



## Newsletter

## Winter 2025

### Marilee Shipman – Volunteer Extraordinaire

**M**arilee Shipman came to Cotati in 1978 to attend Sonoma State University, and lucky for us, she is still here!

Being a docent provides her the opportunity for lifelong learning and she enjoys storytelling. Most of all, Marilee enjoys hearing the wonderful stories from visitors to the museum as they share their fondest memories of Cotati. She delights in seeing their faces light up when they first walk into the museum, seeking to fill in the gaps, as they recollect their own historical journeys either living or visiting here.

One of her favorite recent interactions was meeting a lively nonagenarian at this year's Chicken BBQ. Accompanied by three generations of family, she giggled when they found her elementary class photo on display from the 1930's. When asked where in Cotati she grew up, it turned out to be a century's old house Marilee knew well - built when the family immigrated here from Finland. As she puts it, "what a thrill to learn the backstory of the unusual house that's part of my daily walk."

Marilee looks forward to her docent shifts because "you never know who will step through that door - whether a relative of Dr. Thomas Page from Chile, or a young family exploring the museum after attending the Fall Open House about Veronda-Falletti Ranch." As she puts it, "Cotati is the little town that's so big on charm and so strong on character, it's unique among its neighbors. If that's weird, then that's a good thing!"



Marilee Shipman (top right and bottom) explains some of the exhibits in the museum to a visitor.  
Photos by John Dell'Osso

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## Marie Aggio Remembered



Marie Aggio (on right) shown taking part in the annual field trip for Thomas Page Academy 4<sup>th</sup> graders along with Judy Gustafson.

**M**arie grew up on the family ranch on Stony Point Road across the street from the Washoe House. She was the baby in the family with one sister and three brothers. She went to school at Dunham Elementary and rode the school bus to attend Petaluma High, graduating in 1961. Marie moved to Cotati in 1960 when her mom and dad had the first house built off School Street. This was the only house at the edge of the Christensen Ranch that was later turned into a housing development on East School Street. She started working for Bank of America right after graduation and worked there until retiring after 40 years.

Marie was very close to her seventeen nieces and nephews making sure they could attend the yearly family reunions including this year. She was the lady with a heart of gold always checking in on older neighbors and assisting folks with rides to attend church. She was a willing helper for years to the Crane family at the Crane Melon Barn. She also helped with estate sales that were located at the Crane Melon Barn. Marie's great joy was being a docent at the Cotati Museum, volunteering at the annual chicken BBQ, and many years for the fourth-grade field trip to City Hall by Thomas Page Academy. The first person called when there was a need for clerical assistance was our beloved Marie. She was always ready to make delicious batches of cookies for CHS gatherings. Marie passed away in September at her home in Cotati at the age of 81.

Though her passing was sudden, Marie lived each day with love, grace, and generosity. Her warm smile, kind spirit, and giving heart touched everyone and will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

### 2025 Board of Directors

President	Ed Gilardi
Vice President	John Dell'Osso
Secretary	Velma DiMeola
Treasurer	Bobbie Veronda
Conservation/Restoration Consultant	John Allred
Archiving Administrator	Judy Gustafson
Board Member	Vanessa Davenport
Board Member	Val Kingsbury
Board Member	Gary Martin

### 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.

## CHS is All Over the County!



Photos by John Dell'Osso

Finding History Day at the Santa Rosa Vets Memorial had over 70 historical groups from Sonoma and Marin Counties. Nearly 100 people stopped by the CHS table to ask questions about Cotati's history.

CHS hosted the Sonoma County Heritage Network meeting in Cotati. These regularly scheduled meetings move around Sonoma County and allows all of the historical societies to share current and upcoming information from their area.



Sonoma County Heritage Network meeting in Cotati. Photo by Val Kingsbury

## Did Ya Hear?

Mark your calendars. 2026 Chicken BBQ will be on Sunday, April 19. You can help us by volunteering. 707-794-0305 or email [CotatiMuseum@gmail.com](mailto:CotatiMuseum@gmail.com)



Printed by Minuteman Press

## CHS Launches Two New Social Media Accounts

The Cotati Historical Society working with Flannel Design, has launched two social media sites. We are now on Instagram and Facebook! To find us on these platforms, use @CotatiMuseum. This project was undertaken to reach out to new audiences who may not know very much about our organization.

We currently have 40 followers on Facebook and 135 on Instagram. And our numbers are growing each week and with each posting.



