

Petaluma Museum Association

Petaluma Historical Library & Museum

Preserving the Unique History of Petaluma and Providing
Educational and Cultural Services to the Community

Quarterly Newsletter
Digital Edition



Lucy Deam Kortum
1928 — 2022

Lucy completed a National Register of Historic Places Nomination form for the Petaluma Silk Mill in 1984 and the Carnegie Free Public Library of Petaluma (1906-1976) in 1988, and they were accepted.

Read more about Lucy's legacy on next page.

Winter/Spring 2023

Volume 33, Issue 1

On the Cover

The Remarkable, Indispensable Lucy Kortum

by Kit Schlich, an officer of the PMA Board of Directors, with assistance from historians Terry Park and Katherine J. Rinehart

THE PETALUMA MUSEUM Association — and the entire Petaluma community — lost one of its finest historians and one of its most delightful individuals when Lucy Kortum left us last November at the age of 94. Lucy was the real embodiment of how much one volunteer can contribute to the greater good of a community.

Lucy's contributions were large — from successfully nominating the former Carnegie Library (now our very own Petaluma Historical Library & Museum) and the iconic Silk Mill (now a world-class hotel) into the National Register of Historic Places — but also included the modest but essential task of assisting all those who had questions about Petaluma's heritage. She spent many years organizing disparate printed materials such as books, business brochures and ledgers, newspaper clippings and boxes of ephemera in the Hoppy Hopkins Research Library so that future generations could access local history with greater ease.

In the Research Library, Lucy was a dependable fixture, a constant, always busy sorting through historical materials and answering inquiries on any and all aspects of local history. She was serious about her work, but presented an ever-cheerful demeanor, which made her a joy to be around. Fortunately, she inspired others to pick up the reins to continue this valuable work, and trained them to continue in her stead. If only we could have downloaded all the historical wisdom in that brain . . .

A native Californian, Lucy graduated from Pomona College in 1950, moved to San Francisco and met her future husband, Bill Kortum. After moving to Sonoma County, she and Bill became a "power couple" in local environmental efforts, spearheading a campaign to prevent a nuclear power plant from being built at Bodega Head on the Sonoma Coast. Together they worked as activists to preserve access to the California coastline, where today one might hike the Kortum Trail because of their efforts. All this while working and raising a family of three children!

While Bill served as a county supervisor, Lucy was content to work from the sidelines, never drawing attention to herself. But it was impossible to hide her achievements later in life. Lucy saw environmentalism and historical preservation as related interests, and her work stands as a guide for future such efforts.

(con't on page 4)

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The Petaluma Museum Association Newsletter is published quarterly and distributed to its members. Thank you to all the contributors and special thanks to Kit Schlich & Carl Molesworth, copy editors. If you would like to contribute any news or items of interest to our newsletter, email mary@petalumamuseum.com

Deadline is April 1, 2023

**Petaluma Museum Association
20 Fourth St.
Petaluma, CA 94952**

Message from the President

Debbie Countouriotis

I want to begin my message with a huge thank you to those who gave in response to our annual appeal letter. With your heartfelt donations, we are able to continue the work of preserving Petaluma's history through the exhibits we present and events we host. Your generosity always amazes me and makes me proud to be the President of your museum. My sincere thanks to all of you.

I also want to take a moment to recognize Lucy Kortum, who died peacefully on November 30, 2022, in her beautiful home surrounded by her family. Lucy was a longtime member, volunteer and contributor to the Petaluma Historical Library & Museum. The time, effort and energy she spent supporting the museum is a testament to who she was. She will truly be missed by those who knew her. Read more about Lucy and her life in our newsletter.

Carrying on, or should I say, floating on, the rain we've needed and waited for has finally arrived, in abundance! Fortunately for us, the museum has stood the test of time and with the repairs to our basement doors and windows, we have been able to keep the water out. Our trees are still standing and the grass is getting greener. The rain did put a bit of a damper on some of the new POY walks, but we have prevailed and they were rescheduled and enjoyed by those who attended. Come to hear true tales of mysterious Petaluma, ghostly visitations, strange sightings, dark crimes and deadly dealings that took place in our town years ago. There's much more to hear about so be sure to check the event page and sign up now.

