

# 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  
E-mail chsinfo@sonic.net

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Prue Draper & Connie Martin, Editors

Vol. 8 No. 2

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## SOCIETY OFFICERS

**President:** Marie McNaughton  
529-0734

**Vice Pres.:** Yvonne VanDyke

**Secretary:** Velma DiMeola

**Treasurer:** Connie Martin

**Historian:** Prue Draper

**Archive Admin:** Judy Gustafson

**Directors:** John Allred

Gary Santero

Sandra Walton

**Volunteer Coordinator:**

Barbara Jean Veronda 795-4545

## Cotati Museum Hours:

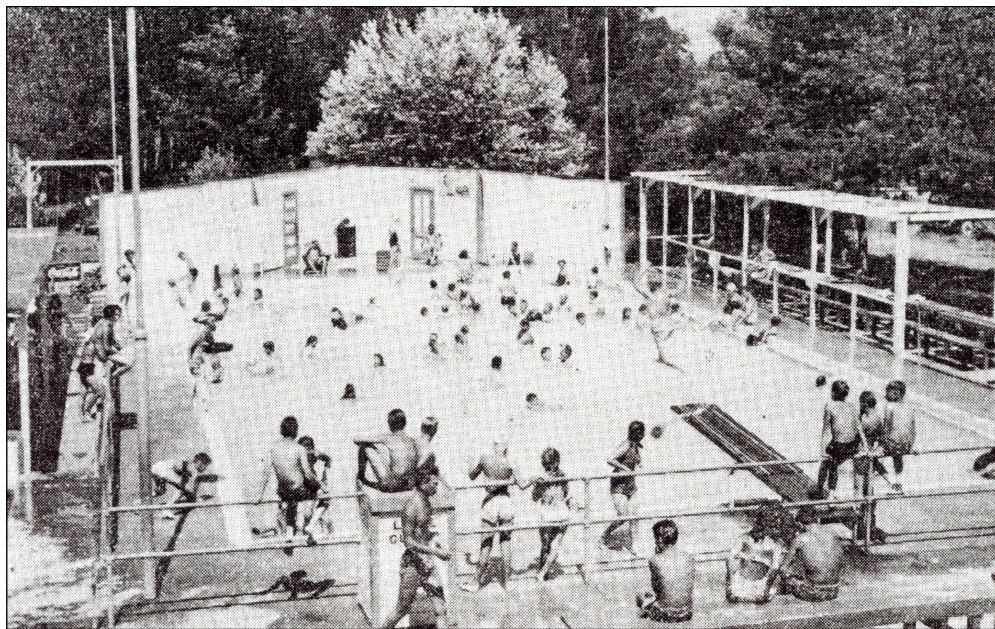
Saturday 1 - 4 P.M.

2nd Tuesday of each  
month 5 - 7 P.M.

Special times by appointment  
Phone 707-794-0305

## Our Mission Statement

As stated in our Articles of Incorporation, dated April 11, 2007, the specific purpose of the Cotati Historical Society is to protect and preserve the history and culture of the City of Cotati, California. Our goal is to provide a 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.



*Swimming and diving lessons, picnics and games, sun-bathing marked the Pioneer Pool.*

## Yesterday's Favorite Spot Just A Memory

Nowadays it's just an empty, fenced field with high grass, a pile of compost and a few trees. But a generation ago – in fact for several generations – the corner of Redwood Highway and Fern Avenue was home of the Pioneer Motel and Swimming Pool, the favorite place to be in summertime.

In those pre-city-limit days, it had a Cotati mailing address and was considered the Cotati Pool.

It had been built in 1938 by a man named John Frankfurter. In those pre-freeway days Redwood Highway was the main road to Northern California and the Russian River, so it got lots of traffic. The motel had 13 small cabins, and travelers often stopped to spend a night or two, and to swim.

In 1946 Raymond Company bought the business, and he and his wife Estelle managed it for 27 years. They and their children, Alan, Bruce, Loren and Janelle lived there, as did Grandma Helen Parodi, who helped with the motel/pool management.

It opened during Easter Week when school was on break, and closed the last weekend in September. It was open from 10 a.m. to 10 pm. during the summer months and weekends during school days.



*The motel was home to travelers, and later to local students and workers.*

*Continued on page 2*



*Continued from page 1*

Children under 12 got to swim for 25c. Students had to pay 35c and adults were charged 50c.

Boy Scout troops and Camp Fire Girls held hot dog roasts there, families celebrated birthdays there, kids learned to swim and dive there, the Red Cross conducted water safety there and teenagers lounged on the grassy lawns.

Jill Riebli Harmon remembers it as her absolutely favorite place. When her mother told her and her sister that they could go swimming the next day if it was a warm day, Jill would say earnest prayers for a day with no fog.

Velma Veronda DiMeola, who lived nearby on Old Redwood Highway, recalls that she and her sisters used to walk to the pool and sometimes spend many summer hours there. The older teenagers would spread their towels on the lawn adjacent to the pool, slather their skin with baby oil and lie in the sun to get a smooth tan.



*Mary Ann Short Weed was one of the many Cotati children who still have happy memories of the Pioneer Swimming Pool.*

Members of the Lucchini, Schollmann, Augustine and Minatta families were among the many who came on their motorcycles and bikes to swim and socialize.



*Jeanne McCarter Riebli Pratt grew up in Penngrove, and is remembered as a wonderful swimmer and diver.*

*Photos from Draper Collection*

There were dressing rooms and showers at one end of the pool and picnic tables, a snack bar with hot dogs, soda, candy and ice cream. Top price was 25c for a hotdog. There were overhead lights for night swimming. The pool was open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day and swimming at night is still a favorite memory for many.

