

THE MUSEUM TRUMPET



Vol. 12, No. 2

The Official Newsletter of the San Jose Fire Museum

April 2021

BRINGING BACK THE OLD 46, SJFD FIRE ENGINE 6

As a result of a grant from the Federal Government immediately following World War II, the San Jose Fire Department (SJFD) acquired four 1946 American LaFrance 1000 GPM pumpers. One of these pumpers acquired by the SJFD was Engine 6 which was located on Lincoln Avenue and was in service from 1947 until 1963. Engine 6 was housed on Lincoln Avenue until 1955 at which time it was moved to a new station on Minnesota. The San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) has had Engine 6 in its possession for some time now and has decided to begin restoration on it. Paul Middione, who owns The Property Network and occupies the Old Station 6 building at 1342 Lincoln Avenue, has graciously offered to help us restore Engine 6. Paul is a big advocate for history in the Willow Glen area. The approximate cost to restore Engine 6 will be \$20,000. The costs are mainly to cover the materials needed for the restoration as most of the labor will be done by museum volunteers. If you would like to volunteer or make a donation to help restore Engine 6, please contact Jim Carter or John McMillan.

While on the topic of restoration, the 1954 GMC which we are still in the process of restoring, is now 90% finished thanks to the help of some wonderful volunteers. It was financed largely with the help of the Gordon Wallace family and generous donations from our SJFM supporters. We will be eager to share with you what it looks like once the restoration is complete!

Pictured to the right: Our 1946 American LaFrance in storage at our Fire Museum Warehouse. It served Willow Glen as Fire Engine 6 for 16 consecutive years from 1947 to 1963, which is probably one of the longest in SJFD history.



Pictured above: Here is our SJFD Fire Engine 6, a 1946 American LaFrance, in service during the early 1950's at Fire Station 6.



BRINGING SEIBERT GALLERY TO LIFE



A BLAST FROM THE PAST:

The front lobby at Old Fire Station One (OFS1) is now called the Seibert Gallery. The goal is to make it look like what it would have looked like back in the 1950's. We are happy to report that things are coming along quite well in bringing it back to life.



FRIENDLY REMINDER:

SJFM has a **NEW MAILING ADDRESS!** Please send **ALL** mail for **SJFM** to:
PO Box 579
San Jose, CA 95106

President's Message

By John A. McMillan



Greetings and Happy Spring to all our San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) friends, donors and partners! We hope that many of you have been able to receive the COVID 19 vaccine over the past 2 months or are able to in the coming months. Over the past couple months, our board members, SJFM volunteers, and archivist and display designers have been busy working to advance our goals at Old Fire Station One (OFS1). Their hard work can be seen in the many positive improvements which have been made.

We are poised to start Phase 1 of our OFS1 power upgrade project and are just waiting for PG&E to let us know when they will start construction. Phase 2 and 3 of this project have been designed and are now going through the City of San Jose permit process. We hope to see this project complete by the end of this summer. We are also working on 2 office exhibits, the Fire Chief Office Display and the Carter Fire Captain Office Display, for which we are currently in the design setup stage. We have included a few pictures of some of the changes and concepts we are implementing in order to bring these exhibits to life in this newsletter. We hope to be able to share with you more of the details along with pictures of the finished product of these exhibits in the next newsletter. Now that archivist Ken Middlebrook is on board, there has been substantial reorganizing of our Fire Museum Warehouse taking place. The building is no longer being used as grounds for a fire museum presentation space as it has been for the past 20 years, but rather as a true storage and restoration space. With Ken's leadership, we are able to sort, prioritize and prepare collection items for proper storage. We hope to share with you our success in doing this by the end of this summer with some pictures. Amy Long, our other consultant, has begun working on design concepts for the OFS1 space with Dale Foster and April Halberstadt. They are currently working on a design focusing on the history of the San Jose Fire Department spanning over 5 significant time periods of firefighting history. Finally, we are excited to announce that we will be opening our gift shop again every Tuesday morning starting April 1, 2021. Visitors will be required to wear masks and maintain social distancing when entering OFS1.