Currently, we are preparing for our upcoming Black History Month exhibit "*From Enslavement to the Path of Freedom: The Power of Black Resistance*", Sponsored by the Petaluma Museum Association & Petaluma Blacks for Community Development. Please check our website <https://www.petalumamuseum.com/events/calendar-of-events/> and <https://pbcd4us.com/black-history-month/black-history-2023/>

Later in the year we will be hosting many other exciting exhibits to include the 100th year anniversary of the Petaluma Rotary Club, the 50th year celebration of the film American Graffiti and the 150th year anniversary of Petaluma High School. Please be sure to check <https://www.petalumamuseum.com/events/calendar-of-events/> for detailed information and while there, click on the links for other exciting news about your museum.

Finally, I am again reaching out to you, our members, to spread the word that we have an opening for a Treasurer and a Member-at-Large for our board. Our board is a great group to work with and we would be delighted to have you or someone you know join us! And, as I mentioned in our last newsletter, our Diversity/Equity/Inclusion committee has been hard at work developing plans to bring our board and museum up to date on including those who have been neglected in the story of Petaluma's history. If you are interested in being a part of this committee, I encourage you to reach out to me at dcountouriotis@petalumamuseum.com and I will put you in touch with this committee. We welcome all who would like to join!

Stay warm and dry and hope to see you soon at the Petaluma Historical Library & Museum.

Lucy Kortum...from page 2

Lucy's Legacy

Interested in all aspects of city and local history, Lucy held a special place in her heart for architecture and dedicated years of research to protect many of our most significant buildings.

Terry Park, who currently works in the Research Library, enumerates some of Lucy's important contributions: "The early city ordinances were in horrible shape, so Lucy and Hoppy [Hopkins] participated with city clerk Pat Bernard in 1985 to catalogue the city ordinances from 1858 to 1894. The project took a number of months, and the Research Library received a copy of the completed project.

"Lucy completed a National Register of Historic Places Nomination form for the Petaluma Silk Mill in 1984 and the Free Public Library of Petaluma (1906-1976) in 1988, and they were accepted. Both took extensive, detailed research by Lucy, requiring 44 pages for the Silk Mill and 52 pages for the Library. Both submissions included history, architectural features, snapshots of the architects, remodels, and the very positive impact on the Petaluma community."

The importance of these projects cannot be overstated. These two buildings are essential Petaluma landmarks, and are today fully enjoyed by a grateful community.

Terry continues: "After the successful nomination of Petaluma's Carnegie Library to the National Register, Lucy took the next logical step: a grant from the State Office of Historic Preservation made it possible for Lucy, with the help of others, to successfully nominate ten other California Carnegie Libraries to the National Register of Historic Places in December 1990. The scope of the project included identifying all 144 California Carne-

gie Libraries, extant or not. Consequently, any of the 87 remaining libraries which meet criteria set forth in the study may now (with brief corroborative documentation of their status as described in the multiple property nomination) achieve National Register designation." Lucy created the template for future Carnegie scholars!

Lucy subsequently submitted a somewhat revised form of this study as an investigative project for her MA degree in History at Sonoma State University. Her masters thesis was titled "Carnegie Library Development in California and the Architecture It Produced, 1899-1921."

Lucy was recognized by the Sonoma County Historical Society for her achievements in historic preservation and research, by receiving the Jeanne Thurlow Miller Individual Award in 2005. In 2006 She was honored to be chosen as Petaluma's "Good Egg" for her volunteer work at the PHL&M.

We are so fortunate to have lived and worked alongside her. Whenever you pass the brass plaque bearing the words "National Register" just inside the entry doors of our museum, think of Lucy Kortum, and thank her.

Memorial for Lucy will be on February 25 at 1 pm at Sally Tomatoes (1100 Valley House Drive, Rohnert Park)

For Lucy's complete obituary, visit <https://legcy.co/3Zgco1J>

The Santa Rosa Press Democrat also ran a feature article on Lucy's life and work.

URL: <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/environmental-activist-historical-preservationist-lucy-kortum-dies-at-94/>

Personal Vignettes of Lucy

by Solange Russek, PHL&M Collections Manager

When I decided that it was time to volunteer in some capacity here in the great city of Petaluma in 2011, I did not realize what an incredible situation I had I walked into.

In September of 2011, I had contacted the museum to offer my services as a volunteer in the PHL&M's Hoppy Hopkin's Research Library. I had spoken with Mary Rowe (of the PMA office) who told me that "Lucy is interested in organizing a large ledger collection" and would I be interested in helping her? Would I? Yes!

