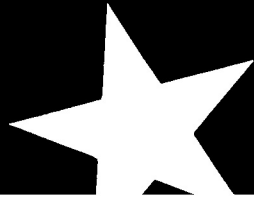


PAPPAGALLO



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Spring 2013

Carnevale, Viva Carnevale!

One of the most famous celebrations of Carnevale takes place in Venice, Italy. It is an annual affair that is looked forward by thousands of visitors, and the city as well. This world famous Carnevale begins on December 26th which is feast of St. Stephen, and ends on Shrove Tuesday also called Fat Tuesday. Yes, this is the last day to enjoy feasting on anything one wish realizing that the very next day is the beginning of Lent or Ash Wednesday! This Italian word Carnevale means "good-by to meat" and lasts for forty days when then one is "released" from lack of food to celebrate the glorious season of Easter!

It is said that the Carnivale of Venice started with a victory of the "Repubblica della Serenissima", Venice's previous name, over the Patriarch of Aquileia, a ruler of a jealous town, in the year 1162. In the honor of this victory, the people started to dance and gather with friends and family in San Marco Square. This square was the largest open space for any type of event and continues to be a fantastic place to view amazing architecture movable huge clock figures, and the history of the city. Apparently, this festival started at that time and become official in the age of the Renaissance. Sadly, the festival declined during the 18th century after a masked procession on the Grand Canal was followed by a ride to the Giudecca to eat a meal of lasagna, raw eel and Crustuli* (fried ribbons of sweet dough dusted with powdered sugar). ".Learn how to make Crustuli. See a well-know Venetian recipe at end of this article!

Even when masked parades became less popular, the extravagant balls continued until Mussolini outlawed masks, then Carnevale in its entirety. After a long absence, Venice and Carnevale again was calling its people to join in dance, music, costumes and, of course, masks! The Italian government decided to bring back this stage of Venetian history, and sought to re-resurrect the traditional Carnival as the "plum".

Today, approximately 3 million visitors come to Venice every year for Carnevale. One of the most important events is the contest for the best mask, usually held the last weekend of the celebration. A jury of international costume and fashion designers votes for "La Maschera più bella".

Venetian Carnevale masks

Masks have always been a main feature of the Venetian Carnevale. Traditionally people were allowed to wear them during the entire Carnevale season. But masks have always been around Venice. Since masks were also allowed on Ascension Thursday and from October 5 to

Christmas, people could spend a large portion of the year in disguise. Maskmakers (*mascherari*) enjoyed a special position in society, with their own laws and their own guild. Venetian masks can be made in leather, porcelain or with the original *glass* technique. The original masks were rather simple in design, decoration, and often had a symbolic and practical function. Nowadays, most of them are made with the application of gesso and gold leaf and are all hand-painted using natural feathers and gems to decorate.

Bauta is a mask which covers the whole face; this was a traditional piece of art, with a strong chin line, no mouth and lots of gilding. The mask has a square jaw line often pointed and tilted upwards to enable the wearer to talk, eat and drink easily without having to remove the mask, thereby preserving their anonymity. The *Bauta* was often accompanied by a red cape and a "tricorn" hat.

By 18th century, now with a black cape called "Tabarro", the *Bauta* had become a standardized society mask and disguise regulated by the Venetian government. It was required to wear it at certain political decision-making events when all citizens were required to act anonymously as peers. Only Venetian citizens had the right to use the *Bauta*. Its role was to guarantee direct, free, equal and secret ballots. One was not allowed to wear weapons along with the mask, and police had the right to enforce this ruling!

Another very popular mask is known as the **Columbina** (1683). It is a half-mask, often highly decorated with gold, silver, crystals and feathers. It is held up to the face by a baton or tied with ribbon as with most other Venetian masks. The *Columbina* was popularized by an early actress in the *Commedia dell'arte* of the same name. It is said it was designed for her because she did not wish to have her beautiful face covered completely. (Female parts were originally played by men).

