

Cotati Historical Society Newsletter

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Preserving Cotati's Past
P.O. Box 7013 Cotati, CA 94931
E-mail chsinfo@sonic.net

March 2011

Prue Draper & Connie Martin, Editors

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INDEX

In this issue, you will find:

Double Celebration at Museum
Video Features Racetracks
Our Annual Chicken BBQ
Field Trip for Students
Historical Ecologist to Speak

Cotati Museum Hours:

Saturday 1 - 4 P.M.
2nd Wednesday of each
month 5:30 - 8 P.M.
Special times by appointment
Phone 707-794-0305

SOCIETY OFFICERS

President Prue Draper 795-5510	V. President Connie Martin 795-2772
Treasurer Terry Dutra	Secretary Suzanne Whipple
Outreach Lisa Moore	Art Director Judy Pagnusat
Archiving Administrator Judy Gustafson	

Come Visit Our New Display "Gentlemen, Start Your Engines"

A special display of the history of racing here is now featured at the Cotati Museum. Ranging from Wilfred Page's race horse track to the giant board speedway on East Cotati Avenue to the dragster-sports car track north of Helman Lane, it features photos, news stories and trophies.

We Celebrate our 1st Anniversary And Fred Wiseman's Historic Flight

It's hard to believe that it's been a year since we held our Grand Opening, with a crowd of hundreds cheering as we clipped a cobweb-covered doorway. We moved the day up a bit to combine it with the countywide celebration of Fred Wiseman's first airmail flight from Petaluma to Santa Rosa.

When Wiseman flew over Cotati in 1911, local housewives waved their aprons to cheer him on. We also waved aprons as a band of hardy walkers re-traced Wiseman's route. They had started in Petaluma and tramped through the rain to Denman Flat where Barry Lawrence greeted them at what was the Denman Dairy in 1911. They then proceeded to Penngrove Power & Implement Museum, then marched up the railroad tracks and came into Cotati with Jeff Tobes, their organizer, waving an antique flag.



Here's to our first year of museum operation. Board Members, l to r: Lisa Moore, Judy Gustafson, Judy Pagnusat, Prue Draper, Connie Martin, Terry Dutra and Suzanne Whipple drink an anniversary toast.

Photo by Jerry Pagnusat



Walkers retracing the route that Fred Wiseman flew on the first air mail flight were led by Jeff Tobes, with antique flag. They had visited the Cotati Museum, and were leaving the Church of the Oaks after brunch.

Photo by Sean Bressie

The apron-wavers escorted them into the Cotati Museum, and then to the Church of the Oaks where, thanks to Sally Tomatoes, we hosted a hearty brunch for the walkers. We wished them God-speed as they slogged on to Santa Rosa, and then by bus proceeded to the Pacific Coast Air Museum, Sonoma County Museum, Windsor Museum, Petaluma Library/Museum and Petaluma Airport to pay homage to Wiseman.

Meanwhile, back at the museum, volunteers held open house all day, serving refreshments and

Continued page 2

THANKS to the many donors since December

Robert & Barbara Abramson
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2011 New Members

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We'd Hate To Lose You

We're delighted that so many members have paid their 2011 dues. We hope others will also send their \$10 per person to CHS at P.O. Box 7013, Cotati, CA 94931. Your dues and contributions help with **Preserving Cotati's History.**

Anniversary Celebration *continued from page 1*



A hearty brunch of frittata, sausage, bacon, rolls and fruit salad was provided by Sally Tomatoes and served by Historical Society members.

Photo by Creighton Bell

welcoming and showing our new display on racing in Cotati. We wound up serving champagne in the evening to toast our anniversary.

Our conclusion: it's been a very successful first year; we're proud to have a museum to preserve and display Cotati's history. It could never have happened without tremendous cooperation and support from our community. Thanks for all you've done to keep us going!



Our sincere thanks to Gerard Guidice of Sally Tomatoes for providing the scrumptious brunch.

Photo by Creighton Bell



Following the lead of Cotati housewives who waved their aprons as Fred Wiseman flew over 100 years ago, volunteers waved aprons at walkers in the centennial celebration. L to r: Yvonne VanDyke, Prue Draper, Marj Torliatt, Judy Gustafson, Marsha Sue Lustig, Suzanne Whipple and Robin Draper.