I gave Lucy my resume, hoping I would meet the requirements for working in a research library. Lucy saw that my background was in the National Park Service and Conservation Corps. She saw that I had also helped "Save Balboa High School" in 1995 (I graduated there in 1981) by establishing the three buildings of the campus as a city landmark.

Little did I realize the work Lucy had completed with placing the PHL&M and the Silk Mill on the National Register of Historic Places. We discovered we were kindred spirits! And I had yet to learn who Lucy and Bill Kortum were: two giants in the early days of conservation and the protection of the natural resources of Sonoma County.

I quickly became engrossed in this new work, going through each ledger and becoming more and more interested in the many businesses and entities that were in front of me. I guess I knew this was the place for me!

The endless information that Lucy retained was incredible, with names, places and interesting anecdotes that went with each story. When a research request came in,

I found myself following her like a puppy, watching her pull information from this drawer to that file and whatever she knew in her head. Poetry in motion came to mind!

Lucy enthusiastically approved the new project of digitizing and making some of our collections available to the public, thanks to grants from California Revealed. One tape is of Bill Kortum discussing his family and the Donner Party! Copy and paste this link to your browser <https://californiarevealed.org/island/ra/object/cavpp%3A34891>

Last year Lucy sent me a note thanking me for work I have been doing in preserving Petaluma's history. "[It was] a good day when you took the museum under your wing." Well, I feel that I have been taken under Lucy's awesome wing the day I came here. I will keep her vision of preservation and conservation within me always!

I miss her dearly.

—Solange



Lucy's birthday at the PMA volunteer luncheon in August 2011.



Volunteering at Heritage Home Tour 1998



Volunteering at the museum 1992



Lucy and John Benanti with plaque they received from the PMA in recognition of their work in the Research Library. August, 2015

presentation on the history of the Silk Mill and organized a private tour for the group. It was the highlight of the day and NCCSAH members still talk about what a great tour that was.

Because of Lucy, I agreed to write *Petaluma a History in Architecture*. She recommended me to an editor with Arcadia Publishing. I'm so thankful she did. Her encouragement meant a lot to me. Throughout the years, she helped me with many research questions and projects and expanded my understanding of our community's history in ways no books could.

I'll miss you, Lucy!

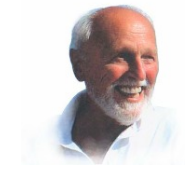
—Katherine



The PMA presents Lucy with a bound book of her master thesis titled "Carnegie Library Development in California and the Architecture It Produced, 1899-1921."



Receiving framed Proclamation of Appreciation from California State Library



Petaluma History & Commentary

by Skip Sommer, Historian

PETALUMA AGONIZED OVER GOING TO WAR IN 1940

IT WAS A question of great import. In the first half of the year 1940, the U.S. was still teetering on entering another great war, then raging in Europe. Strong feelings here went both ways, and President Franklin Roosevelt was leading the teetering upon that historic decision. A few vital questions that hung over us then were: Could the free world survive without us in that fight? Would entering the conflict abroad endanger our home land? Could we afford the terrible price in lives and money? Was there any other way to end this war?

In January of 1940, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler stated that Germany had “grown so strong, that nothing any longer



Hitler and Mussolini in Munich, Germany, circa June 1940

will be able to defeat us.” And in March, Germany began bombardment of the U.K. Germany and Italy formed their war alliance, and one month later, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway. In May, the first prisoners were sent to the dreaded Auschwitz concentration camp. The world trembled.

Emmett Olmsted, Editor of the Petaluma Argus-Courier then, was avidly against our entering the war, as well as avidly anti-FDR. In his editorial of January 10, 1940, he said the new taxes, suggested by FDR, to cover costs of armaments were way out of line. “The only thing sure about taxes is that they are sure, as sure as death.” He warned.

The other major item was one that could affect the West Coast more than other parts of our country: the worsening of relations with Japan. The U.S.-

Japanese trade treaty had expired on January 25, 1940, after 29 years of good will, and that left the U.S. with the ability to burden Japan over its contemporaneous war with China (i.e., no more war material to be purchased from us). It was hoped that our new stance would not also push Japan into military conflict against us. Mr. Olmsted opined: “If we sell goods to Japan, we shall be building up a strong power in the Far East, which will have little respect for our rights there.” On February 4, he added: “Japan’s industries have suffered. She now has not enough foreign trade to establish the credits she needs, for the purchase of war materials.” Unfortunately, Mr. Olmsted, (along with most Americans then), was incorrect about that assumption.

