



THE MUSEUM TRUMPET



Vol. 16. No. 2

The Official Newsletter of the San Jose Fire Museum

April 2025

SAN JOSE FIRE MUSEUM (SJFM) OPEN HOUSE

When: May 31, 2025

Where: Old Fire Station One, 201 North Market Street.

Time: All Day Activities from 9am to 7pm.

Schedule of Events

A *Pancake Breakfast from 9am to 12 Noon provided by San Jose Firefighters Local 230.

Free Docents Tours of Old Fire Station One (OFS1) from 9am to 3pm. Get the opportunity to see the progress of preserving the history of the San Jose Fire Department, along with stories of San Jose's bravest!

Private BBQ to invited guests with interest of being a Major Partner/Donor with the SJFM. A Presentation and overview will take place from 4 to 6 pm along with a Free BBQ. RSVP is required for this BBQ event.

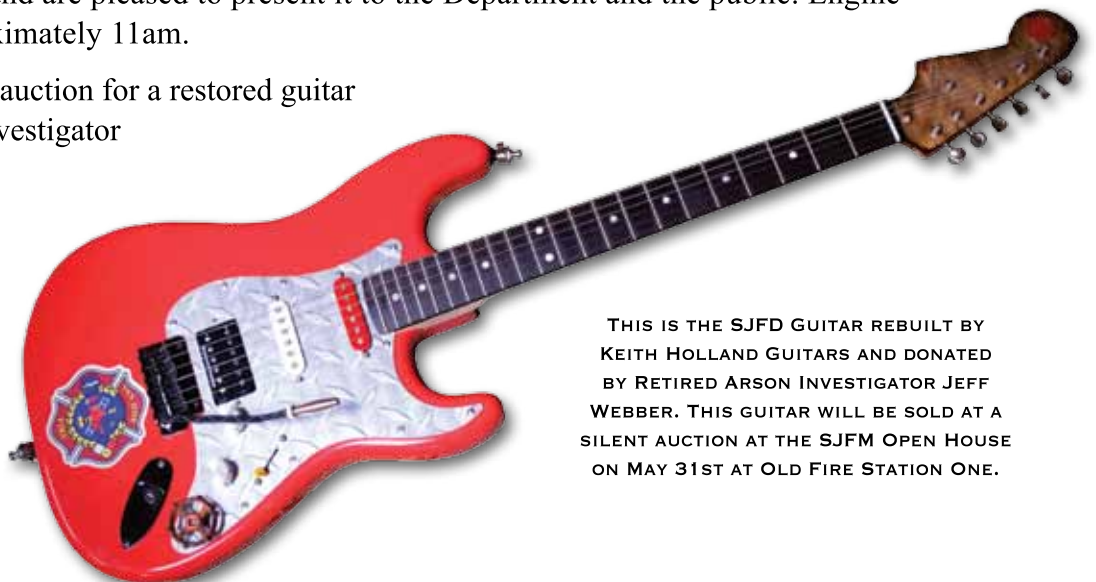


OUR 1945 AMERICAN LAFRANCE (FIRE ENGINE CO. # 6) WAS PAINTED BY MAACO AUTO BODY SHOP AND HERE IT IS COMPLETED ON FEBRUARY 6TH, 2025.

Highlights of the Open House

The SJFM will unveil our SJFD 1945 Fire Engine Company No. 6. This engine is an American LaFrance that operated out of SJFD Fire Station six (6) for many years. We have spent the last couple of years restoring this historic SJFD Fire Engine and are pleased to present it to the Department and the public. Engine 6 will be unveiled at approximately 11am.

The SJFM will also hold an auction for a restored guitar (Donated by SJFD Arson Investigator Jeff Webber) that was re-designed to have a SJFD Firefighter look. The auction timeline will be ongoing silent from 9 am to 12 noon, announcing the winner shortly thereafter.



THIS IS THE SJFD GUITAR REBUILT BY KEITH HOLLAND GUITARS AND DONATED BY RETIRED ARSON INVESTIGATOR JEFF WEBBER. THIS GUITAR WILL BE SOLD AT A SILENT AUCTION AT THE SJFM OPEN HOUSE ON MAY 31ST AT OLD FIRE STATION ONE.

*No RSVP necessary to attend free Breakfast and/or Docent Tour of OFS1.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, SPRING 2025

By John A. McMillan



Happy Spring to everyone! The past three (3) winter months have brought a lot of mixed weather at Old Fire Station One (OFS1). The San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) has dealt with numerous roof water leaks at OFS1 because of rain and a roof that is going into failure; a lot of cold days where our gas heaters are used (requiring use of expensive natural gas); and construction work.

The new bathroom project is in full construction phase. When complete we will have four (4) new unisex bathrooms with two (2) handicap accessible. There have been delays with sewer line connections and getting permits approved by the City of San Jose. When complete, There will be six (6) working bathrooms on the first floor area of OFS1.

