

Rose Garden Resident

San Jose, California *Since 2003*

December 29, 2005

Cover Story



Photographs by Vicki Thompson

Milestones and Mishaps: A few of the celebrations and misfortunes the Rose Garden neighborhood experienced over the past year include: The welcoming of Julie Montalbano (center in photo top, left) at St. Leo's School after Hurricane Katrina forced her family to evacuate their home in Metairie, La.; protests from Hyde Park neighbors, including Mark Wheeler, over the new 1:40 a.m. America West flight from Las Vegas into Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport; the opening of Downtown College Prep at the old Hester Elementary campus on Dec. 5; and an afternoon fire that temporarily shut down the 81-year-old Greenlee's Bakery on The Alameda Nov. 1.

2005: A year of milestones in the Rose Garden

By Linda Taaffe

The Rose Garden spent much of 2005 honoring the old and celebrating the new as residents proved again that a little effort can go a long way in preserving and improving the portion of San Jose that is home.

Nearly every month was marked by a milestone anniversary for a longtime community organization or a groundbreaking ceremony for a project that residents helped transform from concept into reality.

The neighborhood gained two parks: Cahill Park on W. San Fernando Street in May and the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens in September. Residents wasted no time forging a new tradition by holding a small Fourth of July celebration at Cahill.

After months of planning, the Alameda Business Association opened the Rose Garden Farmers Market in the parking lot of Hester Elementary in June.

Groundbreaking on the San Jose MarketCenter at the corner of Coleman Avenue and Taylor Street brought the mayor to the neighborhood. The 34-acre center is scheduled to open next year with Target, Cost Plus World Market and Marshalls among the retail stores. A few months later, Whole Foods announced plans to open a store on Stockton Avenue. Other additions on the streetscape included the Poor House Bistro, Q&Brew and Pueblo Viejo Imports.

If that wasn't enough to boost business in the neighborhood, the Alameda Business Association launched plans to form its own Business Improvement District.

The arts took center stage in the neighborhood as residents worked to launch theatrical groups and galleries. A group of Silicon Valley artists, including 11 from the Rose Garden, organized the Professional Artists Network, which held its grand opening on The Alameda. Longtime Shasta-Hanchett Park resident and historian Leonard McKay opened The Leonard and David McKay Gallery at the Pasetta House in History Park of San Jose in March. The year also marked the first season for Renegade Theatre Experiment at Historic Hoover Theatre.

After shuffling from one site to another, Downtown College Prep, San Jose's first charter school, found a permanent home at the former Hester Elementary School campus Dec. 5.

Preservation and longtime traditions shared the spotlight. Fire Station 7, San Jose's oldest active firehouse that serves the Rose Garden, unveiled renovations made to the 1936 building.

On Race Street, Loui Tucker and Sabine Zappe helped plant 28 new trees along the street on Oct. 21.

Garden-Alameda residents asked the city to rezone their neighborhood to R-1 to preserve its vintage character. The council agreed in November.

Several community organizations celebrated milestone anniversaries: St. Leo the Great School on W. San Fernando hosted a 90-year reunion, The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum saw its 75th year, St. Martin of Tours and Catholic Charities both celebrated 50th anniversaries, the Council on Aging Silicon Valley held its 30th anniversary, and the Shasta-Hanchett Park Neighborhood Association celebrated its 20th anniversary.

If neighbors continue their activism in the next 12 months, we should expect the Rose Garden to continue to blossom without losing its charm.

JANUARY

San Jose Unified School District recommends the closure of Cory School as a cost-cutting move.

The historic Wilder-Hait House at the corner of Emory and Morse streets goes on the market for \$3.25 million. The 5,700-square-foot home sits on 1.15 acres, including its own redwood grove.

Council on Aging Silicon Valley celebrates its 30th anniversary with a champagne reception and auction.

Santa Clara Valley Blind Center receives a \$20,000 grant from Community Foundation Silicon Valley to expand its Living With Vision Loss Program.

Victor Repetto hits the 44-year mark playing the organ at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church on Race Street. He's played almost every Sunday since 1960, except in 1973 when he visited Rome and London.

