

Business News

Month of openings

February is shaping into a month of openings, starting with Pueblo Viejo imported furniture at 76 S. First St. The store, which specializes in rustic furniture imports from Mexico was set to open Feb. 1.

Across the street, however, work continues on the Black Sea Gallery, which originally had a "late-2004" opening. But unexpected construction issues created delays, notably a surprise support beam that could not be removed and required redesign. The furniture chain, which closed its Willow Glen location in November in preparation for this move, may be open by the end of the month or soon thereafter.

Also set to open this month:

- Zyng Asian Grill, 200 S. First St., in the Twoby building at Paseo de San Antonio, offers dishes from China, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Korea and Singapore. Pad Thai, anyone? Call 971-9909; - Melting Pot fondue restaurant, owned by Nancy Avila, at 72 S. First St. Call 249-0904;

- Studio 8 dance club, in the Banker's Club space in the Bank of America building at Santa Clara and South First Street. The club is set to open Feb. 25, said manager **Jonny Nitro**.

Business notes: Speaking of eights, the business at Third and San Fernando originally called Eight will undergo a name change. Fahrenheit Ultralounge could open in March.

Have you noticed that Lee's Sandwiches plans to surround City Hall? The bakery and \$1.75 sandwich place will be on the ground floor of the Fourth Street Garage and in an old Laundromat in the Albertson's parking lot off Santa Clara and Sixth streets. Check leesandwiches.com.

A.P. Stump has revised the menu featuring corn-fed American beef, chops, seafood and classics prepared by executive chef **Jim Stump**. The restaurant at 163 W. Santa Clara is open for lunch and dinner. Call the chop house at 292-9928 or visit apstumps.com.

Welcome Sofa Lounge to 374 S. First St. above Eulipia restaurant. Sofa Lounge, inspired by **Michael Borkenhagen**, comfortably occupies the space previously home to the B-Hive. Call 294-SOFA or check sofaloungej.com.

More business news: Online Game Services, Inc., the U.S. subsidiary of Tokyo-based Solid Networks, which hosts and manages online games, has opened an office at 111 W. St. John St., Suite 705. Online Game Services is interested in forging links with U.S. companies for online game distribution. Contact james@onlinenetworkservices.com.

Cuccini restaurant, formerly Fanny and Alexander, serves Mediterranean and Middle Eastern dishes featuring falafel, hummus and gyros. Owner **Violet Benjamin** also offers patio dining and opens Club Cuccini to the 30+ crowd on the second and fourth Friday of each month. The restaurant is at 72 N. Almaden Ave. Call 287-1737 or check cuccini.com.

Save Money Auto Repair, owned by **An Nguyen**, at 147 E. Santa Clara St. in the Fourth Street Chevron Station, provides car repairs. Call 287-2764.

All In One Typing Services, owned by **Michelle Riley**, provides legal and business support including transcription, notary services and process servers at 22 W. St. John St. Visit allinonetyping.com or call 288-8478.

Postal Annex, owned by **Keh-Ming Hsueh**, at 123 E. San Carlos St., provides packaging, FedEx and UPS services, mailbox rentals, passport photos, copying and school supplies. Call 975-0893.

Fast Cash, owned by **Jim Ball**, at 114 E. Santa Clara St., is a financial service center offering short-term loans, auto loans, money orders and money transfers. Call 279-2226.

Dive Bar, 78 E. Santa Clara St., owned by **Michael Smith**, pours drinks and offers dancing Friday and Saturday nights. Open for private parties. Call 288-5252.

General News

Start your engines: Downtown is revving up for the July 29-31 San Jose Grand Prix, to be raced on a 10-turn, 1.4-mile circuit around HP Pavilion. "People approach all the time and tell me how excited they are about the race, and their desire to participate – especially in the downtown," said Mayor **Ron Gonzales**.

The race course, which includes high-speed and tight turns, long straightaways and multiple passing zones, zooms along West St. John and West Santa Clara streets as well as short chutes on North Almaden Boulevard and North Montgomery Street. The 18-car feature event, part of the Champ Car World Series circuit, and weeklong festival of activities are expected to attract more than 100,000 spectators. Go to sanjosegrandprix.com for tickets and information. Or stop by the grand prix's offices at 333 W. San Carlos St., No. 1.

In other sports news: The race isn't the only new game in town while members await the return of the Sharks. Besides men's tennis in February, the Pac-10 Women's Basketball Tournament returns to the arena for its third straight year in March. The national junior wheelchair basketball championships (March 10-13) and the national judo championships (March 19-20) at the San Jose State Events Center and the taekwondo national qualifier (March 19-20) at the convention center will add 5,300 athletes to the downtown scene.

Coming September 8-11 is another new event, the Dew Action Sports Tour with the world's best skateboarders, BMX racers and motocross racers. That will attract about 20 hours of network TV coverage and – like the Grand Prix event – will bring an estimated \$20-\$30 million into the city.

"It used to be people had a sense of disbelief when we were hosting national events," said **Dean Munro**, executive director of the San Jose Sports Authority. "San Jose is very appealing to most sports organizations."

Quilt smoking: The San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles is moving to SoFA.

Museum officials plan a summer opening at 520 S. First St. with three galleries set up around an open atrium, doubling their current space used to show the artistry of quilts, tapes and other textiles. The reconstructed building will include lobby, store, space for special events, workspace for exhibit and collection preparation, storage space, classroom, offices and upstairs meeting room – more than 13,000 square feet in all.

All museum operations will be under one roof, said Executive Director **Jane Przybysz**. The museum, currently located in limited digs along Paseo de San Antonio between Third and Fourth streets, attracts more than 22,000 visitors annually.