The *mascherari* (or mask-makers) had their own statute dated April 10, 1436. They belonged to the fringe of painters and were helped in their task by sign-painters who drew faces onto plaster in a range of different shapes



The Bauta mask is on display in the Italian Gallery of our museum.

continued on next page



(Carnevale continued)

and paying extreme attention to detail.

During the Renaissance and lasting into the 18th century, traveling troupes performed Commedia della Arte, the Italian Comedy. The company's 10 or more actors each developed a specific type of character some are listed below.

Arlechino (1671) is perhaps the best known character. He is a comic servant who is lazy but energetic, stupid but clever, insolent, and clownish. He leaps in the air, walks on stilts, tumbles and plays extravagant tricks. His clothing originally was covered with patches that became the diamond pattern we know today.

Polliciniella (1800) has a spirit all of his own. No tensions or despair, his melancholic approach to life makes him coast problems, situations, adventures and at the end simply getting out of everything, in the same simple manner as how he got involved. This is the dreamer as only a Neapolitan culture could produce.

useless science, teasing the current exaggerated belief in science and humanism.

Many of the Commedia della Arte Characters developed from Italian professions:

Il Capitan (1577); Trivelino (1645); L'Apothicaire (1645); Il Dottore (1653); Le Notaire, (1725); Meo-Patacca (1800); Polliciniella (1800); Pierrot (1846); Scaramuccia (1645).

Since many of the costumes were so colorful and the characters so well-known, the Venetians adapted the costumes for a more unique and "can-you-compete-with-me look" for the exciting times of Carnevale!

Later, William Shakespeare "borrowed" many of the Commedia della Arte characters for his plays. Do some of these characters seem familiar?

Learn more about the beautiful Italian 18th century costumes, masks and Commedia della Arte that we have on display:

Ethnic Heritage Museum's Italian Gallery,
1129 So. Main St.
February 3rd thru April 28th
Sundays 2-4p.m. or come with a tour!
Admission: Students \$3, Adults \$5, Family \$10
Call: 815-962-7402

Crustuli Venetian Cookies

4 cups flour
 1/2 cup sugar
 1/2 tsp. salt
 4 eggs
 3/4 stick butter, melted
 2 tsp. vanilla
 3/4 jigger whiskey
 (no baking powder is used in this recipe version)

Combine flour, sugar and salt. Break in the eggs and add melted butter, vanilla and whiskey. Combine together. Turn onto floured board and knead well, until smooth. Cover dough with plastic wrap and let rest for 2 hours. Divide into small portions and roll out paper thin. Cut with pastry cutter into 2 1/4 x 4 inch strips. Fry in 1/2 Canola oil and 1/2 Crisco. Drain and sprinkle with sugar.

Note: A pasta machine may be used to roll out the dough since thinner is better.

This recipe is from Velia (Val) Girardin Mioni and John Girardin



IL Dottore (1653) developed in Bologna, at the time in which the University was well established, Balanzone, as the Doctor was called always dressed black, always well groomed, rich looking and talking a river of ostentatious



New Census Reveals Dramatic Increases in Italian Americans

By Lisa Femia



A very interesting article from ITALIAN AMERICA, The Official Publication of The Order Sons of Italian in America magazine's Fall 2012 issue was graciously allowed parts of this article to be printed by the Editor-in-Chief Dona De Sanctis, Ph.D.

Recent statistics from the U. S. Census Bureau reveal a sizeable increase in the number of Italian Americans since its last national census of 2010. The latest American Community Survey (ACS) found the number has increased to 18 million people who said that they were Italian American. Since immigration did not cause this increase, what was the cause?

A new sense of pride with the younger generations seems to be part of the answer. Italian is the fourth most popular foreign language studied at American colleges and universities, according to Forbes magazine. The Modern Language Association measured a 23 per cent increase in Italian language enrollments from 2002 to 2006, putting it ahead of Chinese and Arabic enrollments. Also, a growing number of Italian American college students spend a semester or summer studying abroad in Italy!

