



Cotati Historical Society
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cotatimuseum.org

A 501(c) (3) non-profit, Tax ID# 300421172

Newsletter

Spring 2023

Lucy Kortum

By Chuck Lucas (edited by Marie McNaughton)

There are worldly women who we recognize simply by their first names—in a word, “mononymous.” There are Rhianna, Dolly, Cher, Madonna, Oprah, and Eleanor, to name a few. In Sonoma County we have Lucy. That would be Lucy Deam Kortum. Lucy and her late husband, Bill, shaped Sonoma County into a pearl in the oyster of the Pacific.

Many of us were lucky enough to walk and talk with a local hero and legend. While we never got to be friends with Eleanor, Oprah, or Dolly, we were graced to have spent time with Lucy. Have you ever met the founder of a town? If you knew Lucy, you met one of the founders of the City of Cotati. And that was just one of this amazing woman's accomplishments that affect each and every one of us today.

Lucy took her first breath on August 8, 1928, in Coronado, California, and her last breath on November 30, 2022. She was the daughter of peripatetic parents, due to her father’s career as a Naval Academy graduate and an aviator. The family followed him around as he was redeployed around the country during the Great Depression and World War II.

Lucy met Bill when her friend, Jeanie, Karl Kortum's wife, introduced her to Karl's brother. Lucy and Jeanie were friends from Pomona College. Lucy and Bill became a team—inseparable and loving.

Lucy and Bill were married in 1953 after he graduated from Davis with a degree in veterinary medicine and they were about to change the landscape of SoCo for generations to come. One of their first projects was turning the overgrown field in the middle of downtown Cotati into the hexagon known as La Plaza Park.

While Bill was often the face of their various endeavors, Lucy kept the wheels greased and ready to roll. Among the memorable accomplishments of the power couple were the stoppage of PG&E's clever plan to build a nuclear plant on the San Andreas Fault on the Bodega Head, creating the Coastal Commission, incorporating Cotati, and the placement of Sonoma State in Rohnert Park.

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Lucy was among the first students to attend Sonoma State College, enrolling in a history class. After getting her credentials, she began working part-time in a secretarial position in the Natural Sciences department. She was assigned to the innovative nursing program from its inception, through its accreditation, and elevation as a national model.

She continued taking classes and enrolled in the new Public History program. In 1991, she published her Master's thesis on the Carnegie Libraries in California after she and Bill traveled to all the libraries throughout the state. Today 87 of the libraries are still standing as libraries, museums, and a variety of other functions. The building that currently houses the Petaluma Museum is a sterling example of that architecture, while the former Carnegie Library in Santa Rosa was torn down and replaced with a boring modern structure.

Lucy wrote the nominations that resulted in Petaluma's Carlson Currier Silk Mill (a rare local example of a New England-style mill) and the Carnegie Library building being included on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2005, Lucy was the recipient of the Jeanne Thurlow Miller Award from the Sonoma County Historical Society for her efforts in preserving these sites. Lucy was very active in the Petaluma Museum and the library system. In 2006, Lucy received the Petaluma Good Egg award.

The Kortums continued the struggle to protect our environment and were involved in the fight for the county's Open Space Initiatives, the creation of the Sonoma County Conservation Action, and the creation of urban growth boundaries that are the model across the country to limit sprawl. They were early supporters of the SMART rail system.



(l to r) Prue Draper, Gaye LeBaron and Lucy Kortum at the Crane Melon Barn.

But one of the most fulfilling stories of Lucy was getting to know her. Maybe you were like Prue Draper who shared child care on busy days, or maybe you visited the home that Bill built on Ely Road and sampled some of their Pinot Noir. If you spent time with Lucy you laughed. After Bill died, a small group of chaps would good-naturedly joust to see who had the honor of picking Lucy up and driving her to functions.

Keep Lucy in your thoughts. Walk the Kortum trail. Visit Bodega Head. But most of all keep Lucy in your heart. It was a privilege to know her, and now to know about her.

Tickets available at Cotati's Exchange Bank, Cotati Chamber of Commerce, CHS Board members and volunteers and at the Museum when open.



