

## Post Street welcomes Qmunity

Post Street between First and Market streets was officially designated for the LGBTQ+ community at an event Sept. 10 attended by City, County and community leaders.

"The South Bay LGBTQ+ community deserves a welcoming and affirming space of our own," said **Nathan Svoboda**, president of Project MORE. "A place for shopping, socializing, networking and night life. A district that highlights our history, cultures, and diversity. Post Street is the perfect place."

Civic leaders including downtown Councilmember **Raul Perez**, Supervisor **Cindy Chavez** and San Jose Downtown Association Executive Director **Scott Knies** agreed, each speaking at the event and participating in a symbolic splash of 11 different colors of the rainbow acknowledging all the types and colors of people deserving equity and inclusion.

"We must be so out there that there is no space for hate," said **Maribel Martinez**, director of the office of LGBTQ Affairs for Santa Clara County. "This is a rainbow amid the storm."

The Qmunity district will showcase the LGBTQ+ community's diversity, expression, talent, history, and cultural arts, Svoboda added. Post Street will provide a welcoming space for LGBTQ+ owned and allied businesses, organizations, community groups, and residents. The designation has the support of businesses on the block.

Thanks to city funding via Councilman Perez's office and implementation by SJDA, Post Street has a changed look already, with LED lighting, colorful sidewalks, two art crosswalks, street banners, new trees and soon, a mural on the Splash building at the corner of Post Street and Lightson Alley. Downtown design firm Gensler provided pro bono assistance on the look of the street.

"I look forward to more exciting businesses opening," said **TJ Bruce** of Splash. "I can't wait to party again."

More information at [domoreproject.org](http://domoreproject.org). #wearecommunity #lgbtqia #dtsjopen



**Councilmember Raul Perez led Post Street Qmunity effort.**

## Mac's: A Survival Story

The recent Qmunity branding of Post Street would not be possible without Mac's Club, the gay-friendly bar operating downtown for more than four decades.

"It was Mac's that made it happen," said **Gail Chandler-Croll**.

Chandler is the third and longest owner of the bar, which opened in 1945 on South First Street in the space now occupied by The Continental. She bought the bar, which has always had straight owners, in 1977. The previous owners saw the bar transition to a gay clientele in the '70s, she said.

Over the past 43 years, Mac's has endured, despite plenty of tumultuous times for Chandler, her husband **John Croll**, and longtime bartender/manager **Jim Mitchell**.

"We've lived it," said Mitchell, "the good, bad and ugly."

Their location on South First Street was on the gritty side of downtown. Before it was known as SoFA and full of arts organizations and galleries, South First Street was home to porn theaters, sex shops and streetwalkers.

"It was a fun time," Chandler said. "The hookers were no problem. They'd come in to rest. They actually took care of us."

"That was also a time when straight couples having affairs came to Mac's," she recalled. "They knew nobody would come inside to look for them."

Police caused them problems from time to time during their stay on South First Street. "They'd come in at midnight and check for fruit flies (in the liquor bottles.). I'd complain to the captain, but I also always let them do it."

Added Mitchell: "At Renegades (which Chandler also owned in the '90s amid five other gay establishments in the area of Stockton and Cinnabar streets), the police would shine lights into the bars at night."

Fortunately, gay officers on the police force would help mitigate those distractions over the years, they said.

The community that Mac's has been a part of all these years is a main factor in the bar's longevity.

"We've created a second home for people," Chandler said. "They've followed us. We've respected our customers and taken care of them. We never missed a pride parade. And we've held fund-raisers."



**On Mac's back patio, from left, Gail Chandler-Croll, John Croll and Jim Mitchell.**

Some of the most difficult times were in the 1980s when the AIDS pandemic hit the Bay Area.

"I lost 40 customers and people working for us from HIV," Chandler said. "I can't talk about it. I'll cry."

Her husband finished the thought. "The community kept going," Croll said. "After a funeral, they'd come down here to drink. We've had a lot of wakes here."

Fortunately, drug treatments developed that allowed HIV patients to live normal lives. "But at the beginning, so many were sick and didn't want anybody else to know — they didn't get help," he added.

The Loma Prieta earthquake of October 1989 rattled Mac's, too, but only one half-gallon bottle of Galleano wine was lost, Croll said.

"I came down here after the earthquake to check on the place, and found the bar full of people and music blaring," he said. "A lot of the people at Mac's that day had never been there before or since."

Added Mitchell, shaking his head: "I was at the St. Claire. My drink didn't fall over, but I did."

