



Angela Lansbury with Toni Lemos on "Murder, She Wrote" set. Photo by Wally Smith, 1987.

## ANGELA LANSBURY: MUSE OF CABOT COVE

*Exhibit runs through March 5, 2022*

*Museum will be open on Mondays starting in February!*

The Kelley House Museum's current exhibit, *Angela Lansbury: Muse of Cabot Cove*, is a tribute to the beloved actress and her effect on Mendocino and its people. The exhibit examines her illustrious life and career, in particular her role as Jessica Fletcher in "Murder, She Wrote." The iconic TV series had an impact on Mendocino that ranged from hiring locals for the filming to boosting tourism. Most of all, the exhibit honors Lansbury for the generosity and kindness she showed to everyone she worked with. **Read more** about Angela's legacy.

**SPECIAL EVENT**



## Deadly Lady: Angela Lansbury in Cabot Cove, Mendocino

Saturday, February 25, 4pm – 5:30pm

\$5 members, \$7 non-members, pay at the door

Join us for an evening of reminiscences as a panel of Mendocino locals who were involved in the filming of "Murder, She Wrote" share their memories of Lansbury and experiences during filming. Among our special speakers is Jill Lemos, daughter of film coordinator Toni Lemos, who helped bring the production to Mendocino. There will be an opportunity to share your stories and write down your own memories of Lansbury on the special tribute

wall of our exhibit!

### Point Cabrillo

by Bruce Rogerson, Ginny Rorby, and Jim Kimbrell



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### BUY THIS BOOK, HELP POINT CABRILLO!

As many of you know, the Point Cabrillo Lighthouse suffered significant damage to its gift shop and exhibits when a big wave broke through the front doors. You can help by **donating directly** to their fundraising efforts or you **buy this book** (online or in the museum) for \$15 and we will donate the proceeds to them.



Memories of Cabot Cove  
Hill House Inn  
by  
Innkeeper  
Barbara Reed

### BOOK OF THE MONTH *Memories of Cabot Cove*

by Jennifer Reed, \$10  
Fans of the hit TV show "Murder, She Wrote," will love this photo booklet of over 30 color and black-and-white photos from filming in Mendocino in the '80s and '90s. Compiled by the former innkeeper of Hill House Inn, which appeared often in the show.





## IN MEMORIAM: MEGAN CODDINGTON SMITH

A long-time pillar of the Kelley House passed away in early December, and we wish to acknowledge her work for the museum and the community it serves. Both as a tireless volunteer and a dedicated employee, Megan Coddington Smith did much to make the Kelley House Museum the institution it is today.

Megan was born in Lawton, Oklahoma in January 1942, the youngest of four children, three of them boys. Her family moved to Concord, California when she was ten years old. After her first youthful marriage and child, she married Tom Coddington, moved to Lakeport, and had four more children. She raised them while working in the library as an administrator and in the hospital in community relations. In both positions, she developed her admirable ability to organize volunteers.

In 1990, she moved to Fort Bragg, where she became the Director of the Kelley House, serving until 1996. In that time, she accomplished much for the Kelley House:

- She rounded up enough docents to open the museum seven days a week during the summer.
- She improved the Pioneer Families Vault, the place the museum stores all the valuable archives and artifacts. Temperature and humidity controlled, it protects the relics of Mendocino's past.
- She beautified the Kelley House pond, and had the octagonal garden shed—affectionately called the Loo—built to grace the landscape while storing tools and equipment for lawn parties.
- She started a number of house renovations, especially the kitchen (originally the Kelley's dining room) and the upstairs East Bedroom (Daisy and Elise's room).
- She organized at least one house tour of Mendocino for 400 people.
- To maximize visitors' opportunities to learn about Mendocino, she sometimes ran concurrent groups at the Kelley House, the Ford House, and on a bus, rotating them from place to place until everyone had seen and heard everything.
- She was partly responsible for starting the Kelley House auctions

and turning the July 4<sup>th</sup> lawn parties into the high-powered fun that they are.

Megan married Rex Smith in 1995 and lured him into being a Kelley House docent, a position he still holds happily. Though she had moved on to other positions in the community in 1996, in 2005, when staffing changes at the museum caused a pressing need, she let herself be talked into returning as director for a couple more years. During that time, she hired Carolyn Zeitler to be our archivist, a move that has served the Kelley House immeasurably well since then. Carolyn actually retired as archivist in 2016, after ten years of painstaking work, but she continues to volunteer at the Kelley House every Friday, putting her deep knowledge of things Mendocino to work for all of us.

