

# 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

April, 2008

Prue Draper, Editor

Vol. 1 No. 1

## Historical Society Marks First Year

Your Cotati Historical Society celebrates its first birthday this month. With the excellent help (pro bono) of attorney Maurice Fredericks, Lloyd and Prue Draper incorporated the organization as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation on April 11, 2007. What has happened since then?

We've received tentative approval from the City of Cotati to lease the room that was the former police department in City Hall. This will become a Cotati History Room, and will be handled in the same way that the city leases facilities to the Rancho Cotati Little League. We held a kick-off meeting to show the room to our charter members, who attended with enthusiasm, to share punch and cookies in the Cotati Room and to see some of the historic photos and artifacts that Lloyd and Prue Draper have been gathering and preserving for over 50 years. This event followed a walking tour of Cotati's historic downtown. At that first meeting, Lorraine and Don Leivas donated two of Lorraine's beautiful paintings – one of the Church of the Oaks and one of Spancky's. They'll be wonderful additions to our History Room.

Cotati Architect Robert Leys produced (also pro bono) a plan for remodeling the room in City Hall so it can be used for any city purpose, open to the public. During the Christmas holidays, the Cotati Public Works crew removed old partitions, wall coverings, carpet and generally stripped the room to prepare for the renovation. When plans are complete, the Society and City will be seeking contributions of building materials and labor.

## Historic Donations

The *Community Voice* published an article about the Historical Society and the Drapers' quest for remnants of Cotati's history. This produced some happy results: Pat Larsen Taddie donated photos of the Cotati gas station (now Hines Signs) that were the earliest we had ever seen. The station had been owned by her uncle, Louis Larsen.

Janice Nelson donated a handsome brass Howe brand scale that had been used about 1900 in the Page family's Cotati Company barn on West Cotati Avenue. Her late husband Art had salvaged it in 1961 when the big old hexagonal Page Ranch barn was being demolished to make way for construction of the new St. Joseph Church. Janice also donated a beautiful gilt-trimmed moustache cup that had belonged to her grandfather, Frank F. Lund, who came to Cotati in 1893 as one of the very first ranchers to buy land from the Page family.

The *Voice* article also brought a contact from Joyce Arnold, whose great uncle, George A. Miller, was the Cotati postmaster beginning in 1895, and she shared two early photos of the Cotati Post Office from that era – also treasures that we had never seen before.

## Website, Future Plans

The Historical Society board has held several meetings with Christine Hayes, a librarian at Sonoma State University, who is producing a website for the society. We hope to have that up and running soon. We are already getting frequent contacts through our e-mail address, chsinfo@sonic.net.

The board met with Cotati City Manager Dianne Thompson and City Council members Pat Gilardi and Geoff Fox to tour the old railroad station in Santa Rosa, which has been converted into a visitors' center and has several features and furnishings of types that would be appropriate for the Cotati History Room.

## Visitors Expected

The Historical Society is now preparing for two special events in the coming weeks: a meeting of the Sonoma County Heritage Network and a visit from descendants of Dr. Thomas Stokes Page, Cotati's founder.

Sonoma County Heritage Network is an organization of all the historical societies and museums in the county. The group will meet in Cotati in Saturday, April 12 at 9:30 a.m. with Cotati Historical Society hosting the meeting and Tom Origer & Associates providing the refreshments. Thanks to the generosity of the Church of

the Oaks, which offered use of its facilities to our society, the meeting will be held in the fellowship hall on Page Street, and Historical Society members and church representatives will lead tours of the church, which was built in 1901, Cotati's first church.

On May 11, Mother's Day, a group of descendants of Dr. Thomas Stokes Page, founder of Cotati, will pay us a visit. Some of them are California residents, but some will be visiting from South America. The trip is being arranged by John Page of Palo Alto, a great-great grandson of Dr. Page. The South Americans are descendants of Dr. Page's eldest son, Olof, who remained in Valparaiso, Chile, to practice medicine when the Page family came to the Rancho Cotate in the 1860's. This will be the first Cotati visit for several in the group, and the Historical Society is planning a tour around town, including, of course, Thomas Page School.

## Memorial Fund Established

The death of Elaine Thomas on November 1, 2007 was a source of sorrow. Elaine had been an enthusiastic supporter of the Cotati Historical Society, an active Cotati citizen and a cherished friend. Her family suggested gifts to the society in her memory, and the society established a special Memorial Fund, which is available to anyone who would like to donate in memory of a friend or relative. This fund will be used for special educational projects, not for routine expenses of the society. Anyone who would like to donate may send a check to Cotati Historical Society, P.O. Box 7013, Cotati, CA 94931. Please mark it for the Memorial Fund.

## Membership Roster

The Cotati Historical Society is honored to have so many loyal old-time Cotati residents and enthusiastic newer citizens who have joined our membership roster during our first year: Barbara & Robert Abramson, Erin & David Armstrong, Laurie-Ann Barbour, Creighton Bell, Susan Bennett, Jenny Blaker, Lena Braden, Catherine Bramkamp, Sean Bressie, Frank & Lorraine Castelli, Church of the Oaks, Don & Karen Clancy, Fred & Annie Carrasca, Chris Davis, Julie Dinkins, Diane Dorfman, Vickie Dougan, Lloyd & Prue Draper, Terry, Dan & Will Dutra, Craig Enyart, Jennie Falletti, Tony Fardella, Geoff & Amy Fox, Maurice & Betty Fredericks, Henry & Mary Fuhs, Ed & Pat Gilardi, Victor Gonzalez, Fred & Pat Groverman, Martha Gustafson, F. Paul & Carolyn Hacker, Linell Hardy, Jone Hayes, Nancy Hunt, Andrew Hutchins, Ralph Jones, Nancy M. Justis, Bill & Lucy Kortum, Don & Lorraine Leivas, Bruce & Connie Martin, Hugh & Wendi McCann, Mary Nell McCann, Patrick McCarty, Jerry Miller, Eleanor Miller, Lisa Moore, Bob & Mabel Nelson, Janice R. Nelson, Christine Olivas, Janet Orchard, Paul Otani, John Page, Ron & Connie Petty, Lindee Reese, Dayle Reilly, John & Anne Rock, Eveiin K. Santero, Carl & Mary Schollmann, Louise Steacy, Val & Mike Stevenson, Michael & Donna Thomas, Dave & Elaine Thomas, Dennis Thomas, Ted & Darleen Thomas, Suzanne Whipple, Simone Wilson.

## Historic Photos Needed

Your treasured old photos can help expand the Cotati Historical Society's archives. Lloyd Draper will scan and reproduce them with no damage to the originals and return them within a few days. We would especially welcome any photos of the old Cotati Motel on Old Redwood Highway, and the Pioneer Motel and Swimming Pool south of town. If you have any such treasures, please contact the Society at P.O. Box 7013, Cotati, or chsinfo@sonic.net.

**Please pass this newsletter along to others who are interested in Cotati and its history.**

## New members are always welcome

Anyone interested in Cotati history is invited to become a member of the Cotati Historical Society. **Cost is only \$10 per year per person.**

Please complete this form and mail with your check to Cotati Historical Society, P.O. Box 7013, Cotati, CA 94931

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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