Turned out that Mac's Club lost its lease because of the earthquake — their South First Street building constructed of unreinforced masonry was red-tagged as unsafe. Mac's had to move. Chandler bought the building at 39 Post St., favoring its affordability, small and intimate space and back patio.

Mardi Gras provided the scariest moment of Mac's Post Street era almost 20 years ago when WAVES (now Splash) hosted a party and thousands of people showed up, overwhelming the event — and event security. Mac's was undergoing a front façade renovation and Chandler and Croll had to stand out front

and keep people from literally pushing their way through the wall into the bar.

In 2019, the owners worried about the life of a signature mural on their back patio. A pair of San Jose State students who were regular customers proposed to paint a mural of men and women of diverse colors and sizes. Chandler gave them \$1,000 to cover supplies and some of their time.

"We wanted to support local artists," Croll said. "We thought it was fun," Chandler added.

The mural is "personal to the customers and staff," she said. The small patio is packed on weekends and roomier during the week. "You never feel alone back there," Chandler said.

As it turned out, the mural is painted on the outside of the former Woolworth's building and the site of the planned Alterra high-rise residential development.

**See Mac's, Back Page**

## Downtown's Al Fresco dining expands

Post Street is the latest place for *al fresco* dining.

55 South constructed a wooden ship, christened the 55 El Dorado, to drink and dine in the middle of the street. Don Pedro's and other establishments have set up tables on the half-block between South

First and Lightson Alley.

San Pedro Square, SoFA and the Paseo also have designated outside dining spaces on public property, with the city not charging for street, sidewalk or plaza use.

"San Jose's Al Fresco program helps businesses survive during these very difficult times," said **Blage Zelalich**, the city's downtown manager.

The rules of the city's Al Fresco program also allow businesses to expand their operations on sidewalks as long as their business neighbors give them written approval. Previous Al Fresco orders allowed businesses to operate on private and public parking lots, sidewalks, and public streets, and is now expanded to plazas and parks.

SJDA Business Development Manager **Nate LeBlanc** helps coordinate and set up the program for downtown locations. Email [nleblanc@sjdowntown.com](mailto:nleblanc@sjdowntown.com) for assistance.



**The 55 El Dorado docked on Post Street.**

## Post (nee El Dorado) Street has colorful past

Nobody can recall how Post Street got its name, but it all happened in 1902 when the City of San Jose wanted to make a change to alter the image of El Dorado Street, the street's original name.

From day one in 1855, the couple blocks of El Dorado Street between Market and San Pedro streets was one of San Jose's more colorful districts. A walk down El Dorado would reveal brothels, saloons, gunsmiths, secret Chinese gambling joints and cigar stands, as well as boot-makers, bakers, fish shops and barbers. When the street became Post, spitting was discouraged and the street's image slowly began its evolution into a new reputation that is still colorful and community-minded.



## SJDA News

**Dine Downtown expanded for the times:** Center city restaurants and cafes crushed by the COVID-shutdown are eager to see their customers return during Dine Downtown San Jose, Oct. 1-Nov.15. That's 46 days



covering seven weekends to celebrate and support all the downtown San Jose eateries that have remained open for business during the strict pandemic protocols.

"This is our most popular dining event because it highlights downtown's unique food cultures," said

**Julie Carlson**, SJDA marketing director. "This year, we stretched it to make sure customers have plenty of time to explore new dining experiences and revisit a favorite."

More than half of the participants in last year's Dine Downtown promotion aren't open at this time, mirroring the total number of downtown eateries closed since the coronavirus hit in March.

Cafes are joining in the program this year with creative food and coffee pairings. Breakfast and lunches are also part of the Dine Downtown experience this year, whereas past events focused on white tablecloth dining with chef's specials, prix fixe menus and wine/cocktail tastings.

As of deadline for this issue, some of the restaurants and cafes committed to participating include: Pastelaria Adegá, Enoteca La Storia, Academic Coffee and 71 Saint Peter. More will be signing up even as the event begins.

Check [sjdowntown.com/dine-downtown](http://sjdowntown.com/dine-downtown) for a list of downtown's open restaurants and those restaurants with Dine Downtown specials.

## Mac's

*From Front Page*

The project has been cleared by the city to demolish the building.

"We asked the owners to consider keeping the wall in its place as construction commences," Chandler said. A year later, the Alterra project has stalled as the developer seeks financing.

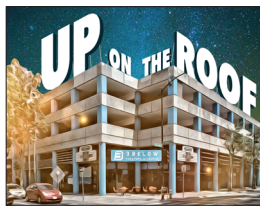
And, of course, the latest challenge for the club is COVID-19, which caused Mac's to close March 16.