After Megan stepped down from her second gig as director, she volunteered as a museum docent for many years. Megan then served as a board member from 2015-2022. Unfortunately, she had to leave the board last summer due to her poor health. That means there is room for another history lover or two to take her place. Megan's story illustrates just how much one person can do for her organization and community. The Kelley House is deeply grateful that Megan chose to give so much to us. *In this photo from 1990, Megan is receiving a check for the Kelley House from Don Tucker on behalf of the Rotary Club.*

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## A PEEK INTO THE PAST

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### **WASN'T THAT A MIGHTY STORM**

Captain Orlando "Ole" Lilleland was master of the wooden steam schooner *Pomo*, which operated along the Mendocino coast hauling redwood and farm goods south and general freight north. *Pomo* was of modest size, built to

be handy in narrow harbors and dogholes such as the one at the mouth of the Albion River. She departed from Albion for San Francisco at noon on Tuesday, December 30, 1913, laden with lumber, some produce, 20 crew members, and four passengers.

*Pomo* made fair progress until nightfall when a severe gale kicked in. The seas grew higher, the waves steeper, the driving rain and fog obscured all visibility. By midnight, the sou'wester had reached hurricane velocity and *Pomo* started pounding herself to pieces,

plunging and rolling violently. Her planks groaned against each other; seams opened and seawater spurted into her hold. Water rose relentlessly, mocking the futile work of the pumps and threatening to breach the fire room bulkhead. Chief Engineer O.F. Anderson and his men worked in waist-deep water, struggling to strengthen the weakened wooden wall. Men wrestled with timbers and canvas, but they could not stay the force of water pressing against the bulkhead.

[Read more.](#)

## COFFEE-BEAN GUESSING CONTEST

January 8, 1973 – The results of a guessing contest were announced at the Mendocino Hotel. The contents of a jar of coffee beans that had been on display for two weeks were



laboriously counted out by three judges. The total number of beans in the jar was 11,829, which included two beans which were thrown at "sitters-bye," who offered "helpful suggestions" to the bean counters.

The *Beacon* announced the contest in December. "In the lobby of the Mendocino Hotel is an odd shaped jar which looks like an escapee from some far away chemistry laboratory in Transylvania or Guatemala. What it is doing there in that 100 year old landmark is bringing back a touch of the good old days to good old Mendocino. Inside that jar is an unknown quantity of Colombian coffee beans, roasted just the other day in a new coffee roasting establishment called Thanksgiving Coffee Company. To publicize the opening of this unique shop the owners have filled this jar to the brim with beans, sealed it with wax, and are asking all to enter this contest following the great American tradition of guessing about everything." [Read more.](#)

**READ THE  
BLOG**





### **CONGRATS KATY!**

The *Anderson Valley Advertiser* honored volunteer Katy Tahja in 2022 for "Best Mendocino Historian" along with Brad Wiley, and Alyssa Ballard.

### **FUNDRAISING HELP NEEDED**

We are planning a very special event in May with a film tribute to Angela Lansbury and a hosted reception at the Blair House Inn. If you have experience in event planning or just want in on the adventure, let us know!

**EMAIL  
US**



### **WE'RE TURNING 50 AND WE NEED YOUR HELP**

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Kelley House as a research institute (originally incorporated as the Mendocino Historic Research Institute). We wouldn't be here without the support of the hundreds of volunteers over the decades. And we still need you! If you are committed to the Kelley House's mission to preserve, protect, and share the rich history of the Mendocino coast, we'd love to have you on our board or as a volunteer. Our board meets once/month, and volunteers are needed to do everything from handy person repairs to docent work to marketing. Don't be shy! We are a hardworking, fun bunch and would love to have you join us.

**TELL ME  
MORE!**

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### **MEMBERSHIP GRATITUDE**

So many of you responded to our year-end appeal, thank you! If you have any questions about your membership, are interested in legacy estate planning, or want to figure out how to give a membership as a gift, we are here to help.

**JOIN OR  
RENEW**

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**Kelley House Museum &  
Research Center**  
(707) 937-5791

**EMAIL  
US**