The San Jose Redevelopment Agency is assisting in the renovation of the original 1923 structure, which served as home of San Jose Supply Co. and more recently as a thrift store. The agency's loan will be forgiven if the museum stays in the space for 10 years.

"This is one of several arts projects the agency is working on in the SoFA district," said **Harry Mavrogenes**, RDA executive director. "The arts are at the core of our humanity and what our downtown is all about."

Venture philanthropist construction company owner **Steven H. Oliver** is working with the museum to rehab the building. Visit siquiltmuseum.com for info.

When Vintage becomes new again: First United Methodist Church is ready to celebrate a \$2.5 million renovation of its high-rise residential building at the corner of Sixth and Santa Clara streets. A rededication ceremony of the art deco-designed Vintage Tower across from the new City Hall will occur at 11 a.m. on Feb. 10.

Originally built in 1928 for medical and dental offices, the 12-story building transformed into apartments in 1987. The city took ownership of the building in 2000 and the church acquired it in 2004. The renovation of the ground floor retail and apartments includes everything from exterior paint, windows and seismic strengthening to interior paint, carpet, ceiling fans and appliances, said **Jim Crawford**, church pastor. The apartments – which offer great views of the valley,

downtown and surrounding hills – are available to low- and very-low-income individuals and families.

City Hall parking to spread through downtown: The city is trying to figure out where city employees at the new City Hall will park after the new civic center opens and before the off-site parking garage is finished. If the plan is implemented, employees will be spread throughout existing public parking garages.

The latest interim parking plan anticipates a need for 1,455 downtown parking places. More than half will be asked to park in the Market/San Pedro Garage and stroll five blocks along Santa Clara Street to work. The city Department of Transportation's plan also recommends 72 take spots in the on-site City Hall parking garage; 150 use the Fourth Street Garage; 400 park in the Third Street Garage; and 100 cars park at the Second/San Carlos Garage.

Bids are out to build the off-site, above-ground garage, delayed until a legal fight over the old Fox-Markowitz building was resolved (the building will be razed). Construction should begin this spring and could be completed by May 2006. Employees are expected to begin moving into the new City Hall in June, meaning the interim parking plan will be utilized for almost a year.

Once complete, the 1,128 space off-site garage would be used by employees only weekdays from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the public would be allowed to park free all other times. The on-site underground garage would open 6 a.m.-11 p.m. Monday-Friday, and the public would pay 75 cents per 20 minutes up to a maximum \$15. The 372-space on-site garage would be closed on weekends, according to the plan.

When one-way becomes two: Work is expected to begin in March converting parts of Third and Fourth streets just north of the downtown core from one-way to two-way traffic from Julian to Jackson streets. Julian Street between Third and Fifth streets will also convert to two-way, according to a plan sent to the City Council for approval in late January. The project has the approval of

the Hensley Historic District and Japantown Community Congress, and is a top priority of the Thirteenth Street Strong Neighborhood Initiative, according to a city staff report.

For the street conversion to occur, traffic signals at Julian and Third, Fourth and Fifth streets and Jackson and Third and Fourth streets must be modified. Railroad crossing gates on Third and Fourth streets must also be altered. Crews will also overhaul streets with new pavement, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, wheelchair ramps, driveway aprons, center islands, proper drainage, and concrete decorative crosswalks. Affected streets should be two-way by August.

Get inside San Jose: For a deeper look into San Jose culture and politics, check out San Jose Inside at www.sanjoseinside.com. Started by a group of people with downtown ties, notably San Pedro Square's **John**

McEnergy and former mayor **Tom McEnergy**, San Jose Inside bubbles with rhetoric and discussion of the issues that confront the city and its leaders.

Vice Mayor Chavez: **Cindy Chavez**, the downtown representative on the City Council, is vice mayor. She received the unanimous approval of her colleagues on the council and was nominated by Mayor **Ron Gonzales**. Chavez, who has represented District 3 since 1998, replaces **Pat Dando** as vice mayor, whose council term expired at the end of 2004.

SJDA News

Calling all sponsors: **Eric Trautmann** has joined the Downtown Association full time as sponsorship manager. In his role, Trautmann recruits sponsors to support SJDA events and promotions. Trautmann has a varied background in special events, fund raising and sponsorship sales that includes experience with festivals and farmers' markets around the Bay Area. He has a bachelor's degree from San Francisco State University.

Downtown Facts

Cinequest considers: Submissions for Cinequest, to be held March 2-13, broke records for the previous 14 movie festivals. In all, 575 feature films and 1,202 short films were entered, more than 5 percent growth over the previous record year in 2004. Screenplay submissions more than doubled, from 271 to 634.

At the Convention Center

Feb. 5-6 – Junior qualifier volleyball tournament (3,500)
Feb. 11-13 – San Jose Arts Festival (5,000)
Feb. 19-21 – Volleyball tournament (3,500)
Feb. 27-March 4 – SPIE's Micro lithography 2005 (3,000) (expected attendance)

Next BOD meeting

All Business Improvement District members are invited to the Feb. 11 meeting of the SJDA Board of Directors. The meeting begins at 8 a.m. at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library at Fourth and San Fernando streets, Room 225B. **Don Kassing**, interim president of San Jose State University and former SJDA board member, will be guest speaker. Members will also be updated on the latest sports-related issues affecting downtown. RSVP with **Emelia Nahinu** at 279-1775.

Downtown Dimension is published monthly by the San Jose Downtown Association, a nonprofit membership organization established in 1986 to serve the Downtown business community. Call (408) 279-1775 for information.

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Jane Przybysz, left, and quilt fans at the under-reconstruction Museum of Quilts and Textiles.


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