EXHIBITS NEWS FLASH AT OLD ONE

Every quarter going forward, we plan to provide you with an update as to the progress we are making with our various exhibits at Old Fire Station One (OFS1).

The first one, the Seibert Gallery, pictured on page 2, is something board members John and Ed have been working on. This exhibit is meant to depict how the front office at OFS1, where the public entered to interact with the station crew, would have looked like in the 1950's. When finished, this exhibit will also include information about our oldest living firefighter, Sam Seibert, for which it is named after. There will be a likeness of Sam dressed up in uniform to greet folks as they enter OFS1. On the opposite corner of OFS1 where the Fire Administration resided in the 1950's, we are currently working on another exhibit of the original Fire Chief Office. We are setting it up to look like it would have in 1950 as well and will include information on past fire chiefs in the department.

Board members April and Dale and consultant Amy Long have been working on various exhibits that will be set up on the apparatus floor of OFS1. The plan is to have 5 exhibits, each representing a significant time period in the San Jose Fire Department (SJFD), and they are as follows: 1) The early period when all the equipment was hand-drawn and operated 2) The horse-drawn era when the industrial revolution brought on the use of steam 3) The mechanized era when the gasoline engine powered vehicles revolutionized fire response and firefighting 4) The post-World War II period when the city expanded rapidly and 5) The modern era whereby firefighting now relies on new technologies.

The following is a sneak peak of what April has come up with so far for the first significant time period, the early period where everything was hand-drawn. For one she has been able to gather a lot of great photos from this era. The first is an image of the **Torrent Engine Company No. 2** on parade which shows them standing in front of their engine wearing parade regalia. There is also a portrait photograph of **James Gourley**, the Irish firefighter who personally purchased two of our early engines. James had been a firefighter in Boston before coming to San Jose. We also have a photo portrait of **Valentine Humburg** in regalia, as well as a photograph of his two young sons standing next to a trumpet. In the photo, **Valentine's sons** are wearing miniature regalia which included the hat, shirt and belt. With the exception of the James Gourley portrait which still needs to be digitized, all the photos have been scanned and Photoshop enhanced since they were used for another project. Another image for this early period exhibit that we have asked Ed Del Prete to draw for us, is the first Fire Station in Lightstone Alley. This particular fire station was used by 3 volunteer groups. Other items we have to be included in this early period exhibit are as follows:

- ◆ An early badge, working trumpet, fire ladder and pike poles that were used to pull down buildings
- ◆ An early hand pumper and the hose cart
- ◆ A short section of riveted leather hose
- ◆ A photograph of the combined City Hall and Fire Station from that era
- ◆ A replica shirt and helmet
- ◆ A map of downtown showing all the early fires with the amount of dollar loss, which was drawn by one of the fire chiefs.

So as you can see from this expansive list, we are working hard to pull the museum together for both our supporters as well as the community. Stay tuned to get more news updates in this section of the newsletter on the progress we are making with our exhibits to turn OFS1 into a great museum! Below is a preview of what we are currently working on for the next segment of our newsletter.

UNVEILING OF THE SJFD FIRE CHIEF OFFICE



The picture to the right is a sneak peak of the exhibit of the original Fire Chief Office as referenced above which we are working on and will unveil in our next newsletter. The finished product will depict what a SJFD Fire Chief Office looked like when it opened at OFS1 in 1950.

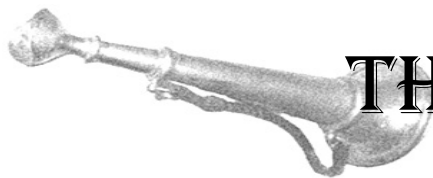


San Jose Fire Museum



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DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT

FIREFIGHTERS DONATE YOUR GEAR!

The SJFM is asking you to consider gifting your firefighting gear to our fire museum.

Items needed:

**Helmets
Turnouts
Badges
Uniforms
Tools & Equipment**

"The Museum Trumpet"

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