The immense costs of entering a war was editorialized as well. In February, Mr. Olmsted stated:

“This year, the President has asked for 2.2 billion dollars for national defense. The neutrality of the U.S. is threatened by the maddest, most hog-like program couched in the name of ‘national defense.’ Rest assured that the heaviest burden will fall upon the poor.”



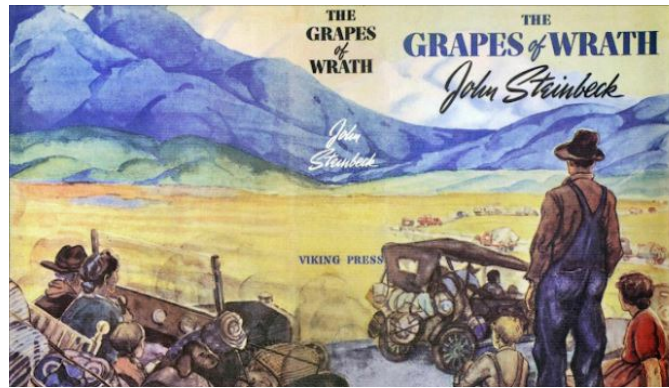
FDR Fireside chats

He pointed out that war expenditures in the U.K. had already exceeded 16 billion dollars and that the U.K. had only one-third the population of the U.S. Translated, he forecast the U.S. would be spending 50 billion on defense, or, “\$350 for every man, woman and child.”

Olmsted warned in March of 1940: “There is little prospect for immediate peace.” Hitler had been talking about settling the conflict if the world would just allow his current conquests to stand. He wanted a guarantee that no foreign power would violate what he then had under his thumb. All this, even though it was *Der Führer* who had just violated much of Europe’s domain. Interestingly, that same day in Britain, it was announced that a man named Winston Churchill had been named Supreme Commander of all their armed forces. It was felt then that the wily 65-year-old Winston could eventually become Prime Minister, as well. He did, and, as PM, Churchill was to become Hitler’s most hated person.



Winston Churchill 1940



Olmsted also warned, there were those in the U.S. who felt, “We are already in the war. Not with troops and ships, but with sympathy and supplies. A repetition of WWI appears to be in the offing.” And he was right-on with that assumption.

Another thorn in the hide of our Editor Olmsted was John Steinbeck’s novel, *Grapes Of Wrath*, which had just won the Pulitzer Prize. The book had laid a great deal of fault on California for the terrible migrant camps, starvations and deaths that had happened to the “Oakies” and “Arkies,” after they had emigrated here from the Dust Bowl and other distressed areas. Olmsted complained: “Why blame California? Steinbeck drew such a lop-sided picture that he maligned the farmers and the State, as a whole.” And, our good editor was quite right there, as well.

Our entire country was already feeling war-weary by the early months of 1940, as we were still attempting a fairly normal pace here in those first months of conflict. We were soon to witness Italy coming into the war, and Hitler riding his Mercedes through Paris. Japan joined Germany and Italy that September, then Romania and

Hungary joined them in November. By Christmas of 1940, England was ablaze, and America was still holding back. We were existing in a different kind of world, here on our continent. When would it all change? When Germany bombed Coventry? When Churchill said of his war pilots, “Never was so much owed by so many, to so few.” Would the USSR opt to fight with the Allies, instead of the Axis? When?

Of course, you know the answer to that. It was on Dec. 7, 1941, that we were forced to make that commitment. And even then, we first committed to ending the war in Europe and North Africa, prior to sending massive numbers of ships and troops against the Japanese in the Pacific. Little did we know how much we would have to sacrifice in the next four years.

To counter the air of impending gloom and doom in 1940, America turned to efforts to boost morale with lighter fare: Woody Woodpecker and Tom & Jerry debuted that year, joining Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck as beloved cartoon personalities. The hot movies were “Pinocchio” and “Fantasia.” “When You Wish Upon A Star” was the upbeat song. Stay safe folks.

2023 BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS

by Faith Ross

February is Black History Month and we at Petaluma Blacks for Community Development are excited about our lineup of activities for 2023. The COVID pandemic curtailed our exhibit and some of our other events at the museum, so we went to alternative locations for 2021 and 2022. For 2023, we are excited to share with you our 45th anniversary celebration. First let me tell you about our activities that are at the Petaluma Historical Library and Museum.

