

Cotati Historical Society Newsletter

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Preserving Cotati's Past
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Marie McNaughton, Editor

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: John Allred 795-2791
Vice President: Sandra Walton
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Treasurer: Connie Martin
Archiving Administrator: Judy Gustafson
Membership: Yvonne Van Dyke
Newsletter: Marie McNaughton
Museum Volunteer Coordinator: Bobbie Veronda 795-4545

COTATI MUSEUM HOURS

Every Saturday, 1-4 p.m.
2nd Tuesdays, 5-7 p.m.

For tours and appointments,
call 707-794-0305

*Inside Cotati City Hall
201 West Sierra Avenue*

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, California, 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.

History of the Cotati Historical Society & Museum

Part I, The Early Years, 2007 to 2010

As CHS continues its 10th year, we are reviewing the early days of our founding, the beginnings of the museum and the initial events that now constitute Cotati traditions: the spring barbecue, summer parades, and fall history events and open houses.

The Cotati Historical Society was founded in April 2007 by longtime Cotatians Prue and Lloyd Draper. With the pro bono assistance of local attorney Maurice Fredericks, the society incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission of collecting and preserving the history of the community of Cotati.

The Drapers—journalists and former publishers of *The Cotatian* newspaper, as well as cultural and political volunteers—had been accumulating historic images and artifacts for some 50 years, filling their back bedroom with such items as volunteer fire chief Burt Chadwick's barber chair and decades of records of the Cotati Ladies' Improvement Club, founded in 1910. They published *Cotati*, an Arcadia Press Images of America book of historic photos in 2004, and realized that they already had the makings of an archive, permanent displays, and years of museum exhibits.



Visit our new display honoring Prue and Lloyd Draper, curated by CHS vice president Sandra Walton —with assists from Simone Wilson and Bob and Robin Draper

CHS's first directors were Prue as president and Lloyd as vice president; Terry Dutra, treasurer; Suzanne Whipple, secretary; Lisa Moore, ways & means chair (later outreach chair); Connie Martin, newsletter. Membership dues were set at an easy \$10 per year (and remain so in 2017). First on their agenda was creating public awareness of the society and its plans to establish a museum. Within the first year, the City of Cotati agreed to lease space for \$1 a year, in what had been the first grade classroom of the 1921 Cotati School (now Cotati City Hall).

The public kick-off meeting previewed designs for the renewed space, old photos and memorabilia already acquired, and inspired the donation by artist Lorraine Leivas of two acrylic paintings of local landmarks—Church of the Oaks and Spanky's tavern. An article in *The Community Voice* newspaper garnered still more donations—photos of the old post office and first gas station (now Hines Signs) were uncovered. Janice Nelson donated a brass Howe farm scale used on the Rancho Cotate in the 19th century and a gilt-trimmed mustache cup owned by her grandfather Frank Lund who bought his piece of Cotati in 1893.

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Photo above, Bruce and Gary Martin moved Burt Chadwick's vintage barber chair from the Draper home for restoration, 2009. To the left, Bob Herrerias (far left) and other early museum supporters visited the old first grade classroom to see new dry wall, images of the past, and plans for the future, 2010. Uncredited.