Photo by Creighton Bell

Video Expert Helped Make it Happen



Kevin Comora

Ever since the Cotati Museum opened, we've been asked about "that race track the used to be in Cotati." Some people meant the world-class raised wooden track that was next to East Cotati Avenue in the 1920's. Others meant the old Navy airfield that became a drag strip north of Helman Lane. To celebrate our first anniversary, we resolved to answer those questions with special displays.

A new volunteer, Kevin Comora, owner and operator of Vizicast, offered to make a video of former racers reminiscing, and we solicited loans of trophies or other souvenirs of the two race tracks. With cooperation from George Arthur, Ed Bingelli, Frank Faraudo, John LeBaron, Lenny Mane, Steve Nelson, Carl Schollmann, Lloyd Silacci, Ken Silvestri, and Vern Tardel, Kevin produced a great video and we filled our display case. Judy Pagnusat produced the new photo display panels.

We expect the racing history to remain on display until at least April 17, when we hold our big Chicken Barbecue. Come and take a look.

We'll have our Famous Chicken BBQ on April 17 at the Cotati Room

In Cotati's history, a major annual event was the big public barbecue held in the Plaza, attracting food-lovers from all over the county. It's one of our favorite traditions in preserving Cotati's past, and preparations are already underway for our third annual Chicken Barbecue on Sunday, April 17.

Tickets are on sale now at the Cotati Chamber of Commerce Office or Exchange Bank, Cotati Branch. You may also get tickets by calling 795-5508 or 794-0305, or by emailing chsinfo@sonic.net and you save money by buying in advance at \$10 each. At the door they will cost \$12.

The meal of succulent barbecued chicken, beans, coleslaw, rolls and beverages will be served from noon to 3 p.m. The always-popular Bake Sale will again feature luscious cakes, pies, cupcakes and cookies, all made by local cooks. If you can help with the bake sale, please call Judy Gustafson, at 763-7256.

Beer and wine will be available, and Gil Gardner will play live American Roots Music. The always-popular silent auction and 50/50 raffle will give everybody a chance to go home with a treasure.

Terry Dutra is general chairman for the barbecue, and she would love to hear from everybody who would like to volunteer to help with setup, serving or cleanup. It's a lot of fun, and a great help to your historical society. Terry can be contacted at 795-3977 or dutrat@hotmail.com.

This is our major fundraiser of the year, and also our most enjoyable project, so we hope everybody will come and share the fun and good food. The museum will be open all afternoon for visitors and browsers.

FOURTH GRADERS GET A HISTORY LESSON

March 8 was a red-letter day as we hosted our first large field trip for students of Thomas Page School. The trip was arranged by Lisa Moore, museum Outreach Director. The group of about 60 fourth grade students was invited to come and learn about Cotati history as preparation for entering our historical essay contest.



Fourth grade students arrive at the front door of Cotati City Hall for a field on history. Sean Lowe on the right was one of the accompanying parents.

The annual contest is open to all Thomas Page School fourth graders, and is being held this year for the first time. It is financed through our Memorial Fund.

Ecologist – Poet – Historian to Speak

What was Cotati like 200 years ago? We'll get a chance to ponder that on March 28, when the Cotati Historical Society and the Cotati Creek Critters join in hosting a talk by historical ecologist Arthur Dawson.

Called "Thinking Like an Oak – 200 years of Change", the meeting in the Cotati Room, Ray Miller Community Center behind Cotati City Hall, will begin at 7 p.m.

Dawson, who lives in Glen Ellen, has done research through the Sonoma Ecology Center, but his large collection of maps and photographs and the fact that he is a poet and author as well as an ecologist assures that this talk won't be just a dry account of geography but a vision of what our area was like when the Coast Miwoks fished in our creeks.

He will conclude with a look at how mimicking natural patterns may reduce soil erosion, filter water, reduce flooding and restore habitat.

The public is invited, free of charge, and refreshments will be served.



Prue Draper, Society President, explains how Cotati grew into a city.



Judy Pagnusat, Society Art Director, leads a group in a project depicting names of Cotati streets.

NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

You, too, can help preserve Cotati's history as members of the Cotati Historical Society. **Dues are still only \$10 per person per year.** Please complete this form and send with your check to:

Cotati Historical Society
P.O. Box 7013
Cotati, CA 94931

Name/s _____

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR
3rd ANNUAL CHICKEN
BBQ
APRIL 17
Noon to 3 p.m.



Last year's BBQ chefs, l to r: Ed Gilardi, Bruce Martin and Fred Carrasca promise a repeat of last year's feast. *Photo by Jerry Pagnausat*