The Shasta-Hanchett Park Neighborhood Association begins celebrating its 20th anniversary year.

Silicon Valley Community Newspapers launches *Image*, a monthly magazine insert.

Asiana Produce, the wholesale produce operation on Lenzen Avenue, begins selling fruits and vegetables directly to the public.

FEBRUARY

A group of Silicon Valley artists, including 11 who live or work in the Rose Garden area, organize the Professional Artists Network. Its first big event is "Love & Chaos Revisited"--a Valentine art exhibit and auction at Alameda Artworks.

San Jose Unified School District board votes to close Cory School in June and expand Trace School to a K-5 school for the fall 2005 semester.

Mark F. McCormack, a Newhall neighborhood resident, is the first Santa Clara County firefighter to die in the line of duty in its 58-year history. Some 150 fire engines from throughout California form a procession along The Alameda to his memorial service at HP Pavilion.

Larry Clark, owner of an office building at 919 The Alameda, enlists the support of The Alameda Business Association for his plans to put a new façade on his building.

Be Civilized closes its store at 1345 The Alameda, relocating to Willow Glen.

Planned Parenthood starts the process of expanding the parking lot at its offices at the corner of Taylor Street and The Alameda.

In his seventh annual State of the City speech, Mayor Ron Gonzales pitches the idea of a ballpark on the edge of the Rose Garden area near Diridon Station.

MARCH

The Leonard and David McKay Gallery at the Pasetta House opens in History Park of San Jose. The initial collection of 32 oil and watercolor paintings by 20th-century Silicon Valley artists was amassed by Leonard McKay, historian and longtime Shasta-Hanchett Park resident.

The Theatre Arts Department of Lincoln High School starts staging the musical *Seussical*, in preparation for taking it to Scotland for presentation at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August.

Alrie Middlebrook, owner of Middlebrook Gardens at 76 Race St., launches a "Lose the Lawn" division to her business. Her aim is to replace lawns with native plants.

Students at St. Leo the Great School raise close to \$6,000 jumping rope for the American Heart Association.

Lowry's Irish Coffee House in the River Street Historic District, celebrates its first St. Patrick's Day in business. Owner Willie Meagher had planned to be open by March 17, 2004, but was delayed until April of that year.

Lou's Village owners Tom and Tim Muller announce they're selling their 59-year-old restaurant and five acres of property to Shea Properties for a housing development. They say they will close the restaurant at the end of 2005.

Andy's Pet Shop, a landmark at the corner of The Alameda and Julian Street for more than 50 years, is put up for sale by owner Linda Gaetke. The pet store was opened in 1950 by Andy Camilleri and Gaetke bought it from his family in 1993.

Quinceañera Dream, a store specializing in dresses and accessories used for the traditional 15th birthday of Hispanic girls, opens at 982 The Alameda. The store also sells special occasion clothing and offers tuxedo rentals.

The Alameda Business Association starts proceedings to form a business improvement district that would be an extension of the existing San Jose Downtown Association.

The future site of JW House at the new Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Santa Clara is dedicated by Jan-Willem Knapen. JW, as he is known to his friends, conceived the idea of a home-away-from-home for ill children and their families while fighting brain cancer and has spent months raising money for it.

Black & Brown, a store specializing in used vintage and modern clothing for men and women, opens at 1225 W. San Carlos St.

APRIL

San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales announces that he is moving the route of the San Jose Grand Prix away from its original route near The Alameda to downtown. Restaurateurs near the original route are disappointed.

The Bellarmine College Prep community and College Park Neighborhood organize a coalition to successfully fight the closure of the College Park Caltrain Station. It is one of four stations recommended for closure in a cost-cutting move by Caltrain. On April 22, a contingent of students led by the Rev. Jerry Wade, chancellor and interim president of Bellarmine, attended a Caltrain board meeting to protest the closure.

Cisco Systems Foundation gives Unity Care Group Inc., on Race Street, a \$75,000 grant for its transitional housing program. The program serves adults between the ages of 18 and 21 who are aged-out of the foster care system when they turn 18, but are still in need of stable housing.

