

# Cotati Historical Society Newsletter

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

Preserving Cotati's Past  
P.O. Box 7013, Cotati, CA 94931  
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Winter 2018

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"Wa" continues. BBQ Coming!	

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

**MULTIPLE BOARD POSITIONS  
OPEN FOR 2019**  
Please share your time & talents!

## COTATI MUSEUM HOURS

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

For tours, research &  
other 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, 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.

## "Wa" Exhibit Opening Educated, Entertained SRO Crowd of Members & Newcomers

Well over 100 visitors packed the Cotati Community Center and Museum on Nov. 4 for the Cotati Historical Society's free fall history event. "Wa" is expected to be a year-long and changing exhibit in the Cotati Museum. The title refers to harmony, community, and simply "things Japanese."

Volunteers greeted entering guests and described a small exhibit of loaned Japanese antiques and everyday objects. Demonstrators Sachiko Knappman—writing guests' names in traditional calligraphy—and Henry Kaku—folding origami gifts for all. Adults and children colored Japanese cartoons and art, played with pretend foods, and practiced origami on their own.

Other opening activities included mapping Japanese American family properties in the Cotati area and writing good wishes on a special five-foot square of paper (to be used ceremonially later in the afternoon). Guests refreshed themselves with grapes, savory Japanese crackers, and barley tea.

The speakers panel began with Sachiko Knappman (in traditional dress) sharing Japanese history and culture and the story of immigration to Hawaii and the U.S. mainland that began in the 19th century.

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Photographers, too, abounded at the "Wa" opening. Top to bottom: Japanese antiques and family treasures on loan from Mae Fisk and Henry Kaku, photo by Jerry Pagnusat. Speakers Bruce Shimizu and Nancy Petersen, musician Elliott Kallen and origami master Kaku were captured by Robert Grant. Dave Wasson documented the early, gathering crowd. For more pictures, by Judy Gustafson, see page 3.

## THANK YOU TO THIS QUARTER'S NEW & RENEWING CHS MEMBERS

Jack and Muriel Mahall, Gary Muller

## CHS Board and City of Cotati Place Memorial Bench Plaque

The Cotati Historical Society board of directors and the City of Cotati recently worked together to honor the late CHS co-founder and community leader Prue Draper with a brass plaque honoring her memory. The bench overlooks La Plaza Park playground and bandstand.



Photos by Marie McNaughton

## Chilean Page Family Members Visit SF Area and the CHS Museum

Cotatians answered the call when unexpected visitors from the Chilean branch of the Thomas Stokes Page family rang the bell at Cotati City Hall—just after closing on an August evening. Senior city planner Jon-Paul Harries then called John Allred, who called Connie Martin, and both were able to show our town founders' descendants around the museum.

This was Anibal Huneeus first trip to Cotati, after visiting family on the San Francisco Peninsula. Long-time CHS member, supporter, and donor John R. Page and his sister had hosted a small luncheon for the family at the Menlo Circus Club in Atherton, the 19th century home to Faxon Dean Atherton, a Yankee trader, business

associate, and family friend for some years in Valparaiso, Chile. Atherton and his Chilean wife, Dominga de Goñi, hosted most of the Page family when they first emigrated from South America in 1869.

John Page reports that the luncheon guests talked a lot about the historically significant Athertons and their generations-long friendship with the Pages. It was Atherton who convinced Dr. Page to buy the Cotati property and other holdings in California in the 1840s. Many letters between the two are in the California Historical Society archives in San Francisco, and transcriptions made by John Page are available for reading at the Cotati Museum.

Other documents available include Thomas Page's personal journal of his voyages from Pennsylvania and New Jersey to Europe and thence to Valparaiso to start his medical practice. Other family records and a few historic valuables are also available for viewing by request.

Everyone should know that the *CHS Silent Auction* will take place concurrently with

## The 11th Annual Cotati Old-Fashioned Chicken BBQ Sunday, April 7, 2019

We cannot do this without you: generous members and friends and companies participating. If you have ideas for donations and/or volunteering to help the SA committee, please let me know.

Cathryn Fairlee  
[cfair@monitor.net](mailto:cfair@monitor.net) • 707-433-2297

*This is a community event. Let's get started!*



Continued from page 1

Marie Sugiyama from the Sonoma County Japanese American Citizens League talked specifics about the World War II relocation and imprisonment of 120,000 Japanese Americans from December 1941 to the end of the war—to the consternation of many in the crowd who had believed the period’s propaganda that the internees were being kept “safe.” Cotati-area native Bruce Shimizu continued with his very personal account of how imprisonment affected and still affects him and his family.

The panel then broke briefly for a Kamishibai street theater production of “Yuki and Taro” by local artist Becky Brendlin Sugiyama, authors Cynthia Kishi and Sachiko Knappman and assisted by Marie Sugiyama. The play centered on one young girl’s experience of leaving home, living in camp, and being welcomed home in a most unexpected way.

The speakers’ panel resumed with local resident Nancy Petersen Hunt’s story of how her family took care of their Japanese American neighbors’ farm while they were incarcerated, by purchasing the property for \$1 in 1942 and selling it back for another dollar at the end of the war.

Melissa Morita concluded the panel presentations by sharing how she became part of a bi-racial family and how her children came to identify primarily as Japanese-American in part due to our region’s celebration of diversity.

Henry Kaku capped the day’s activities by transforming the previously mentioned large-format paper into a gift crane of peace to the CHS while Elliott Kallen played a Zen meditation piece, “Kumoi Jishi” on a traditional Shakuhachi (bamboo flute).



Photos by Judy Gustafson

## Shikata Ga Nai

Shikata ga nai

means

It can’t be helped

which translates

scour and scrub

till the smell of horse urine

is a faint memory,

cobble a table out of

scavenged fruit crates

create a home from the stall

that is temporary shelter for

your family of six.

Pretend you don’t see barbed wire

or soldiers with rifles in guard towers

when you gaze at Heart Mountain on the horizon.

Shikata ga nai-

a tacit agreement

to adopt the government jargon:

relocation and internment

not concentration or prison camp,

to be as American as possible,

having to prove your loyalty

even though you were born here.

And when your daughter hungers to know

about your life in camp,

you giggle about the “hi-jinks girls”

and being prom queen,

a typical teenage life.

It suggests

your secret, mounting dread

each year as December 7th approaches,

even now, over sixty years later.

Shikata ga nai means

End of discussion.

I don’t want to talk about it.

There’s nothing more to say.

—Jodi L. Hottel

Used with permission

Read by Marie Sugiyama, Nov. 4, 2018 at “Wa” opening

# Time to renew your dues for 2019

We collect dues every January and you too, can help preserve Cotati's history. **Dues are still only \$10 per person per year.** Please complete this form and send with your check.

- Yes I want to renew my membership for 2019 @ \$10 per person*
- An additional donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed*
- A memorial donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed in memory of: \_\_\_\_\_*

**Please send to:**  
Cotati Historical Society  
P.O. Box 7013  
Cotati, CA 94931

Name/s \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

*We can save postage by sending quarterly newsletters online.*

Cotati Historical Society & Museum  
Inside Cotati City Hall  
201 West Sierra Avenue/P.O. Box 7013  
Cotati, CA 94931

## Cotati Museum & Historical Society

Invite you save the date:

**Sunday April 7, 2019**

for our

**Annual Old-Fashioned  
Chicken BBQ  
& Silent Auction**

And do plan a visit to our current exhibit:

WA 和

*Japanese Americans in Cotati*

West Sierra Avenue at School Street  
[www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org](http://www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org)