

Cotati Historical Society Newsletter

A non-profit 501 (c) (3) California corporation Tax ID #30-0421172

Preserving Cotati's Past
PO Box 7013 Cotati, CA 94931
chsinfo@sonic.net www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org

Spring 2020

Bobbie Veronda and Marie McNaughton, Editors

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IN MEMORIAM

CHS newsletters often feature stories about our supporters and volunteers actively working on events, exhibits, historical research, collection care, fundraising, and more to make us even more useful to the community.

This edition memorializes two of our number who have recently died by noting some of their contributions to the community. The loss of these and other elders underscores the difficulty of keeping an all-volunteer organization going beyond the lives of its founding members.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: John Allred 795-2791
Vice President: Ed Gilardi
Secretary: Velma DiMeola
Treasurer: Bobbie Veronda
Lead Archivist: Judy Gustafson
Membership: Connie Martin

BOARD POSITIONS OPEN

ALL KINDS OF HELP NEEDED

Recruit Members Via Social Media
Manage Volunteers + Develop Exhibits
Write or edit the Newsletter

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO?

COTATI MUSEUM HOURS

Every Saturday, 1-4 pm
2nd Tuesdays, 5-7 pm

For tours and research
appointments,
call 707-794-0305

Inside Cotati City Hall

THE CHS MISSION

As stated in our Articles of Incorporation, dated April 11, 2007, the specific purposes of the Cotati Historical Society are 1) to protect and preserve the history and culture of the City of Cotati, 2) to provide a permanent resource (museum and interpretive programs) for the preservation of artifacts, memorabilia and documents illustrating the past and present life of the Cotati community, municipality, and its citizens, and 3) to reach out to the general community and to support similarly guided educational and historical agencies.

Harold Griffith 1931—2019

When Harold Griffith came to Cotati at the age of two he found a permanent home, staying for 85 years. He died last fall in the house he built himself on West Railroad Avenue on the family homestead where his parents Robert Griffith and Anna Marty Griffith farmed chickens and raised their two sons, Harold and Earl.

He attended Cotati School and graduated from Petaluma High School in 1949. He studied at Santa Rosa Junior College and University of California, Davis, where he played football for the Aggies and was a charter member of the Delta Sigma Phi fraternity. Harold graduated in 1954 with a bachelor's degree in Animal Science and took over his family farm.

He married a fellow Cotatian, the late Sena Yoakley, in 1961. He is survived by his children Karen, Bob, and Debbie, their spouses, more than 10 grandchildren and great-grandchildren and his partner Martha Gustafson.

His lifelong vocations, however, were leading our volunteer fire department and promoting local real estate, especially through his Rancho Realtors business. He served as president for the Sonoma County Multiple Listing Service and as a director of the Northbay Association of Realtors.

In 1956, Harold began his 63 years of service to the Cotati Volunteer Fire Department. He was a firefighter,

assistant chief, and board director for the Cotati and Rancho Adobe Fire districts until 2019.

Along with his family and the fire department, Harold's passions were abalone diving, fishing in Alaska and vegetable gardening.

It was his association with the fire districts that enabled him to create a 2014-2015 Cotati Museum exhibit that contained Cotati Fire Department records and photos from the 1920s to the 1960s and firefighting equipment and uniforms.

He also assisted at the CHS Fall Forum in November 2008. He, along with Jennie Falletti, was on the panel discussion of Growing Up in Cotati.



Harold Griffith, Assistant Chief, 1957
Photo Courtesy Rancho Adobe FD

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW AND RENEWING 2020 MEMBERS

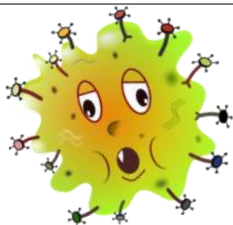
Marion Ackerman	Greg Gustafson	Bette McKnight*
Mark & Shannon Ackerman*	Judy Gustafson	Scott Minnis*
Marie Aggio	Martha Gustafson	Millie Nibe*
D.S. Alexander	Constance Hammerman*	Vi Nordman
John Allred*	Karen & Dave Heisel	Kathy Norwood
Lars & Erin Andersen	Mel & Cathy Hendrix	DeLoris Osborn
Mary Bartlett & Chris Davis	Robert & Carol Herrerias	Ellen Ostrand
Adele Pasquini Bennett*	Irene Hilsendager	John Page*
Harold Berkemeier	Hines Signs *	Jerry & Judy Pagnusat
Jenny Blaker	Nancy Hunt*	Bob Parker
Lillian Blodgett	Art Ibleto	Bruce Pearson*
Dick & JoAnn Braden*	Mark & Jolene Ibleto	Stan Poncia
Martha Brankline	Stephen Jones*	Fred Reed
Diane Canadas	Susan Kashack	Lindee Reese
Ken & Sherri Carli	Pat Kavanaugh*	Bob & Debbie Renati*
Ann & Fred Carrasca*	Valerie Kingsbury	Jennie Rossotti*
Ofelia Cutrone	Michael & Janet Kurvers	Louise Santero
Ron Dodge	Adrienne Lauby	Sharie Sbrazza
Bob Draper*	Don Leivas*	Carl & Mary Schollmann*
Robin Draper*	Mary Lou Issel Lentz	Mike Sheehan*
Fed. Indians of Graton Rancheria	Chuck Lucas	Allen & Carol Stansbury
Melanie Fleek*	Anna & Patrick Marshment*	Dan & Carolyn Torliatt
Elizabeth Fredericks*	Bruce & Connie Martin	Lee & Marjorie Torliatt
Janet Gingher*	Ali, Heather & Bruce Jr. Martin*	Pam Torliatt*
Kevin Gingher	Gary, Kim & Jake Martin	Gerald Turney
Fred Groverman	Barbara & Terry McGee*	Robert Waldron