Rose Garden residents Brandi Chastain and Marlene Bjornsrud launch the "GoGirlGo!" program as part of their Bay Area Women's Sports Initiative. The program is aimed at building a positive environment for girls to become an integral part of the Bay Area sports culture.

CommuKNITy, a store devoted to knitting, crocheting and the needle arts, opens at 1345 The Alameda, in the space formerly occupied by Be Civilized. The store is owned by Gail Faris and Tom Johnston and managed by Nathania Apple.

San Jose MarketCenter officially breaks ground at the corner of Coleman Avenue and Taylor Street. It is a 34-acre, 360,000-square-foot retail development that will open in March 2006. Among the stores will be Target, Cost Plus World Market, Marshalls and Michaels.

San Jose Unified School District Board of Trustees votes to charge up to \$300 per student to ride school buses in the 2005-06 school year.

Santa Clara County officials cite Asiana Produce for selling directly to the public and owner Mai Nguyen closes the stand.

Jose Guzman opens Pueblo Viejo Imports, a store specializing in traditional Mexican rustic furnishings, at 1060 Park Ave.

MAY

St. Leo the Great School on W. San Fernando near Race Street hosts a 90-year reunion for all graduates of the grammar school.

Fil Maresca of Filco Events announces he will stage an Independence Day Party at Cahill Park on July 4, in conjunction with the long-running Independence Day festival held in downtown San Jose.

Lincoln High School is named a 2005 California Distinguished School by the California Department of Education with a ceremony at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim.

Allen Hahn, founder of Greenhouse Flowers at 2321 Stevens Creek Blvd., retires after more than 17 years. Hahn was the first florist in San Jose to carry the large Ecuadorian roses. A trio of MBA graduates buys the shop.

Susan Proctor-Comaroto opens Move It Elsewhere at 195 Stockton Ave. The store, which specializes in consignments from seniors, is open one weekend a month.

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church is given a permit to continue its annual Greek Festival for the 34th year by the San Jose Planning Commission. The festival had been operating without a permit since 1999, when the one issued in 1994 expired.

The Alameda Business Association votes to skip a merger with the Downtown Business Association and looks into establishing its own Business Improvement District.

Postal carriers in the Rose Garden area collect 9,303 pounds of food during their annual Letter Carriers Food Drive, the largest one-day food drive in the United States. That total was up 1,532 pounds from the 2004 total of 7,771 pounds.

Cahill Park is officially opened. The park is located on W. San Fernando Street between Bush Street and Wilson Avenue.

San José State University announces the purchase of a home on University Avenue to serve as University House. It will be used as the residence for the president of the university and for occasional receptions.

The artwork of six Lincoln High School students goes on display for a year as part of the Downtown Doors project. Their original artwork is digitized, enlarged and then made into vinyl adhesive decals on 13 doors in the downtown area around the Fairmont Hotel and San Jose Repertory Theatre.

JUNE

JD Duncanson and Dennis Thomas buy Andy's Pet Shop at the corner of The Alameda and Julian Street. They expand its offerings to include the largest selection of exotic birds in Silicon Valley.

Q&Brew, a restaurant specializing in Southern barbecue, opens at 735 The Alameda, at the corner of Stockton Avenue.

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church holds its 34th annual San Jose Greek Festival at the church grounds on Davis Street.

The Rose Garden Farmers Market goes from longtime dream to reality, opening on June 11 and continuing on Saturday mornings through mid-November.

Barbara Jo Price, the former San Jose Unified School District employee accused of embezzling \$483,000, turns herself in to San Jose police.

The YWCA of Silicon Valley celebrates its century mark with the publication of a book and a dinner on June 23.

Fire Station 7, the oldest active firehouse in San Jose and the one serving the Rose Garden area, hosts an open house to show off the renovations made to the building. It was built in 1936 as a Works Progress Administration project.

Two 100-year-old Scotch elm trees in front of 1818 The Alameda are removed due to Dutch elm disease.

Jay Meduri opens Poor House Bistro, a New Orleans-style restaurant, at 91 Autumn St.