Italy.GoAbroad.com, ranked Italy as the most popular destination with Florence as one of the most popular cities. The National Restaurant association identifies Italian cuisine as one of the three most popular ethnic cuisines in the U.S. Americans' new interest in genealogy-as-hobby, plus Italy's culture, fashion, and dolce vita lifestyles may also help explain why those 2 million people identified themselves as Italian American.

A MINI-PROFILE OF TODAY'S ITALIAN AMERICANS

The charts below compare Italian American levels of education, income and employment to those of the general population, based on the most recent American Community Survey.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

The ACS reports the following geographic distribution of Italian Americans

Northeast: 45% **South:** 22%
Midwest: 17% **West:** 17%

EDUCATION

	Italian Americans	United States
High School Diploma	92%	85%
Bachelor's Degree	21%	18%
Graduate or Professional Degree	12%	10%

INCOME

	Italian Americans	United States
Family Income of \$200,000 or More	8%	5%
Family Income of \$75,000 or More	53%	41%
Mean Family Income	\$100,800	\$82,500

EMPLOYMENT

	Italian Americans	United States
Employed (16 years and older)	64%	59%
White Collar Jobs (management, business, science, arts, sales, office, teaching, etc.)	41% of U.S. workforce	35% of U.S. workforce

So you think your Italian is pronounced correctly?

While reading another wonderful article from ITALIAN AMERICA The Official Publication of The Order Sons of Italian in America magazine's Summer 2011 entitled Menu, That's Italian by Mary Ann Castronovo Fusco who gave me permission to reprint parts of this charming article. I thought it would be fun for our readers to "check their pronunciations".

Let's start with this word that is spelled correctly.

You need to underline the correct pronunciation within the parentheses.

Espresso (espresso or expresso)

Bruschetta (brush-etta or broo-skeh-tah)

Pino grigio (pino gree-jee-oh or pino gree-joh)

Limoncello (lee-mohn-chehl-oh or lemon-cello)

Salame (salami or salame)

Arancina (orancine or arancini)

Al dente (dehn-teh or dehn-tay)

Crostata (crostada or crostata)

So are you a (real or reel) Italian or not?

This magazine is "The nation's most widely read magazine for people of Italian Heritage"



How to solve your Winter Chills---Italian Style!

While writing this article on one of the coldest days in the city, my eyes wandered to the kitchen counter where sits our Coppa Del'Amicizia. Perhaps you've heard of it, if you family originates in the beautiful region called Val D'Aosta. I'll let your homework be locating this unique area of Italy. The "Friendship Cup" or better known to Italians as the Grolla bowl. It is a hand-carved wooden bowl with a cover and six drinking spouts and is offered in just about every bar, café or family home. It is filled with hot espresso, grappa, or a flavored brandy such as apricot, plus sliced oranges, lemons and apples. A little sugar is mixed with more brandy, poured over the top and set aflame! When the flame dies out, it is passed around, everyone drinking from his or her own spout. It is the most popular activity "doposci" (after ski). Each Grolla bowl is hand carved so there are no two exactly alike. The top sports an Edelweiss blossom in relief.

Recipe for La Coppa Del'Amicizia

Juice of ½ lemon (save the other 1/2)
 Juice of ½ orange (save the other 1/2)
 Pinch of cinnamon
 Pinch of nutmeg
 2 tbs honey or sugar
 2 ounces flavored brandy
 4 ounces of plain grappa
 8 ounces very strong, very hot espresso or French roast coffee

Mix lemon juice, orange juice, cinnamon, nutmeg, honey or sugar, brandy and grappa. Slice the remaining fruit into small sections and add. Let stand for ½ hour, stirring a few times. Make coffee. If you do not have a Grolla Bowl, rinse out four heavy ceramic mugs with scalding water. Pour coffee over the other ingredients. Serve immediately...perfect for that Winter Chill!



SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

Check out this list of organizations where scholarships are available.