EVENTS AT THE PETALUMA HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

February 3, 2023 - We kicked off our celebration with **The doRian Mode**. Dorian Bartley and her amazing accompanists treated attendees to an evening of wonderful vintage jazz and R&B. Tickets sold out early for this very popular event.

February 10, 2023 – Exhibit Open House – Doors open at 6:30. There will be a docent-led tour of the exhibit, **“From Enslavement to the Path of Freedom: The Power of Black Resistance”**. This exhibit addresses the ongoing oppression that African Americans have encountered since the beginning of this country and how they have resisted, organized, planned and educated themselves to show the true resilience of a people determined to hold the United States to the ideals of freedom, liberty and justice for all. The exhibit will be at the museum from February 10 to March 26, 2023. It is free and open to the public.

February 18, 2023 – Saturday, from 11:30 to 2:30. Children’s Story Time at the Museum. We will have a story teller, pictures to color and activities. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Free.

March 5, 2023 – Sunday, from 1:00 to 3:30 , Rosa Parks Day at the Museum. Children will make a bus similar to the one Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on and hear stories about Rosa Parks. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Free.

EVENTS AT OTHER LOCATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

February 16, 2023 – 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at the **Polly Klaas Community Theater, 417 Western Ave.** West African Drumming and Dance by Amadou Camara and Marie Soumah. Two 30-minute sessions. This performance is in conjunction with Arts Alive, The Polly Klaas Community Theater and Petaluma Blacks for Community Development. Free and open to the public.

February 19, 2023 – 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. – **Museum of Sonoma County, 425 Seventh Street, Santa Rosa, CA.** **“Art in Conversation: Black Resistance in Contemporary Art”**. Four contemporary Black artists of Northern California will share their art via video discussing Black resistance, their art work and how it is perceived in the world today. This will be a one-day, “must-see” art exhibit. Cost: \$10 general admission, \$5 members, and \$7 seniors and youth. Sponsored by the Sonoma County Museum and Petaluma Blacks for Community Development.

February 25, 2023 – 5:30 p.m. – **Black History Program, New Life Christian Church, 1310 Clegg St., Petaluma.** This will be our 45th Anniversary Program. Expect to be entertained and educated. We will have something for everyone in the family. The program is free and open to the public. We are planning for an in-person program with possible live screening.

March 19, 2023 – 4:00 p.m. – **Sharon Henderson and the Reflection Band, singing Gospel and R&B. Polly Klaas Community Theater, 417 Western Ave, Petaluma. Cost \$40.00, includes refreshments.** Sharon has been singing since the age of three. She has received rave reviews from the San Francisco Examiner, and her moving a cappella rendition of “Lawd How Come Me Heah” has moved some people to shout.

Please check our web pages for any changes to the programming.

<https://www.petalumamuseum.com/calendar-event/current-exhibit-the-power-of-black-resistance/>
Petaluma Blacks for Community Development at <https://pbcd4us.com/black-history-month/black-history-2023/>

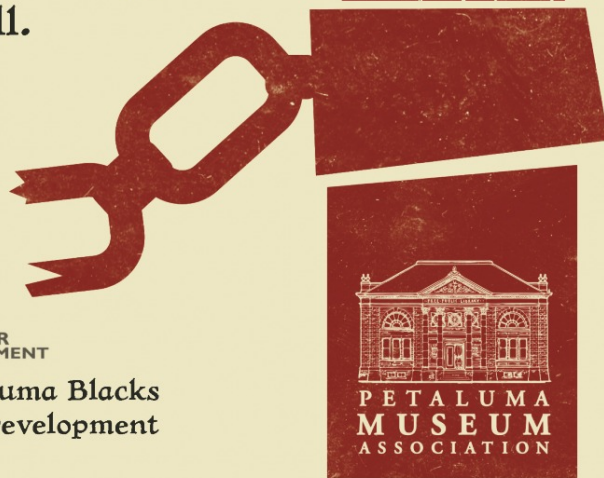
FROM ENSLAVEMENT TO THE PATH OF FREEDOM

THE POWER OF BLACK RESISTANCE

African Americans have encountered oppression since the founding of our country. This exhibit explores the true resilience of a people determined to hold the United States to the ideal of freedom, liberty, and justice for all.