"One day we're in business and having our best year ever. The next day we're not," Chandler said. "But the state still wants us to pay for our permits."

Mac's announced plans to open as soon as possible once Post Street was available for Al Fresco dining on Sept. 9. They are sorting out the details now, including food service and insurance.

During the shutdown, Mitchell performed maintenance on

**Dinners and Movies for (A) Change:** More than 40 movies will be presented on the roof of the Third and San Carlos Garage from Oct. 8 and Nov. 1.



Up On the Roof is a collaboration between Guggenheim Entertainment and the San Jose Downtown Association and presented by First Tech Credit Union with dinner and movies outdoor under the autumn sky. And no sitting in lawn chairs for this experience! Patrons will dine in a real movie theater seat with cup holders.

**Shannon and Scott Guggenheim**, owners of 3 Below Theater and Lounge, have created a concept where customers can see a movie on a big screen, have dinner prepared by someone else and share an experience with other people "for a change," and see movies for change.

Up On The Roof focuses on bringing entertainment to Downtown that puts a spotlight on social justice. As long as there have been smart, empathetic filmmakers, there have been great social justice movies. The series themes include Black Lives Matter, Salute to Asian Pacific American Film Makers, Celebrating Latinx Voices, The Power of Women, Amplifying LGBTQ+ Voices, Documentaries for Change, and Must-See Movies.

The 3Below cafe is all clean and sparkly and the customer service team is up to date on all the procedures to keep you safe while preparing hot food, cool treats, and movie theater sweets. The \$25 ticket includes a \$10 food voucher, and tickets purchased before the start date may receive \$3 off. [3belowtheaters.com](http://3belowtheaters.com) has all the details.

the 100-year-old building, and Chandler checked the mail. None of the windows were broken by vandals.

"We've always survived," the Crolls said. "We can't see it going any other way."

Mac's is one of three remaining gay bars in the city which once had 17.

"The community changed," Chandler said. "Nobody makes fun of gay clubs anymore. You don't see the discrimination now like we once did. Now the clientele at all bars is more mixed. You see people holding hands, kissing, walking with their kids everywhere."

"Our customers have been the soul and life of this place," Chandler said. She expects a speedy recovery for her business when they can reopen.

"2021 hopefully will be the return to good times," she said. "The day we reopen will be a big party, especially with Splash also being open."

## Downtown News

**Hello Hella Gardens:** Twenty-three artists painted foliage, flowers and garden scenes on the windows of 21 downtown storefronts in mid-September.

All the window activation paintings had a floral theme. Pedestrians could even play a game of "Eye Spy" to find hidden bugs in the Hella Gardens art works.

The program to showcase artistic diversity and bring some life to vacant storefronts was organized by Local Color and supported by the San Jose Downtown Association's PBID program and the City of San Jose.

Some of the Hella Gardens sites include: Hank Coca's, Leisure Sports, Western Dental and Saratoga Capital on East Santa Clara Street; the former Tech Shop on South Second Street; and Family Life Chiropractic and Hapa Masubi on the Paseo de San Antonio.

Hella Gardens provides another reason for people to explore downtown on foot, said **Erin Salazar**, Local Color executive director.

The artists involved come from diverse backgrounds. Some were involved in a painting event of social messages in June, also coordinated by Local Color and SJDA, following protests over the deaths of **George Floyd** and others.



**Andrew Summer paints on Santa Clara Street.**

**Lourdes (Lou) Jimenez**, an artist and San Jose State University junior taking classes in visual culture (formerly art history) and urban planning, painted a tropical garden with "a vintage look" on the corner of Santa Clara and North First streets.

"I hope that people like it," she said. "This is for them — this is their street. No ads. Maybe they can stop, disconnect and find peace for a moment. It means a lot to me to be able to create something like this."

Check [localcolorsj.com](http://localcolorsj.com) for more information.

**Office developers must help pay for affordable housing:** The City Council approved Sept. 1 new Commercial Linkage Fees meant to generate funds for affordable housing needs in the city caused by the new commercial space.

The City Council agreed to set Commercial Linkage fees downtown that are more than twice the rate of commercial developments in the rest of the city. For buildings in the downtown more than 100,000 square feet the fee will cost \$12 per square foot while the fee for a similar project outside downtown will be \$5 per square foot.

"The much lower fee for large office projects outside downtown is a subsidy to San Jose's urban sprawl," said **Scott Knies**, SJDA Executive Director.