Sons of Italy Foundation, Illinois

Several \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to students of full or partial Italian ancestry graduating from high school. Financial need, scholastic record, activities showing character and leadership are the criteria. Personal statements and faculty recommendations are required. Deadline July 1. Presentation: October. Only written requests will be honored. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request to Illinois Sons of Italy Foundation, 9447 W. 144th Place, Orlando Park, IL 60462

Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans

One \$2,000 scholarship awarded to a student of Italian ancestry who is either a high school senior accepted into a college with the intent of establishing a major in journalism or communications, or an under graduate student majoring in journalism or communications. Deadline and presentation to be announced. Winners must attend presentation. Visit www.jccia.com, contact 708-450-9050 or jcc@jccia.com

Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans

One \$2,000 scholarship presented to a male high school senior of Italian ancestry. Deadline and presentation to be announced. Winners must attend presentation. Visit www.jccia.com, contact 708-450-9050

Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans Women's Division

Several \$2,000 scholarships awarded to female students of Italian ancestry. Deadline: April 1. Presentation: May 1. Visit www.jccia.com, or contact 708-450-9050 or jcc@jccia.com

Justinian Society of Lawyers

Ten to 20 scholarships of \$1,000 to \$5,000 awarded to law school students of Italian ancestry based on academic ability and need. Deadline: Early September. Presentation: Late September. Visit www.justinians.org/scholarship-programs, or contact Anthony Farace at 312-255-8550 or amf@amarilovallo.com

Columbian Club Charitable Foundation

Several scholarships of various amounts awarded to graduating high school seniors and undergraduate/graduate students of Italian decent who are permanent residents of the state of Illinois. Scholarships are also available for undergraduates in music education and graduate students in law, medicine and dentistry. Deadline: October 31. Presentation: January. Visit www.columbianclub.org

The Greater Rockford Italian American Association

Go to our website: www.griaa.org then on to the Scholarship committee chaired by Ben Todaro and Frank Valentine. Through this committee, scholarships are presented each year to area Italian American families to defray the cost of private (parochial) school education. To date, more than a half million dollars in scholarships have been presented.

The Scholarship information Sheet and Application Form can be viewed and printed by clicking on "Application Form" from our website.



Boylan's Italian Club: How Are We Doing?

"Tutto a posto"... that is the status of Boylan's Italian Club. We started four years ago after hearing the sad news that the Italian language would not be taught. We meet every Wednesday, and have about 30 students on average come to each meeting. Over the years I've done quite a variety of things with them, as much as I can do. Our meetings consist of something edible (pizza, pizzelle, spumoni, gelato, panettone, cookies, cheeses, breads, candies, etc.) followed by some sort of activity. These activities vary: playing scopa (an Italian card game), listening to Italian music, presentations about famous Italians or customs, videos, bocce and so on. Once in a while we do take field trips: Chicago, Milwaukee, and yes, we even had a trip to Italy with 15 students. Financially, we are self-sustaining, so that means we have to put together our own fundraisers. Our biggest sources of income are bake sales, bocce tournaments, and club t-shirt sales. There are two things I'd love to see for the future of our club. 1) The Italian language taught at our school. That will make everything our club does more worthwhile. 2) I would like more involvement from the community. I'd invite our Italian-American community to give presentations concerning aspects of our traditions, history, or important persons from our heritage, prepare Italian treats, and inform me of what's going on of interest to youth. I would welcome any help I can get, please contact me at [HYPERLINK "mailto:jsartino@boylan.org"](mailto:HYPERLINKmailto:jsartino@boylan.org) jsartino@boylan.org Grazie! By: Jimmy Sartino (Club Moderator)

Attention: Learn more about our Italian Gallery of the Ethnic Heritage Museum's World War II exhibit!

Mark your calendar and join us...April 28th through November 10th for original Armed Forces uniforms, photos of our men and women who protected us in time of danger.

See European theater of war medals, a scale model of the General Sherman Tank, the South Pacific Naval battles and original flags of the Signal Corps! Hear stories of heroism.

Where: Ethnic Heritage Museum 1129 S. Main St.