Curated By Petaluma Blacks
for Community Development



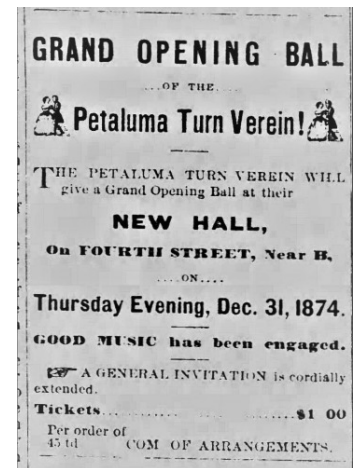
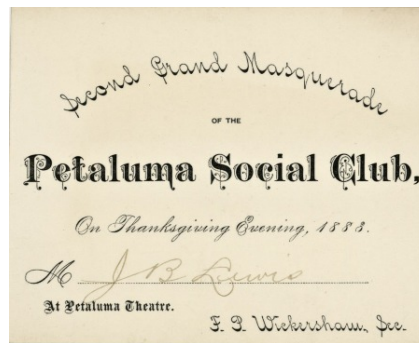
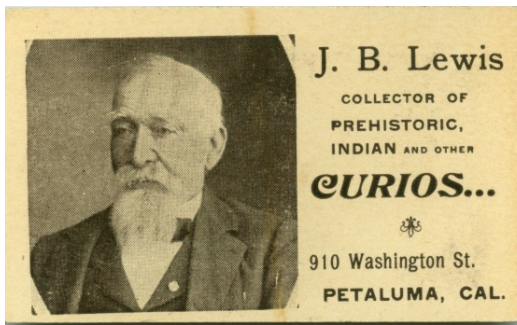
OPENS FEB.10-MAR.26, 2023

What's New in Collections

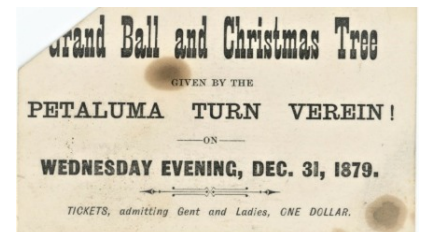
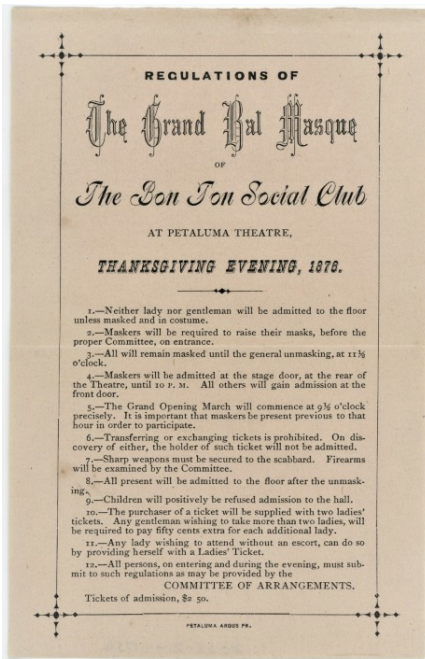
by Solange Russek, Collections Manager

Another Thank you to Barbara Webster for her continuous and generous donations of her family histories.

Barbara's great-grandfather, John Bacon Lewis, had a museum at 910 Washington St. in the late nineteenth century that featured many mortars and pestles, guns, pistols, knives and swords. He also attended numerous local dances and compiled an incredible collection of invitations, programs and regulations. Among the dances he attended were those hosted by the Turn Verein Club, an organization formed in Germany in 1811 by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn. Though J.B. Lewis was of English Irish descent, he still attended many Turn Verein dances. The collection provides a rare view of the many social events in Petaluma during Lewis's heyday, including masquerade balls held on Thanksgiving evening that went on until 3 a.m.



Petaluma Weekly Argus December 11, 1874



Ticket from the 1879 December 31st dance



Did you know the U.S. treasury printed Fractional currency during the Civil War? In order to save on metal for the war effort, paper coins were printed, but did not last long and coins were then again minted.

Petaluma Ghost Walk Debuts

by Tom Whitley

The debut Petaluma Ghost Walk was held on Saturday, Dec 31st, and again on Sunday, Jan 1st. Our persistent (yet still appreciated) atmospheric river put the damper on the New Year's Eve walk, even though our ghostesses, Adele Baylis and Nora Barry, did manage to charm the rain into submission.

The New Year's Day walk was a much sunnier affair with a nearly-full crowd, and special ghost Clara Travers coming by phantom coach, all the way from the Gold Rush town of Marysville. Adele and Nora regaled the living guests with tales of

horror, tragedy, and mysterious occurrences. The group even spotted the skeletal specter of Black Bart — the famous Petaluma city workhorse from the early twentieth century — not the notoriously pleasant stagecoach bandit. A fun and educational time was had by all.

