



# THE MUSEUM TRUMPET



Vol. 17. No. 2

The Official Newsletter of the San Jose Fire Museum

April 2026

## ED DELPRETE: WE WILL MISS YOU!

By John A. McMillan

The San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) lost a dear friend and long time volunteer. Ed DelPrete passed away on March 6th, 2026. Ed was 83 years old. He was involved with the SJFM for the past 23 years. He served on our Board of Directors as Director of Preservation for at least the past 16 years.

Ed was so much more than a volunteer for us. We know he was a Fire Buff and just loved everything about firefighting. He was a long term member of Fire Associates over 40 years and many retired San Jose Firefighters can remember Ed at emergency events helping out providing canteen services assisting firefighters. Ed was introduced to the San Jose Fire Museum when he met the late Retired SJFD Fire Captain Dennis Madigan at a Fire Muster event.

Ed also had a tremendous love for trains and he collected train sets along with being a dedicated member of the South Bay Historical Railroad Society. Many a Saturday you would find Ed at the Train Depot volunteering. Ed also volunteered at the History San Jose Restoration Shop.

Art was Ed's life and he lives on through it. He always had a pencil or pen in his hand along with a sketch book. If you received one of his paintings, a sketch, or handmade card you were truly special to him. Sam Seibert received multiple sketches from Ed over the years. The SJFM also received multiple sketches.

We selected Ed as our first Lifetime Volunteer Award back in 2015. Then in 2025 we approved that Ed become a Lifetime Emeritus Director. Ed was a great friend and always wanted to help others be successful. You could always see Ed doing his beautiful sketches. Many times he was busy drawing his version of a fire apparatus with his unique drawing details.



ED IN HIS FIRE ASSOCIATE SUPPORT UNIT ATTIRE. ED SUPPORTED ALL 13 FIRE DEPARTMENTS DURING HIS 40 YEARS SERVING AS A MEMBER OF FIRE ASSOCIATES.



ONE OF ED'S MANY SKETCHES HE CREATED OVER HIS LIFE.



ED WITH SAM SEIBERT AND SAM'S CARE PERSON SAI BACK IN JANUARY 2025 IN THE KITCHEN OF OLD FIRE STATION ONE.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, SPRING 2026



By John A. McMillan

We head into Spring of 2026 with a lot of planning taking place; a San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) Apparatus Photo & Catalog Project is in full swing; and members of our Board commemorating Ed DelPrete, a dear long time friend of the SJFM. You can find articles about the Apparatus Photo & Catalog Project and commemorating Ed DelPrete in this Newsletter.

The planning we are working on includes moving forward with a total cost estimate for remodeling & upgrading Old Fire Station One (OFS1) along with a separate cost estimate analysis to design and build new displays in all areas of OFS1.

Five Eras of SJFD Response - We have new details on the Five Eras of SJFD Response. We have approved the design idea of installing each era on a different wall space location on the apparatus floor. Each era display will be located near an apparatus that operated in that era. At this point in time we have approved development of Era One, The Hand Drawn and Volunteer Response - 1850 to 1871 from design to construction. We will locate our Alert Hose Cart and James Smith Hand Pumper next to the Era One Wall Display. Our consultants are working on the cost estimate for all design & construction of displays to be installed into Old Fire Station One. We have included an early design concept picture that is just a sample idea for you to check out.

Remodel & Upgrade of OFS1 - We expect to have an estimate to complete all design & construction of OFS1 by the end of April, 2026. I have mentioned before this will include a total remodel of the upstairs, a simple seismic upgrade of the entire fire station area, sprinklers, elevator and new emergency stairwell located in the hose tower. We will also have a separate estimate to design & install a stand alone steel structure that will cover the entire backyard area. Probably the biggest challenge right now is making sure the elevator shaft will fit into the space that was originally a tarp drying room.



Ceiling banner



THIS IS A DRAFT CONCEPT ELEVATION OF HOW THE ERA ONE WALL DISPLAY MIGHT LOOK ON THE OLD FIRE STATION ONE APPARATUS FLOOR. THIS WILL END UP BEING A PIECE OF FURNITURE PROBABLY ABOUT 5 FEET WIDE BY 7 FEET TALL, MOUNTED TO THE WALL AND THE DEPTH WILL BE NO MORE THAN 12 INCHES.



# SAN JOSE FIRE MUSEUM PHOTO & CATALOG PROJECT

The San Jose Fire Museum has 55 pieces of apparatus and equipment in the collection. Over the years attempts have been made to photograph and to document the history of each piece.



PICTURE OF THE SJFM 1905 FIRE CHIEF CADILLAC

Vitaly Litvinenko, a professional photographer and video/multimedia producer with San Jose Fire Department, was requested to assist the SJFM with photographing the collection. The project involves photographing three angles of each piece, which with the help of museum volunteers such as Scott Boucher, repositioning each piece against a black backdrop. As you can imagine, repositioning each piece and prepping the piece for the photo shoot takes some time. The project

is being done at the museum warehouse.

The project will help us develop a catalog. The catalog with the photos is being produced by retired SJFD Deputy Fire Chief Gerry Kohlmann. The catalog will provide information on each piece regarding its history and background. In addition, the documentation will be utilized to enhance the museum website and to assist with the development of displays for the museum. At this point of time we have completed pictures of four apparatus and it will probably take over a year to complete. Gerry Kohlmann has a draft catalog started and is focused on making a great one.



SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT HOSE CART. WE THINK IT COULD ORIGINALLY BE USED WITH THE WASHINGTON HOSE COMPANY IN 1870 AND POSSIBLE LATER AS A HOSE CART FOR ALERT HOSE COMPANY IN 1876.

San Jose Fire Museum



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

## **BREAKING NEWS!**

**The San Jose Fire Museum  
is excited to announce they  
are receiving a \$1,000,000  
Gift from:**

**Robert J. Bettencourt Estate**

### **“The Museum Trumpet”**

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### **Newsletter Layout**

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