatus as a "thank-you" for being a part of this great show.

## **President's Message**

By John A. McMillan

Hello to our family, friends, and volunteers from the San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM). As we move into the Summer of 2015, the SJFM has a lot to report.

Over the past 3 months, we have hosted a number of activities in our Museum Warehouse. The San Jose Fire Department (SJFD) used our facility for 3 separate SJFD Badge Ceremonies that were very successful events. During the recognition, many of the firefighters and their families were able to see the Fire Museum's collection for the

very first time. On May 9, we hosted a wedding reception for the Gentile Family, and, most recently, we hosted a Memorial Service for Dennis Madigan which had over 100 guests in attendance.

In addition, as you might suspect, during this period Old Fire Station One has received some tender loving care.

The SJFM hired Garden City Construction to begin the process of restoring the old firehouse. Initially, Fire Museum volunteers went through all the SJFD storage that was kept in Old One and sorted and saved whatever documents were of historic importance. Next, Garden City Construction completed

the abatement of any asbestos and lead paint. When that task was accomplished, the building was completely cleaned out.

Just recently, the SJFM had a security system installed by SJFD Retired Fire Captain Michael Woodworth. And while that work was being completed, Cintas Fire Extinguishers installed the building's required fire extinguishers.

Finally, we asked Garden City to paint the apparatus bay walls and ceiling and then clean and polish the apparatus floors. The old firehouse now looks great -- especially

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## "Year of the Horse"

# 2015 Membership Pin Commemorates the Last Horses Used By the SJFD

This year's Museum pin is in a horseshoe shape that symbolizes the 100-year anniversary of the last San Jose fire horse to serve the San Jose Fire Department.

It all started in 1871 when the men of the Empire Engine Company were forced to admit they had enough of wrestling their two-ton steam engine to fires and received permission to acquire a driver and a team of horses. This was the beginning of the "Era of the Horse" in the SJFD.

The 1898 *Department Rules and Regulations* stated that horses would be driven "no faster than a trot." They were exercised daily, but regulations required that they stray no more than 3 blocks from the station and all horses were to be kept bridled and bitted.

The chemical wagons and hose carts were pulled by the light stock and the larger steamers were pulled by the heavy, 1,500-pound equines. After arriving at a fire, the sweating animals were unhitched and blan-

keted, except for the horses assigned to the chemical engines. The usefulness of this apparatus depended upon mobility and required that the horses stay hitched to the equipment.

Chief Brown once described the training and utilization of San Jose fire horses proclaiming, "Those horses know their business just as well as the men, and take just as much interest in it."

There are a few stories about San Jose fire horses, but the following is one of the more interesting.

At the South 8th Street firehouse, a big bay named "Rooster" was smart enough to turn in his own false alarm. Chief Brown recounted that, "We have, on the firehouses, local bells for turning in still alarms. One day, the foreman of the company was temporarily away, and other members were somewhere in the vicinity, when suddenly a still alarm on the local bell brought them all to the firehouse on the jump. But what they saw was old "Rooster" with the local bell rope in his mouth jingling it for all it was worth!" You see, the horse had gotten loose from his stall and went straight for the bell rope.

The notion of selling off the horses was unthinkable to some, but in



1915, the Fire Commissioners began purchasing motor trucks for the Department and selling off the beloved horses. The old horse-drawn fire apparatus were sold, while many of the hose beds, chemicals tanks, etc. were rebuilt onto truck chassis.

Engine No. 1's three horses were especially missed. They included "Blutcher", a big 8-year-old black with only 4 years service. His teammates were "Frank" and "Dick" -- each 13 years old. Veteran driver Tim Sullivan took them out on their last run, later pointing sadly to the new motorized rigs and exclaiming, "They're good machines, all right, but you can't love 'em and they can't love you back."

On December 2, 1915, the newsman Wilson Albee wrote, "No more will the faithful animals spring from their stalls at the fist tap of the gong, aquiver, every muscle ready to strain in the harness until their last breath."



*Historic black and white images of SJFD horses from the photo archives of the San Jose Fire Museum.*



## **President's Message**

*Continued from Page 1...*

the apparatus floor space. But keep in mind that even though the building is clean and safe from contamination, it still shows scars from all the years of neglect. There is a lot of work yet to be accomplished.

In the near future, the SJFM intends to use the apparatus floor as a display space. Here, potential financial partners will be able to view the facility with some of our historic collection as a backdrop. Be sure to watch for upcoming announcements about a major barbecue for all active and retired San Jose Firefighters and an open house at Old Fire Station One.

In other news involving Old Fire Station One, the SJFM has entered into 3 consultant contracts.

First, we have started what is known as a "pre-program design study". This study will explore some preliminary floor plan

designs to indicate how the restored Old Fire Station One will be transformed as a fire museum. This study will have engineering services involved to help with a structural and electrical analysis. All this information will allow our construction consultant, Garden City Construction, to develop a construction estimate. Eventually, the final outcome will be a design and cost estimate that we can share with potential partnerships.