Additional Ghost Walks happened on Jan. 21st and 22nd and an upcoming Valentines-themed walk is scheduled for February 11th and 12th.

Find out more at:

<https://www.petalumamuseum.com/calendar-event/new-saturday-or-sunday-ghost-walks/>



Photos by Rio Helmy



Alexander J. "Zan" Stark (1889-1967)
"Public Library - Petaluma Calif."
Real photo postcard #738, March 1941

You have made the Petaluma Museum a part of your life. Now, we hope you will consider making the Petaluma Museum Association a part of your lasting legacy by leaving a gift in your will or trust.

Your bequest will ensure that the PMA remains a vibrant organization that welcomes our community in the historic Carnegie Library Building and passes down our history to the next generation of Petalumans.

To make the PMA a part of your estate plans, contact your financial planner. To find out more about how your will or trust might sustain our educational mission, contact Debbie Countouriotis, PMA Board President at dcountouriotis@petalumamuseum.com

PMA Issues a Call for Candidates

The Petaluma Museum Association, a dynamic group dedicated to preserving and celebrating Petaluma's history, seeks qualified candidates for its board of directors for two-year terms. Directors are expected to advance the financial stability, organizational strength, and cultural relevance of the PMA through active attendance at board and committee meetings and through acting as PMA representatives in their other community activities.

The PMA is looking for potential board members with experience in:

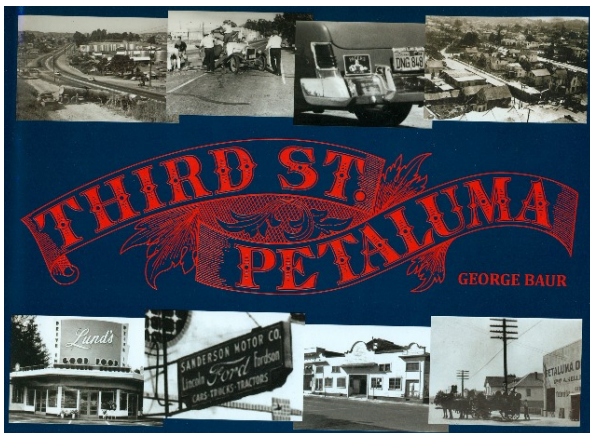
- fundraising
- grant writing
- legal expertise
- marketing / merchandising
- event and exhibit planning
- community-wide education
- architectural history
- a passion for Petaluma history

Deadline for applicants is March 15, 2023. Please read the Board of Directors Agreement here before filling out our online application.

<https://www.petalumamuseum.com/wpcontent/uploads/2023/02/2023-PMA-Board-Agreement.pdf>

Online Application

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc1C49i2YrX1KYvYzyces1FhjBY0zgF2DXpgyDCHT1h-sCvzA/viewform>



Video Presentation – George Baur, Author of Third St. Petaluma November 12 at the Petaluma Historical Library and Museum

https://vimeo.com/788800744?embedded=true&source=video_title&owner=115012656

George takes us back in time before there was a “Petaluma Boulevard.” In those days, B Street South was named 3rd Street and B Street North was named Main Street – which is also the subject of George’s latest sell-out book “Third Street, Petaluma”.

The author shares with us his motivation and inspiration behind his latest book, as well as talks about the old car clubs in Petaluma. He discusses the history of racing in Petaluma: Horse Racing in the 1880’s, Bicycle Racing and present-day racing activity in town. 150 years of racing in Petaluma!



In Memory of Fred Schram

Katherine Rinehart

The following was posted on my facebook page on Dec.31 but for those of you who are not on facebook here is the text.

I'm thinking about Fred Schram today, a 2002 Petaluma Good Egg who died earlier this month. I was pleased to see that the December 19, 2022, Petaluma City Council meeting was adjourned in his honor.

Fred was president of Petaluma's Heritage Homes. Its first meeting was held in February 1968 and was inspired by the city beautification program launched by Mayor Helen Putnam. Schram was president of the organization from 1971 thru 1974. During this period, he led the effort to save the George and Ida (Denman) McNear home at the south end of town, which sadly failed, and the Petaluma Christian Church on Western Avenue, which had been sold to the City of Petaluma and was slated for demolition. That building has been beautifully restored and is now home to the Polly Klaas Community Theatre. He was also instrumental in creating Petaluma's historic preservation and landmark ordinance and appointed to Petaluma's first Historic and Cultural Preservation Committee in 1974, along with Barbara Lind, William Doty, and John Eliassen.