JULY

Miguel Mendoza moves his successful Everything's Blooming florist shop from the Avalon on The Alameda complex to 986 The Alameda.

The first Fourth of July party at Cahill Park draws a very small crowd. The firework viewing is marred when the park sprinklers come on.

Stockton Avenue between University Avenue and Emory Street is permanently closed for environmental and safety reasons.

Sahlu Okebato phases out the coffee shop part of his operation and converts the Queen of Sheba at the corner of The Alameda and University Avenue to an Ethiopian restaurant.

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte starts work on the expansion of its parking lot at the corner of The Alameda and Taylor Street.

Renegade Theatre Experiment opens its first season as the resident theater company of Historic Hoover Theatre.

The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life comes to Lincoln High School.

Business owners along the Alameda still hope to see some of the benefits of the first San Jose Grand Prix, even though the race course was moved to downtown San Jose. The world class, open-wheel racing event took place the last weekend of July.

A San Jose police SWAT team converges on the Flamingo Motel on July 21. It arrested armed robbery suspect Nicolas Swanson who had been living at the motel at the corner of The Alameda and Race Street.

A Swainson's toucan takes up residence at Andy's Pet Shop, which holds a contest to choose a name for the bird. Olivia Neely, 9, suggests the winning name--Mango.

Councilman Ken Yeager and his staff, including council assistant Megan Doyle, move into the new San Jose City Hall.

Ilya Neizvestny opens up Pawin' Around, a dog care and boarding facility at 1068 Park Ave.

AUGUST

Jan-Willem Knapen, the courageous 16-year-old Bellarmine College Prep student, loses his battle with brain cancer on Aug. 3. His legacy of JW House, a home-away-from-home for ill children, is expected to start construction in 2006.

The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum celebrates its 75th anniversary with a reception for the community and special exhibitions and programs.

Megan Doyle, aide to San Jose City Councilman Ken Yeager, is honored with a community award from the Newhall Neighborhood Association. Also honored at the National Night Out barbecue on Aug. 2 are the firefighters of Station 7 and Sgt. Manny Martinez of the San Jose Police Department.

Due to San Jose budget cuts, staff at the Municipal Rose Gardens are reassigned one day a week. In two years, staffing has dropped from 15 staff shifts a week to eight.

San Jose City Councilman Ken Yeager announces his candidacy for District 4 Supervisor, replacing Jim Beall who is termed out.

Hopes for a dog park at Lincoln High School end when supporters are unable to raise money for even a "bare bones" park.

Artist Craig Miller, who lives in the Newhall area, has a one-man show of his paintings and sculptures at the Triton Museum of Art.

SEPTEMBER

Guadalupe River Park and Gardens officially opens on Sept. 10 offering 2.6 miles along the banks of the river, from Highway 280 to Highway 680.

St. Martin of Tours School celebrates its 50th anniversary with a Golden Gala that attracts more than 400 alumni.

Tutuzzo's Ristorante Italiano reopens at 1423 The Alameda with new owner Dan Herrer and Chef Robert Brust. It had been closed for a year.

Rose Garden resident Megan Dwyer leads her second annual Changing Gears motorcycle ride from San Diego to San Francisco to increase awareness of young breast cancer survivors. Dwyer also leads rides later in the year in the United Kingdom and in Australia.

The Italian American Heritage Foundation hosts its 25th Italian Family Festa at Santana Row.

Santa Clara University officials apologize to Newhall Neighborhood residents for the noise from a Sept. 19 outdoors concert featuring the group Slightly Stoopid. The noise was heard as far away as the Shasta-Hanchett Park neighborhoods.

The St. Leo the Great community takes in Julie Montalbano and her mother Brenda after they are evacuated from their home in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

OCTOBER

Catholic Charities, one of the largest providers of human services to the poor of Santa Clara County, celebrates its 50th anniversary with a dinner on Oct. 6.

Race Street, between Sierra and Park avenues, receives 28 new trees on Oct. 21 thanks to the efforts of volunteers Loui Tucker and Sabine Zappe. Our City Forest provided the trees.

