

The Laguna de Santa Rosa Event

The Laguna de Santa Rosa is Northern California's largest freshwater wetlands complex situated here in Sonoma County.

On November 3rd, a gathering of experts came together to share success stories on restoration and educational efforts along the Laguna in Cotati.

The talks began with Anne Morkill, the Executive Director of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, who gave an overview of the 250-square-mile watershed that feeds into the Laguna and how its headwaters can be traced to Cotati.

Maria Alvarez then talked about early native revegetation efforts and creek cleanups with citizen volunteers which began an understanding and appreciation for the Laguna.

The talk moved into a long-term project by the Cotati Creek Critters of which Jenny Blaker gave a comprehensive description. She discussed the formation of the group and the myriad volunteer groups who eventually planted over 2,000 trees and shrubs to create a shaded canopy over the Laguna. Jenny also mentioned Wade Belew, who did quite a bit of organizing groups and planting native plant species. The Creek Critters gave numerous educational programs along the Laguna to various groups.



Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation Executive Director Anne Morkill providing an overview of the Laguna watershed. Jenny Blaker, representing Cotati Creek Critters, is holding the map of the watershed.

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You Never Know Who Might Drop In!

When a recent walking tour ended at the museum, several of the participants came inside to look around the exhibits. Among them was Robert Mandler, the great-grandson of Robert C. Ross. He brought us a storyline and a thumb drive containing about 180 photos and documents, some we have never seen.

Robert C. Ross moved his family to Cotati in 1906 to establish a store to service the farmers of the area. His business in San Francisco on Market Street was destroyed by the fire in 1906. His home that he built in Cotati in 1908 is still standing.

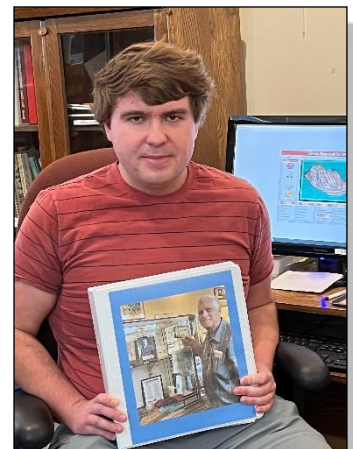
See the historic photo of the Cotati Theater on page 6, which was also owned and operated by Mr. Ross.

Robert Mandler, pointing to his great-grandfather, Robert C. Ross in our business display case. (photo by Judy Gustafson)



(l to r) Docent Mike Whitley, Robert Mandler, Docent Margie Cassero, and Sallyann Clarke, posing underneath a photo of the Ross Store from early Cotati days. (photo by Judy Gustafson)

Our new volunteer, Cyan McMillan, who put together this binder to display all the Ross Family items donated by Robert Mandler. (photo by Judy Gustafson)



Images from Celebrating the Laguna Day

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Educational programs is exactly where the next two speakers shared their expertise. First, Michael Knappman who had children then grandchildren at what is now called University Elementary at La Fiesta (UELF), a Cotati-Rohnert Park school near the Laguna, began taking classes on field trips along the Laguna to learn more about the natural history of the area. He continues to do so today.

Finally, Jessica Gilleran, a teacher at UELF and several other schools within the district, also brings classes out to the Laguna for experiential learning. The children are learning to appreciate the natural world through her inspirational programs.

Anne Morkill wrapped everything up talking about the future of the Laguna in the Cotati area, then each speaker went to their tables to take specific questions.

(top to bottom); display tables representing the various speakers and their organizations; and the large gathering in the Cotati Room. (photos by John Allred)



Dedication of Park Bench in Memory of Carl Schollmann



Schollmann Family members from left to right:

Rick Krinard, Donna Krinard, Helen Schollmann, Bruce Schollmann, Mary Schollmann, Lori Smith, Elizabeth Schollmann, Blake Skinner, Doris Dunkan, and David Schollmann.

Carl Schollman's family at the dedication of a bench in his memory in La Plaza Park. (photos by John Dell'Osso)



CHS President Ed Gilardi saying a few words about our good friend Carl.

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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.

Ongoing Business Memberships

Church of the Oaks, Cotati Accordion Festival, Cotati Chamber of Commerce, Evans & De Shazo Inc., Exchange Bank - Cotati Branch, Hines Signs, Sonoma County History & Genealogy Library, Loud and Clear Music, Millerick Bros., Oliver's Market, Professional Framing Services, Rancho Adobe Firefighters Association, and Redwood Self Storage

Sonoma County Finding History Day

The CHS participated again this year in Sonoma County Finding History Day on November 2. Over 50 organizations participated in this free event where the various organizations tabled inside the Santa Rosa Veteran's Memorial building.

The event also included 20-minute presentations on various historical topics. Numerous people stopped by the CHS table and took free copies of our several most recent newsletters, asked many questions, looked at binders which included information on the Cotati Cabaret and the Inn of the Beginning, which prompted many stories from people's past.

Next year's event is scheduled for November 1, 2025. Keep on top of this at the Sonoma County Historical Society web page here: SonomaCountyHistory.org.



Crowd at 2024 Sonoma County Finding History Day at the Santa Rosa Veteran's Memorial building (photo by Ray Johnson)

What is This Building Today?



Owned by the Ross family, the Cotati Theater showed silent films accompanied by a piano player. Still in the same location on what is now West Sierra Ave., it is now Vicarious Experience Used Books.

Learn more about our downtown with the summer and fall walking history tours. Visit our website for more information.

Thank You To Our New and Renewing Members and Donors

August 1, 2024 – November 30, 2024

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Lillian Blodgett
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(l to r) Panelists from the Celebrating the Laguna event included Anne Morkill, Maria Alvarez, Jenny Blaker, Michael Knappman and Jessica Gilleran.
(photo by John Allred)



Printed by Minuteman Press



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Membership/Dues/Donations

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

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