Old-Fashioned Chicken BBQ


Sunday, April 30, 2023

12 Noon - 4:00 pm -- Meals served until 3:00 pm

Cotati Room, Ray Miller Community Ctr, 216 E. School St.
\$20 in advance, \$25 at the door

Meal includes: One-half BBQ chicken, beans, coleslaw,
roll & drink.

Take-out available. Beer & Wine for sale.



Live music, bake
sale and vintage
car show!



All proceeds benefit Cotati Historical Society,
a 501(c)3, non-profit.
For more information, visit www.CotatiMuseum.org

CHS Accomplishments in 2022

- ✓ Continuing fundraising and design and communications with the City of Cotati and Farmster on the use of the Veronda-Falletti barn proposal (also made 2 presentations at City Council meetings)
- ✓ Inventoried and catalogued all artifacts from the Veronda-Falletti barns
- ✓ Obtained a new display case to showcase many of the artifacts
- ✓ All-day cleanup of the 2 barns on that property
- ✓ Continuing the process of updating our by-laws
- ✓ Writing position/job descriptions
- ✓ Developed and approved on-line voting policy (Article IV, Sec 4.01 (b))
- ✓ Support of walking tours and purchasing necessary items (amplifier, wagon, booklets, binders, etc.)
- ✓ Produced quarterly newsletter. Expand newsletter from 4 to 8 pages and produce every 4 months
- ✓ Working on recruitments for new board members
- ✓ Produced the Music in Cotati display and event in November with over 100 people in attendance
- ✓ Planning for the BBQ along with subcommittee meetings
- ✓ Business membership drive and creation of CHS decals for business windows to display
- ✓ Conducting monthly Board meetings
- ✓ Filing all necessary tax reports and conducting annual financial audits
- ✓ Making presentations to community groups like all of the Rotary groups in the area and participation in Sonoma County Finding History Day
- ✓ Attending events with CHS booth and info
- ✓ Continuing to track memberships and donations and keeping contacts up to date
- ✓ Maintaining a spreadsheet to support newsletter listings of donations, updating an email mailing list to keep it current for email communications
- ✓ Developing a new website and providing all the supporting documents and information
- ✓ Design of new logo, letterhead and envelopes
- ✓ Participating in the Art Ibleto post office renaming and designing commemorative envelopes honoring Art
- ✓ Planning for annual Thomas Page Academy school field trip
- ✓ Joined “Time Travelers” which offers benefits and discounts to our membership at participating museums throughout the U.S.
- ✓ Packing, moving and covering up everything in museum to prepare for window replacement project and moving everything back (new windows are 95% UV protection for archives)
- ✓ Continue access to Board meeting minutes in a binder, along with finance sheets
- ✓ Sending out the newsletter and President’s letter
- ✓ Continue to accession boxes filled with donated object, photos, and documents

Ed Gilardi Honored

Ed Gilardi was recently honored by the 2022 Historical Records Commission of Sonoma County with a Collections and Archives Recognition Award for his work to uncover and preserve history on behalf of CHS.

CONGRATULATIONS ED!!!



Our Dues Have Changed – see back page for details



More Exciting News from CHS!

For 14 years that Judy Gustafson has volunteered for CHS, she signed up for the State Farm Good Neighbor grant who has given \$500 each year to CHS thanks to Judy's work. That's a total of \$7,000 from State Farm. Thanks Judy!

Reopening of Museum

Recently, the City of Cotati contracted out replacement of the windows on the south side of City Hall. This included the CHS Museum windows facing West Sierra Avenue. The new windows are 95% UV protection which helps the long-term preservation of the archival material that we have on display.

Our hours will continue to be Saturdays from 1:00 – 4:00 PM or by appointment.

Images showing how the museum displays were moved to one wall and covered in plastic to protect from dust during the construction work. (photos by Judy Gustafson)

Veronda-Falletti Barn Work

In the past few months, CHS volunteers and Board members held a barn cleaning day at Veronda-Falletti Ranch. Several of us gathered one morning to clean-up the years of debris in the two barns. After multiple loads taken to the recycling center and several items saved, the inside of both barns looked very different.

Prior to this effort, Board member Ed Gilardi had gone through items tagged years ago by CHS volunteers as items that should be

preserved. Ed photo documented, numbered and labeled each item and put them together in a binder.