The fees will apply to all office commercial approved after September 2019. Downtown has several buildings in this category that are moving forward, such as CityView Plaza and 200 Park Avenue. In most cases, developers have an alternative to the maximum fees by purchasing or building affordable housing with their projects.

## Business News

**Moment for the holidays:** The MOMENT shops at San Pedro Squared are making a list and checking it twice, preparing for the holiday season.

The Source Zero soaps and Aulala Design women's clothing will continue to serve customers through December. Joining them through Oct. 6 is SJMADE's Animal Crossing themed pop-up. The store, which presents animal-themed items, welcomes walk-ins on Oct. 5-6. Walk-ins through Oct. 4 will be accommodated around reservations that were sold out in September.

The other two shops from mid-October through December will be:

- ♦ An SJMADE composite store featuring products from more than 50 local makers and artists. (Instagram/sjmade)
- ♦ Black Sheep Made retail and do-it-yourself pop-up, focusing on knit, crochet, and macramé goods, as well as workshops. (Instagram.com/blacksheepmade)

SJMADE curates the shops with retailers rotating throughout the year in the four storefronts. The concept was developed by the San Jose Downtown Association out of the ground floor of the city-owned Market-San Pedro Square Garage. The objective was to activate both sides of San Pedro Street and provide a retail incubator for small entrepreneurs to offer their products in a brick and mortar location.



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Retail projects have no Commercial Linkage fees and hotels citywide will pay \$5 per square foot. Office projects of less than 40,000 square feet pay no fee, and those between 40,000 and 100,000 square feet pay \$3 per each square foot over 40,000 square feet.

San Jose's job-rich neighbors have higher Commercial Linkage fees. Santa Clara charges \$20 per square foot, Cupertino \$24.60, Sunnyvale \$17.20, Palo Alto \$36.53 and Mountain View \$28.25. Only Milpitas is lower than San Jose at \$8.

## From the Archives

**15 years ago – October 2005** — San Jose's new City Hall opened on Santa Clara Street between Fourth and Sixth streets. Designed by architect **Richard Meier**, the postmodern glass rotunda and 18-story tower is the second tallest building in San Jose.

**20 years ago – October 2000** — Downtown's Fire Station One opened its new two-story facility at 201 N. Market St. The 15,600 square-foot station houses one truck, one engine and 11 firefighters. Station One is recognized as the busiest fire station in the city.

**25 years ago – October 1995** — SJDA's Retail Task force members presented to the San Jose City Council 25 recommendations for a "Prescription for Retail Revival" inclusive of opportunities for more residential development in the core and a low-interest loan program to stimulate retail development.

**30 years ago – October 1990** — Three key projects opened and reopened symbolizing downtown's past, present and future: the 113-year old St Joseph Cathedral

**Hammer supports live streaming performances:**

Hammer Theater Center has reopened, offering its space to local arts groups that can adhere to Santa Clara County COVID-19 guidelines. The dance, music, theater performances or talks can be live-streamed to in-home audiences via the Hammer's newly installed studio quality high-definition multi-camera equipment system.

The theater, operated by San Jose State University, offers technical, sound, lighting, production and ticketing support. Email [HammerTheatre@sjsu.edu](mailto:HammerTheatre@sjsu.edu) or call (408) 924-8502.

**Artisans return to Friday market:** Artisan businesses have returned to the weekly Farmers' Market open each Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. along San Pedro Street. Artisans can apply to be a vendor at the Farmers' Market page at [sjdowntown.com](http://sjdowntown.com).

"We're going to move slowly introducing new artisans," said **Donna Butcher**, SJDA events manager. "We want to make sure everyone has room to move through the market safely."

Walk, ride or use VTA to get to the market. Shoppers must keep their distance and wear a mask.

Follow the Downtown Farmers' Market presented by Kaiser Permanente on Twitter (@SJ\_Downtown), Facebook (/sjdowntown and /DowntownSanJoseFarmersMarket) and the weekly Downtowner Online email of events.

## SJDA Annual Meeting

**Virtual annual meeting Oct. 9, 8:15 a.m.:** Official business at the San Jose Downtown Association Annual Meeting includes electing SJDA Board members, a review of SJDA and Property-Based Improvement District 2019-20 finances, and the "two-minute drill" recap of SJDA's work by association committees over the past year.

The "State of the Downtown" address by Executive Director **Scott Knies** will kick off the meeting.

Registration information for the Zoom webinar can be found on SJDA's Facebook @sjdowntown event page. Webinar space is limited. The meeting will also be streamed live on Facebook.

## DOWNTOWN DIMENSION

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