After the 101 freeway opened in 1957, travelers didn't come up the old highway so often, and the motel business became more difficult. The Company family started renting out the motel units by the week and month. After Estelle Company died, her husband sold the property in 1972 to a group called Pioneer Associates. One

of its managers was Bob Davis, who was a teacher at Rancho Cotate High School and a Cotati City Councilman.

Davis rented some of the motel units to SSU students and to workers on the freeway construction, and the residents often got together for barbecues and parties. Davis continued to operate the swimming pool for several years, but maintenance of the property became a problem. It was condemned by the county in 1976.

That year a father-son partnership made plans to develop the property as a nursery, and the son, Gordon McGowan, was to manage it. However, that never materialized, and the property eventually was cleared.

Now it just holds memories of many people in Sonoma County who used to hold their parties there, swim, barbecue and enjoy the summer sunshine...or moonglow.

**WELCOME TO OUR MOST RECENT  
NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS**

**Barbara Abramson, Pat Anderson, Joyce Arnold, Marie Baranzini, Karen Bertolini, Martha Brankline, Dennis Carrera, Congregation Ner Shalom, Amy & Geoff Fox, Maurice & Betty Fredericks, Bob & Wendy Gilman, Martha Gustafson, Bill & Connie Hammerman, Bob & Carrol Herrerias, Sage Howell, Alice Inouye, Bob Jensen, June Kimball, Jan & Mark Landman, Chuck Lucas, Mary Nell McCann, Patrick McCarty, Karen Panfiglio, Fred Reed, Lindee Reese, Donna Lee Ryan, Barry & Lois Santero, Christopher Santero, Gary & Reta Santero, Ken Santero, Sharie Sbrazza, Lee Thomas, Barbara Jean Veronda, Suzanne Whipple.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
MEMORIAL DONATIONS**

**Mabel Nelson - by Gary & Reta Santero  
Jolene McKay - by Gary & Reta Santero  
Eleanor Wass - by Bruce & Connie Martin**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS**

**John Allred, Pat Anderson, Maurice & Betty Fredericks, Martha Gustafson, Alice Inouye, Connie Johnson, Fred Reed, Donna Lee Ryan, Barbara Jean Veronda.**



# Annual Barbecue Also Marked Our 5th Anniversary



*Large crowd dined in the Cotati Room.*



*Chuck Lucas, left, and Kelly Smith - bartenders.*



*City council members served barbecue.*



*Pat McCarty and "Take Your Medicine".*



*Rhonda Nole arranged vintage car show.*



*Silent Auction included art by Don & Lorraine Leivas.*

## Essay Contest Winner and Teacher Rewarded



Wyatt Daly received a certificate and \$50 check for winning the essay contest sponsored annually by the Cotati Historical Society to help Thomas Page Academy fourth graders learn about the history of our city and the name of their school. His teacher, Mira Patel, who also received \$50 for her class expenses, congratulates him. Anane Wilson and Frida Preciado won honorable mention.

*Photos by Jerry Pagnusat*



*Mother Nature smiled - the sun shone on diners.*

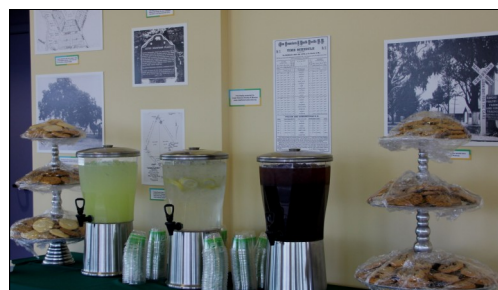
## SMART Train Came To Cotati - First Visit to New Depot

The Sonoma-Marin Area Rapid Transit District chose the Cotati Depot as the locale for the first public showing of their new train, which will start service between Santa Rosa and San Rafael in 2016. The train debut drew an

overflow crowd to the local landmark on April 7. Several hundred people attended, in spite of rain, to see the super-modern train, hear from officials, tour the depot and share refreshments and a variety of souvenirs.



*A temporary ramp and stairway had been constructed near the depot to make it possible for hundreds of visitors to board the new train. A tent in the parking lot helped shelter the large audience.*



*Cotati Historical Society had prepared a display of historic photos of the city, its ranch heritage, the famous albino redwood and the original North Western Pacific depot. The SMART committee provided an array of refreshments, relics and souvenirs.*



*Sandra Walton, left, and Prue Draper were assisted by John Allred, Simone Wilson, Muriel Mahall and Judy Pagnusat in preparing the photo display.*

*Photos by Simone Wilson*

# Not too late to renew your dues for 2015

We collect dues every January and if you have not yet renewed, we would appreciate your help in preserving Cotati's history. **Dues are still only \$10 per person per year.** Please complete this form and send with your check to:

- Yes I want to renew my membership for 2015*  
 *An additional donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed*

**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 on-line.*

Learn more about Cotati history and  
the Cotati Museum at our **website:**  
[www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org](http://www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org)

The Cotati Historical Museum always needs volunteers to welcome visitors on Saturday afternoons, when we are open from 1 to 4 p.m. Docents work in pairs and the duties are basic - unlock doors, turn on lights, open blinds and prepare to be friendly. We have an instruction pamphlet that tells you everything you need to know. If you are interested, contact Barbara Jean Veronda, 795-4545.

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**P.O. Box 7013**  
**Cotati, CA 94931**



*Free Admission*  
*Refreshments*

*As owners of the Cotati Rancho the Page family named the streets. How did our other streets get their names?*

**Find Out at our Annual  
FALL HISTORY FORUM  
Nov. 1, 2015 - 3:00 p.m.  
Cotati Room**

Arranged by  
Pamela Wilford  
& Prue Drager