We are in continuous talks with the City of Cotati and Farmster as to our vision for use of the smaller barn for educational displays.



Before (left) and after images of the inside of one of the two barns after clean-up on the Veronda-Falletti property.

Crane Ranch Visit

The Crane family graciously provided a tour of their displays at their ranch to members of CHS, Facilitated by Chuck Lucas, our guides, Richard Crane and Bill Fishman showed us many of the tools used back in the day. Cindy Crane and Jennifer Crane were also on hand helping out.

Thank You Crane Family!!



Bill Fishman (top) talking to part of the group on how different tools were used and Richard Crane talking about other tool uses on the Crane Ranch (right). (photos by Ed Gilardi)



Thank You To Our New and Renewing Members and Donors

December 6, 2022 - March 26, 2023

Individuals and Families

Marie Aggio
Harry Allagree*
Dennis Andersen
Marie Andreoli Rice
Mary Bartlett & Chris Davis
Virginia Benson*
Harold Berkemeier
Jenny Blaker & Neil Hancock
Richard Braden*
Peter Callinan
Ken & Sherri Carli
Velma DiMeola
Jane Ferina*
Elizabeth Fredericks
Karen Griffith & Lou Breuer*
Judy Gustafson

Angela Hollern
Sage Howell
Rick Hull
Mark & Jolene Ibleto
Bob & Marci Jenkins
Kate Johnston*
Susan Kashack*
Pat Kavanaugh
Alice Larsen
Steven Lavoie
Chris Leivas
Mary Lou Issel Lentz
Jeff & Janet Libarle*
Bruce Martin
Bruce Martin, Jr & Family*
Gary & Kim Martin*

Rick Minervini*
Millie Nibe
Kathleen Norwood
Tom Origer
Carole Otani
John R Page, Jr*
Bruce & Rita Pearson
John T Savage*
Trudy Simonton
William Tomrose
Gerald & Kathleen Turney*
Yvonne VanDyke
Bob Waldron
Sandra & Joshua Walton

*Donation in addition to membership

Memorial Donations

Jenny Falletti & Ruby Otani by Marie Aggio
All the great old-timers of Cotati by Peter Callinan
Marge Rosselli by Ken & Sherri Carli
Mae Fisk, Lucy Kortum, Darlene (Dolly) LaRochelle, Evelyn Gilardi by Velma DiMeola
Darlene LaRochelle, Dory Camozzi and Lucy Kortum by Martha Gustafson
Eugenia M. Goff by Mark & Jolene Ibleto
Connie Martin by Bruce Martin
Howard & Mildred Jacobsen by Kathleen Norwood
Lucy Kortum, Maryann Moeckel, Evelyn Gilardi and Darlene Joy Jensen LaRochelle by Barbara Jean Veronda
Whitey & Eleanor Waldron by Bob Waldron
Prue Draper by Sandra & Joshua Walton

Business Memberships

Church of the Oaks
Exchange Bank
Hines Signs-Jake Page
History/Genealogy of Sonoma County
Professional Framing Services-John Allred

Donations

Greg Cochran
Darlene Schunk Engellenner
John Sheehy



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Cotati Historical Society
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2023 Board of Directors

President	John Allred
Vice President	Ed Gilardi
Secretary	Velma DiMeola
Treasurer	Bobbie Veronda
Archiving Administrator	Judy Gustafson
Communications/Outreach	John Dell'Osso

The CHS Mission

Our mission is to preserve Cotati history through the acquisition and preservation of artifacts, photos, archives, and other historical materials. We provide resources for visitors and researchers interested in Cotati's unique past. Our community outreach program enables us to support Cotati-related cultural activities and events and to maintain reciprocal relations.



Membership/Dues/Donations 2023

This form may be used for new & renewal memberships, general or memorial donations. Thank you for your support of Cotati Historical Society.

Dues: Individual \$20, Family (All members of same household) \$25, Business \$40

Yes, I want to join/renew my/our membership thru 2023: _____

An additional donation of \$ _____ is enclosed.

Member Name/s _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

A memorial donation of \$ _____ is enclosed in memory of: _____

Please send an acknowledgment to: _____

Address _____

Please send to: Cotati Historical Society, PO Box 7013, Cotati CA 94931