* Indicates a general donation in addition to dues

Note: Memberships and donations received after February 14, 2020 will be acknowledged in the summer newsletter

In Memoriam Donations

Marie Aggio for Jennie Falletti	DeLoris Osborn for Florence McMasters Collier
Ken & Sherri Carli for Marjorie Rosselli	Ellen Ostrand for her son, Bill
Ron Dodge for Dogtoberfest	Lindee Reese for Prue Draper
Judy Gustafson for Jennie Falletti	Bob & Debbie Renati for Lu Water & Prue Draper
Martha Gustafson for Catie MacKinnon	Jennie Rossotti for Harold Griffith
Karen & Dave Heisel for R.C. "Tubby" Braden	Louise Santero for Linda Santero & Shorty Santero
Art Ibleto for Victoria Ibleto	Bobbie Veronda for Harold Griffith & Jennie Falletti
Mark & Jolene Ibleto for Victoria Ibleto	Pamela Wilford for Severa & Leona Wilford
Vi Nordman for Ed Nordman	



CHS 2020 BBQ

**** Postponed due to COVID-19 virus ****

Stay Healthy .. We'll send updates for the BBQ later



Jennie Falletti 1923—2019

Born in Colorado, the daughter of Italian immigrants, Jennie Veronda and her sister, Emma, first came to Cotati in 1938, when their parents, Pete and Elizabeth, bought the Mattson family ranch facing West Sierra Avenue (across from what was then Cotati School and is now City Hall).

Jennie graduated from Cotati School and then Petaluma High School where she took several years of Spanish language classes. She hoped to become a Spanish teacher. However, she gave up her college dream to help her family locally. They farmed up to 3,000 chickens until Pete's death in 1953, when the family switched over to raising sheep mainly to keep the grass down. Through the years the sheep eventually became Jennie's pets.

In 1948 Jennie married Al Falletti, who grew up on a Penngrove farm, and they designed and built a Spanish Colonial-style home at the corner of Olof Street. They carefully tended the fruit trees and flower gardens we see today. With Jennie's support Al was able to serve our community for over 25 years as a member of the Cotati Public Utility District, Cotati's first City Council, and the Cotati Planning Commission. He served two terms as Mayor of Cotati. He died in 2002.

Jennie was very proud she worked for the Sonoma County Tax Collector's office for 44 years—for many years riding the Greyhound bus from downtown Cotati to Santa Rosa. She knew how to drive a car, but felt secure on the road only going to and from the post office in Cotati.



Jennie in her trademark red coat with Bobbie Veronda and historian Yesenia Chavez Lyons at the Veronda-Falletti Ranch, 2016
Photo by Judy Gustafson

Once retired, she walked to St. Joseph church almost every day into her nineties. Many locals saw her in recent years walking in her signature red car coat. In 2008 she and her niece, Barbara Morrow, sold the farm portion of her property to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and the City of Cotati to protect a significant marker of the town's rural heritage. Fortunately it will be saved as public open space in perpetuity.

Jennie was unflagging in her support of the Cotati Historical Society and instrumental in identifying and cataloging its collection of historical objects and records. She volunteered as a docent in the museum and was always happy to tell stories about how Cotati "used to be."

A small neighborhood park, Al & Jennie Falletti Park, on Gravenstein Way, Cotati was named for the couple in 1995 by the City of Cotati.

The Board of Directors of CHS with the help of the City of Cotati held a gathering of friends in Jennie's honor at the museum. Also, at the close of its regular February 2020 meeting, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adjourned in memory of Jennie.



Jennie with Supervisor Helen Putnam, Santa Rosa, 1984
Photo courtesy of Sonoma County Library

MAKE FRIENDS AND PRESERVE COTATI HISTORY!!

WE ALWAYS NEED VOLUNTEERS—

even when we're not putting on the annual BBQ, which has been postponed due to the current health crisis.

Contact us for information on how **YOU** can help to increase public awareness of the museum and to support the historical society.



Do You Know??

As CHS works to record Cotati's history, we regularly come across questions about which we know little or nothing. To tell the full story takes a community of diverse generations, experiences, and interests.

In other words, we need your help!

There is a memorial stone and tree in La Plaza park, pictured here. The tree has grown magnificently over the decades, but Brian MacKenzie Garrett's identity has become obscured.

Do you know who this young man was or what significance the park might have had for him or his family and friends?

To share your knowledge of this and other Cotati stories, please call 707.794.0305 or write to chsinfo@sonic.net. Even better, stop by the Museum—open every Saturday, 1-4 pm, second Tuesdays, 5-7 pm, and by appointment—to learn as well as preserve our varied history.

And if you have a question which has baffled you about Cotati, contact us and maybe we can get answers.



Cotati Historical Society & Museum
Inside Cotati City Hall at 201 West Sierra Ave
PO Box 7013 Cotati CA 94931

A Historical Walking Tour of Cotati

Join guides Marie McNaughton & Lisa Moore

Dates:

June 13

July 11

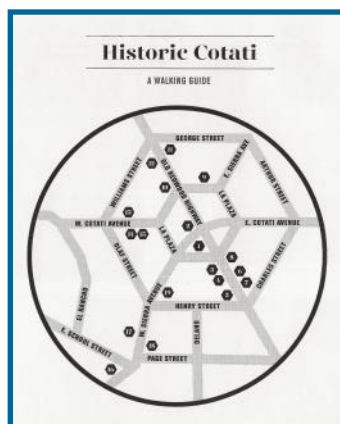
August 8

September 12

Time:

1:30 - 3:00 pm

No Charge



Tours begin & end at the Cotati Museum

Learn about our city then and now