We are also very excited with all of the improvements going on. We successfully had our 1945 American LaFrance (Old SJFD Fire Engine 6) painted by Maaco Auto Body Shop.

We started a new Schematic Design process of OFS1 back in January, 2025. We did our first Schematic Design back in 2016 and used it as our focus trying to raise donations to completely restore OFS1 and include a full buildout of the backyard. Now over eight (8) years later, our non-profit has had a chance to re-evaluate our priorities on how to restore and use OFS1. We decided we wanted a simpler design that is more cost effective to construct. A simpler design will allow us to do less construction tear out and maintain a lot of existing walls and rooms. Early design details are providing us with some rough cost estimates that will be fine tuned in the coming months. At this point of design we estimate we will need about five (5) million dollars to complete the entire remodel (Not including any buildout of the backyard area).

We have some smaller projects we are moving forward on. We have decided to move forward on the design of the five (5) SJFD eras of history by creating a display design for each era. Dale Foster & April Halberstadt are the lead individuals with this process.

Please read the other articles in this newsletter to discover other projects and historical facts about Firefighting in San Jose.



ON FEBRUARY 13TH, 2025 THE MOST RECENT SJFD RECRUIT CLASS OF 18 NOT ONLY RECEIVED A TOUR OF OLD FIRE STATION ONE BUT GOT A PICTURE WITH RETIRED SJFD FIRE CAPTAIN SAM SEIBERT. THIS RECRUIT CLASS GRADUATED A DAY LATER ON FEBRUARY 14TH!

WE NEED PICTURES

The San Jose Fire Museum is asking all San Jose Firefighters both active & retired to send us pictures of firehouse life including dorm, apparatus, group (company), and even any emergency calls. We will cover the cost of mailing of hard copy photos/negatives and return whatever you want back. If you want to send a Thumb Drive, after copying we will return to you if you request. You can also just Email pictures to John McMillan (macmhalain@yahoo.com) or Jim Carter (jhcarter1038@yahoo.com). Anything you send should have an approximate date and maybe some names identifying individuals or firehouse or event. We need this info to help us bring the stories of the San Jose Fire Department history together.

THE TAILBOARD FIREFIGHTER

Firefighters riding on San Jose Fire Department engines until the late 1970's stood on the back tailboard of the engine and grabbed onto a cross bar while riding to calls, this was commonly known as riding the tailboard. Being on the tailboard and arriving at the scene of a working fire, the Firefighters were poised and ready to deploy a large diameter 2 ½ or 3 inch line.

Riding on the tailboard, besides being an interesting way to travel to an incident, was more than just hanging on to a crossbar and standing on the tailboard. The Firefighter had to be aware of their surroundings and keep their knees slightly bent to absorb the bounce of the engine going over bumps on the road or train tracks. The firefighter was also exposed to the elements and on calls during inclement weather the Firefighters could be seen trying to protect themselves from the cold or rain by ducking under the hose bed cover. One of the most feared noises while riding the back of the engine was hearing tires screech behind the engine. Firefighters were always ready to jump up on the hose bed or off the engine when hearing that sound. Also the tailboard firefighter did not have communications so the only way they knew it was a working fire was to see the smoke as they were responding. Further, when arriving on the scene when a self-contained breathing apparatus(SCBA) was required, the tailboard firefighter needed to step off the tailboard, go to the compartment and put on the SCBA, delaying getting involved in the incident.



THE TAILBOARD FIREFIGHTER ON THE SJFD WAS GONE BY 1980.

Additionally there was a button on the back of the engine to alert the driver when the Firefighters were on the tailboard and ready to leave or, in the event the Firefighters wanted to communicate to the driver, to stop. Two pushes of the button meant they were on the tailboard and ready to go, one push on the button meant the driver was to stop immediately. The button activated the engines horn or a buzzer in the cab so the engineer and captain both heard the button activation.

The fire service has come a long way since the days of the tailboard Firefighter and today Firefighters are much safer and better prepared when arriving on scene.



THE OLD BOILER ROOM FLOOR IN FINAL PREPARATION AT OLD FIRE STATION ONE BEFORE NEW CONCRETE FLOOR IS POURED.



THE NEW DOOR OPENING INTO THE OLD BOILER ROOM UNDER THE REAR AWNING OF OLD FIRE STATION ONE. THIS WILL BE THE ENTRANCE POINT FOR THE NEW FOUR (4) BATHROOMS. NOTE HOW THICK THE CONCRETE EXTERIOR WALLS ARE AT 8 INCHES.

San Jose Fire Museum



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DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT

SJFM Gift Shop is Open!

Just a reminder, we are open every Tuesday from 10 am to 12 Noon & First Saturday of each month from 10am to 12 Noon.

The Gift Shop sells a variety of items for Men & Women including T-Shirts, Sweat Shirts, Fleece Vests, Full Zip Sweat Shirts. We also sell Hats, Mugs, Jewelry, License Plate Holders, Patches and other Misc.

We accept Credit Card, Check and Cash.

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