Harlan Osborne wrote about Fred's life and passions in a May 17, 2012, Petaluma Argus-Courier article, which, thanks to the Sonoma County Library and others, I can share here.



WALKING TOUR PLANNED — Petaluma Mayor Helen Putnam (left) discusses plans for Sunday's walking tour with Fred Schram of Heritage Homes and Barbara Lind of the Bicentennial Committee. The one hour tour of 11 of the city's historic downtown buildings will kick off Historic Preservation Week May 12 through 18. Shown in the background is the McNear Building, constructed in 1886 with cast iron fronts, which will be featured on the tour. (Argus-Courier Photo by Ted G. Hansen)

TOOLIN' AROUND TOWN

Fred Schram's passion for history preservation

In the more than 40 years Fred Schram has lived in Petaluma, he's pursued many causes centered around preserving historically unique places from being demolished. Still, he's never given up his affection for his hometown of San Francisco. "I'm still a city kid at heart," admits the recently turned 80-year-old "it's my second home."

A third-generation San Franciscan, he remembers sitting in the window seat of his parents' Richmond district home mesmerized by the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge. As a five-year-old, he attended its official opening in 1937.

If you're one of us that appreciates landmark historical structures and symbols of a bygone era you can thank him and his involvement with Heritage Homes of Petaluma. However, not all of his efforts have been successful, notably the saving of the George F. McNear mansion, but one can only surmise that if he'd been here sooner he would have spearheaded more interest in protecting the erstwhile Healy Mansion and perhaps the old City Hall from the wrecking ball.

Schram's interest and involvement with preservation and his love of the Sierras began as a teenager in the 1940s when he helped dismantle a hand-peeled stage coach barn in the Trinity Alps and worked moving bricks from a railroad roundhouse in the Tahoe-Truckee region. Later, while working in San Francisco, he'd often cringe at the number of old warehouses and industrial buildings being razed.

He and his wife of 30 years, Deb, were living in Sausalito in the 1960s when they discovered a unique hilltop Victorian in Petaluma's Brewster neighborhood built in 1904 for a prominent local family. Along with their two daughters, Lauren and Doris, they moved here in 1969. After painfully witnessing the demolition of Se-

rensen's Funeral Home (Healy Mansion) the Schramms joined Heritage Homes of Petaluma, and two years later Schram became its president. He was also involved with the Petaluma River Festival and was a long-time supporter, and president, of the Old Adobe Association.

His efforts to preserve the Five Corners building, erected in 1910, and his drive to save the Two Rock Coast Guard Training Center, along with his many other endeavors led to him being chosen as Petaluma's Good Egg in 2002.

While Schram was working as the public relations manager for the Chamber of Commerce in 1977, Universal Studios movie director Jeremy Kagan, who was planning to film the movie "Hercules," starring Henry Winkler, Sally Field and Harrison Ford, approached him regarding shooting a scene in the Schram's living room. The shooting lasted for several days and is in the movie as the Munro house.

Schram also pursues a lifelong passion for writing, particularly poetry and non-fiction. He's laboring to complete his signature piece of work, as co-author with the late Jack Wagner, in a coffee-table sized format, the story of the evolution of the Northern California Redwood forests, how they became timber company property and how the timber groves in Hum-

HARLAN OSBORNE

Fred Schram sits on his 1960 Mercury in a photo taken while he was stationed at Ford Ord Army Base near Monterey.

Fred Schram is working on a book, "Giants on the Land," which is about the evolution of the Northern California Redwood forests.

boldt County got their names. Utilizing Schram's extensive knowledge of timber companies and taken from a salesman's point of view, the book, titled "Giants on the Land," will be filled with historical photographs and begins with William Ralston, who gained immense wealth from Nevada's Comstock Lode and founded the Bank of California. The book details how the Redwoods, and the problems encountered getting lumber out of Humboldt before the railroads stepped in, was the next big event after the Gold Rush.

"It's got to be finished. It's a magnificent California history story," Schram says of the project. "I really have a love for California history."

(Harlan Osborne's column, Toolin' Around Town, appears every two weeks. Contact him at harlan@osborne.net)



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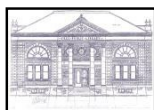
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