The 10th annual Autumn in the Rose Garden Home Tour takes place, raising money for St. Martin of Tours School.

Councilman Ken Yeager, at the request of residents, proposes rezoning the neighborhood behind Garden Alameda to single family residential, or R-1.

Whole Foods announces plans to open a 45,000-square-foot store at the corner of The Alameda and Stockton Avenue in 2007.

For Your Journey closes the retail side of its operation. Owner Donna Lopez moves her workshops to 1972 The Alameda.

A fire in a 10-unit apartment complex at 1011 Myrtle St. on Oct. 13 injures one firefighter and leaves 17 residents temporarily homeless.

Linda Taaffe is named editor of the Rose Garden Resident.

Jan-Willem Knapen, the 16-year-old Bellarmine student who died in August of brain cancer, is the first non-corporate CEO to win Community Foundation Silicon Valley's Spirit of Philanthropy Award. His parents, Anne Marie Knapen-Asnong and Geert Knapen, accept the award for him at a luncheon on Oct. 21.

NOVEMBER

An afternoon fire on Nov. 1 temporarily closes the 81-year-old Greenlee's Bakery at 1081 The Alameda. The fire started when the bakery's original oven was being replaced.

Construction of six new pedestrian safety islands on The Alameda is completed, more than a year after they were promised.

A Nov. 4 electrical fire in Realty World at 1402 The Alameda temporarily closes the business, forcing voters to a new polling place at Westminster Presbyterian Church across the street.

Replacement of underground water mains along Park Avenue closes portions of the street weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Detours and road closures are expected to end Feb. 3, weather permitting.

A Leftover Turkeys Concert at Lou's Village features local bands playing '60s rock & roll music. The Nov. 26 concert is a benefit for Hoover Middle School's chorus class trip to Disneyland.

Patrick Soricone announces he is stepping down as executive director of the Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center at the end of November. He moves down The Alameda to United Way of Silicon Valley where he becomes director of community impact.

Clark Williams agrees to serve as interim director of the Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center during the search for a new executive director.

San Jose Redevelopment Agency approves the \$5.7 million purchase of Stephens Meat Products on S. Montgomery Street. It is part of a 13-acre parcel on which city officials would like to build a ballpark.

O'Connor Hospital announces it is closing its O'Connor Home Care and Home Pharmacy division and lays off 113 workers as of January 2006.

Derek Morgan Beck, founder of Cycle Recyclery and a senior at Bellarmine College Preparatory, donates 20 bicycles to residents of InnVision's Montgomery Street Inn. The shelter's residents will use the cycles as their primary mode of transportation to jobs, health care and counseling appointments.

Lincoln High School's football team wins the 63rd annual Big Bone Game against San Jose Academy on Thanksgiving Day by a score of 56-20. This is the eighth year in a row that the Lions have been victorious.

DECEMBER

Downtown College Prep moves into the former site of Hester School at 1460 The Alameda. The 380 students start classes on Dec. 5. Downtown College Prep is the first charter high school in the San Jose Unified School District.

A single-story 9,789-square-foot-building for 955 The Alameda at North Morrison, is recommended for approval by the San Jose Planning Department. Construction is expected to start in late spring 2006.

San Jose City Council votes to lift the ban on sales of food and alcohol at gas stations.

San Jose City Council votes unanimously Dec. 13 to censure Mayor Ron Gonzales following an independent investigator's findings that he was involved in a deal in 2000 giving Norcal Waste Systems \$11 million more than the council had agreed on.

On Dec. 19, the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office confirms it is investigating the Norcal Waste Systems contract.

Santa Clara County sheriff officers stage a drug raid Dec. 13 in the Buena Vista neighborhood, arresting 12 and seizing marijuana, rock cocaine and methamphetamines and more than \$10,000 in cash.

The San Jose City Council votes unanimously Dec. 13 to approve the rezoning of 137 properties in the Garden Alameda area to single-family residential, or R-1.

Work is completed on the parking lot expansion by Planned Parenthood Mar Monte at the corner of The Alameda and Taylor Street.

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