Next, we have started a marketing study. Through a series of surveys and one-on-one interviews, this study will help determine if our vision of a downtown Fire Museum is something that will excite fire buffs, school children, and the public.

Finally, we are engaged in a feasibility study. This effort will help us create a list of potential partners, update our Business Plan, and do an analysis of how our fire museum will compare to other similar museums. This study will ultimately be used to reach out to potential partners and will give us a good idea of what donations and

other funding will be available for the development and construction of our downtown fire museum.

In other news, we just completed the election of a new SJFM Board of Directors. The new board will have a 2-year life starting in June, 2015 and running through May, 2017. We are excited to report that we have 2 new members on our Board of Directors. Dale Foster has been elected as our Administrative Officer and April Halberstadt will fill the role of Community Liaison. The other members include: John McMillan, President; Jim Carter, Vice-President; Eileen Townley, Secretary; Rob Cone, Treasurer; Dave Wood, Director of Facilities; Mike Igno, Director of Apparatus; Ed Del Prete, Director of Collections; Sean Lovens, SJFD Liaison; and Sam Seibert, Director of History.

Finally, we continue our search for a truck mechanic volunteer. If you have those skills, or know someone who does, please contact John McMillan at the fire museum.

## **Fire Museum Hosts Memorial**

### **Dennis Madigan — A Fond Memory**

*By Josh Weggeland, Museum President Emeritus and SJFD Retired*

On May 16, 2015 a Celebration of Life for Dennis Madigan was held at the San Jose Fire Museum. More than 100 people -- friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family members -- came to pay respect and share stories about the Dennis they all knew and loved.

Dennis was born Apr. 25, 1944 and passed away Sept. 26, 2014. His family lived on a dairy farm on the outskirts of Seattle. He was the son of a Seattle firefighter. His grandfather and great-grandfather were Portland firefighters. Dennis, upon joining the fire service, became a 4<sup>th</sup> generation firefighter and his son, Steven, is now a Boise firefighter -- the 5<sup>th</sup> generation.

Anyone that knew Dennis knew he was all about the fire service, serving the community, volunteering, coaching, and mentoring. He was also a father and single parent to his sons from a very young age. Somehow, and I'm not sure how, he managed a challenging career, parenting, volunteering, and coaching sports at the same time -- a remarkable man.

Dennis wasn't about Dennis. He did everything for everyone else. His word and his handshake were his bond. If he said he would be somewhere or do something, he would. He had a lighter side as well. He was a prankster and loved to surprise people.

His smile and firm handshake are missed by everyone. His participation and leadership in the Fire Museum is a void not easily filled. His life as a retiree, enjoying his family -- particularly his sons and grandchildren -- was cut short.

We are all better people having known Dennis Madigan. RIP my friend.



*Josh Weggeland addresses those in attendance at Dennis Madigan Memorial at the Museum.*

## **Photo Gallery**

### **Fire Museum Stays Active In Community**

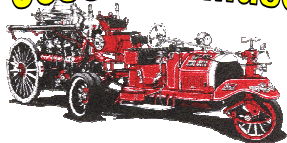


*Museum Founder Emeritus Sam Seibert hosted a ride-along donated as part of a Schallenberger Elementary School Gala Auction. Shown in this photo are auction winners Jason, Sarah, Landon, and Parker Jellin, with family friend Dylan .*



*The SJFM annually donates a firehouse dinner at the Valley of Hearts Delight fundraiser. Shown above enjoying their meal are: John and Linda Herschbach; Linda's mother, Evelyn Ucovich and brother Martin; and friends Lori Ageno and Tom Mancuso. Thanks to SJFD Capt. Sean Lovens and crew, they enjoyed visiting Station No. 1.*

# San Jose Fire Museum

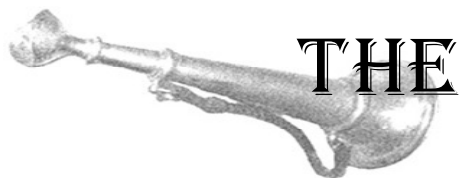


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*DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT*

### Calendar of Events

- July 14, 2015    SJFM Board Meeting at the Museum  
9:00 A.M. to Noon
- Aug. 11, 2015    SJFM Board Meeting at the Museum  
9:00 A.M. to Noon
- Sept. 8, 2015    SJFM Board Meeting at the Museum  
9:00 A.M. to Noon

### Save the Date

#### 10th Annual Firefighters' Car & Motorcycle Show

August 9, 2015 — 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.  
San Jose Elks Lodge, 444 W. Alma St., San Jose  
Classic vehicles, music, good food, and raffle prizes!

### "The Museum Trumpet"

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John Whitaker

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