When: April 28 through November 10

Hours: Sundays 2-4p.m. Tours can be arranged, call 825-962-7402

Admission: \$3 Students; \$5 Adult; \$10 Family.

Lent and Easter Family Recipes and Traditions

The beautiful altar, the wonderfully shaped bread, the colorful cakes, the tasty pasta topped with breadcrumbs. These can only mean one thing for Rockford's Italian-Americans. A St. Joseph's Altar.

The largest and longest running of those can be found on Sunday, March 17, at St. Anthony of Padua Parish. While it seems to be unholy to talk about a highlight of the Lenten Season, Rockford's Italian-Americans can't be faulted for looking forward to the St. Joseph Altar at St. Anthony of Padua Church. Aside from a few individual altars – including Rose Scalise Sheridan's on Tuesday, March 19, at 7020 Clikeman Road – the parish-sponsored altar at St. Anthony has become a tradition. It's a welcome event that seems to signal the end of winter.

As the Lenten Season makes its way to Easter, most of our families have their own traditions, most of them centering on food. My first memory of St. Joseph's Day probably occurred in the early 1950s at my Uncle Jake Fiorenza's family home on Montague Street, next to Montague Library. I remember sitting at a huge table and being asked to taste the St. Joseph pasta, which I wanted nothing to do with.

A better memory is roaming around South Rockford, mostly around St. Anthony's, and locating the homes with altars in the early 1960s. The newspaper printed a map where to find them, and, while we were too late for pasta, we weren't to grab some cookies.

When my daughters were young, we took them to the altar at St. Anthony every year, and they now bring their families to start their own tradition. Even though we attended the church altar, my mother-in-law, Carmela Cipolla, always made St. Joseph pasta on March 19. Today, my wife Nora and I have carried on the tradition. And here is the recipe we use, courtesy of the *The St. Anthony Church Altar and Rosary Cookbook*:

Sauce for St. Joseph's Pasta (Pasta con sardi)

1 12-ounce can tomato paste

1 large can tomatoes

Salt and pepper to taste

Basil (several large sprigs)

1-2 paste cans of cold water

1 large onion

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

2-3 tablespoons, cooking oil

1 cup chopped fresh fennel (or anise)

1 large can Condimento di Pasta con Sardi (can be found at Salamone Brothers at the 320 Store, Logli on East State Street or DiTullio's)

Cook fennel in a sauced pan with water until tender. Set aside. In a large saucepan, sauté onions in oil until tender.



(continued from page 5)

Add garlic and cook until tender. Add paste, water and tomatoes and mix well. Add salt and pepper to taste, cooked fennel, basil and condiment for sauce. Simmer for 1-2 hours. Cook 1-2 pounds spaghetti according to directions. Drain and serve with sauce and toasted bread crumbs.

Toasted Bread Crumbs

2 cups unseasoned bread crumbs
1 teaspoon oil
1 teaspoon sugar

Toast bread crumbs in oil in sauce pan over low heat until lightly browned, stirring constantly to prevent burning. Remove from heat and add sugar. Sprinkle over St. Joseph Pasta. Recipe courtesy of *Cuchina Italiana-Rockford Style*.

Everyone should try to make the special day's bread at least once. Here is a recipe from Albert Skaronea's A Gourmet Trip Thru Italy.

St. Joseph' Italian Bread (Pane di Sant Guiseppe)

3 packages yeast
2 cups warm water
¾ cup sugar
4 to 4 1/8 pounds sifted flour
Use 2 cups for proofing
½ pound butter
4 eggs, beaten
2 tablespoons salt
2 cups scalded milk
1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Dissolve yeast in warm water, and add a level tablespoon of sugar and 2 cups flour. Mix well and put in a warm place until bubbly. Cream butter and sugar, and add beaten eggs. Sift salt and flour. In an extra large mixing bowl, put the creamed mixture of butter, sugar and eggs and add yeast. Stir well. Add scalded milk and flour, a small amount at a time, mixing well each time. Add enough flour to make soft kneaded dough, and then knead well. Let rise (or proof) until double in size. Punch down and let rise again for 30 minutes. Shape into 6 loaves and let rise until double in size. Place dough in well greased loaf pans. Brush with egg mixture. Bake at 400 for 15 minutes. Lower heat to 375 degrees and bake 30 minutes longer or until bread is golden brown.