## Update on Veronda-Falletti Ranch Plan



In November, CHS hosted an ice cream social that included updates as to what is going on at the Veronda-Falletti Ranch. Bryce Nahas, Farm and Livestock Manager (shown on left) and CHS President Ed Gilardi talked about the City's Future plans for the site and Ed provided new drawings of the future of the site across from City Hall.



Bryce updated the audience on the ranch management currently in place and the modest growth coming to the site. Those in attendance had a number of questions which were answered by Bryce, Ed and Aishwarya Kancharia, Program Director at the Ranch.

And yes, ice cream was consumed!

Photos by John Dell'Osso

## Visit from a Local Artist with History

We recently had two special visitors to the Museum whose family has a long history in Cotati. Artist Beverly Roberts Colburn came in with her daughter Barbara Colburn Mariani. Beverly had donated a collection of dolls as seen in the photo, a number of years ago.

She also painted the water colors of Cotati Landmarks framed on the walls in the museum. See some of those examples on this page.

Some of her water colors were also made into black & white notecards for sale in the museum.

Her father Dr. John Roberts, practiced in Cotati for several decades. He too had a flare for artistic endeavors as seen by the “Healing Hands” sculpture on display in the museum which he created.



Photos by John Dell'Osso



## Annual Field Trip for Thomas Page Academy

The annual field trip for this year's 40 fourth graders from Thomas Page Academy happened on November 13. They are students in the classes of Katherine Ness and Jules Celli. The participants visited the Cotati Museum, the departments in Cotati City Hall including the Office of the City Manager and City Clerk, Recreation, Planning, Community Development, Public Works and Engineering, Administrative Services and Finance, and the Police Department. The students also had a lesson on Cotati's history. The dedicated CHS volunteers were Lisa Moore, Marilee Shipman, John Dell'Osso, Velma DiMeola, Ed Gilardi, Carol Williams, Vanessa Davenport, Val Kingsbury, and Judy Gustafson.



Velma DiMeola (above) with a group of 4<sup>th</sup> graders in the museum. Photo by Marilee Shipman



Photo by Ed Gilardi



### Calling All Volunteers

We are looking for Museum Docents and Research Volunteers

Do you have excellent customer service skills, a passion for your community, and an interest in history? Contact the Cotati Historical Society to learn more and apply to be part of our team!

707-794-0305 or  
[CotatiMuseum@gmail.com](mailto:CotatiMuseum@gmail.com)



The front of Cotati City Hall which used to be the school in Cotati from 1922 - 1971. Photo by Judy Gustafson

# Thank You To Our New and Renewing Members and Donors

August 1, 2025 – November 30, 2025

## Memorial Donations

**Marie Aggio** by Crane Family  
**Marie Aggio** by Jennifer Crane  
**Marie Aggio** by Patricia DeBernardi  
**Marie Aggio, Margie Cassero & Fran Otani**  
by Velma Di Meola  
**Marie Aggio** by Eleanor & Andrew Facendini  
**Marie Aggio & Fran Otani** by Ed & Pat Gilardi  
**Marie Aggio** by Judy Gustafson  
**R.C. Braden** by Dave Heisel and Karen Braden  
**Marie Aggio** by June Kimball  
**Marie Aggio** by Jim Martinoni & Family  
**Marie Aggio** by Carole Otani  
**Marie Aggio & Connie Martin** by Stan Poncia  
**Marie Aggio, Joan Tunzi & Fran Otani**  
by Marie Andreoli Rice  
**Marie Aggio, Margie Cassero & Fran Otani**  
by Bobbie Veronda  
**Marie Aggio** by Carol Williams

## Individuals and Families

Jordan Feht  
Dave Heisel and Karen Braden  
Stan Poncia

## 2025 Business Memberships

Church of the Oaks  
Cotati Accordion Festival  
Evans & De Shazo Inc.  
Oliver's Market  
Professional Framing Services  
Redwood Self Storage  
Rancho Adobe Firefighters Assoc.  
Sonoma County Library



Photo by Bobbie Veronda



Accepting the plaque for Exchange Bank, Cotati are Kianna Hall (left) and Dominic Costantino (right), two of the longest Relationship Bankers in the Cotati Branch of Exchange Bank. Exchange Bank, Cotati has helped CHS multiple times throughout the years to preserve the history of Cotati and truly living up to their motto of Commitment, Respect, Integrity, and Teamwork!



Cotati Historical Society  
PO Box 7013  
Cotati CA 94931

## 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**

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I want to join/renew my/our membership: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ 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 mail to: **Cotati Historical Society, PO Box 7013, Cotati CA 94931**

Online payments: **[cotatimuseum.org/support](http://cotatimuseum.org/support)**