Nino Orifici, who has operated a couple of local restaurants and currently is the pizzeria manager at Logli's on East State St., was born in Capo di Orlandi, Sicily, but raised in Rockford. One of his memories of Lent came at the end when his mother would make baccala on Good Friday.

"It was all right," Orifici said. "My sister likes it, and still makes it."

The original Orifici version used salted cod, but fresh cod works well, he said. His family recipe included a marinara sauce and olives. The local cookbooks have several baccala recipes. This one seems to be the same as the Orifici family. It's also one I would choose if I was going to make it. Maybe I should someday.

Baccala alla Marinara (Sailor's Codfish)

2 pounds cod steak, 1 inch thick
2 cups canned tomatoes, sieved
¼ cup pitted chopped green olives
2 tablespoons capers
1 tablespoon parsley, chopped
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon oregano

Pre-heat oven to 350-degrees. Place cod steak in a greased 1-1/2 quart casserole dish and set aside. In a saucepan, combine all of the other ingredients and bring to a boil. Pour the hot mixture over the cod in the casserole dish. Bake at 350 for 25-30 minutes or until the fish flakes when pierced with a fork.

Another Good Friday tradition was more palatable – at least for the Pirello family. Renee Pirello Zwiger remembered her aunt Laura Marconi's mother made the bread Chamalone, an Italian Easter Bread. "They always brought it over on Good Friday," Zwiger said. "It was real dense bread. We would slice it, toast it and put butter on it."

The recipe lives on today with Eleanor Pro Biasin, who got it from her mother Aurelia Pro. Eleanor's aunt was Laura Marconi's mother, who was Renee's mother's god-mother. "And she brought it from Ferentino," said Biasin, whose aunt Laura Marconi was Renee's mother's god-mother.

Chamalone (Italian Coffee Cake)

7 eggs
2 ½ cups sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
One-half of a small bottle of almond extract
2/3 cup milk
2/3 cup melted Crisco
2 oranges, rind and juice
6 ½ cups flour
7 teaspoons baking powder
1 beaten egg
Sprinkle of sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix the eggs and sugar, add the vanilla, the almond extract, milk and Crisco. Then add the orange rind and juice, and the flour and baking powder. Mix well together. Grease and flour a tube pan. Add the bread mixture into the pan and brush with the



(continued from page 6)

beaten egg and sprinkle with sugar. Bake at 350 for 1 ½ hours. It is done when a toothpick comes out cleanly.

Another Easter season tradition that Eleanor follows is Pizza con Ricotta, another recipe that her mother brought from Ferentino. "I make it every Holy Week, and we have it on Easter," she said.

Pizza con ricotta

5 pounds of Ricotta cheese, drained
1 ½ pounds of sugar
6 eggs
2 orange rinds
1 large Hersey chocolate bar, chipped into small pieces
Cinnamon to taste
2 shot glasses each of rum, anisette (anise), sweet vermouth, creme de cocoa
Pastry shell

Mix the cheese, sugar, eggs, orange rinds and chocolate. Add cinnamon to taste or until the batter has a light brown color. Add the rum, anisette, vermouth and crème de cocoa and mix well. Bake at 375 degrees for 45 minutes to an hour until the crust is light brown.

I spent a lot of time at my mother's family home on Montague Street. There was always something going on at the LaRosa house – maybe because there were 10 children in the family. My late aunt DeDe (her name was really Deloris) LaRosa loved holidays and the Lenten and Easter season was no exception. Often, my sister and I would catch the bus on Saturday morning and go downtown with her. One of her traditions was to stop at the Wyman Street Bakery and buy several chocolate-frosted cookies that were topped with chopped nuts. But during Lent, she would bring home hot cross buns. Whenever I see them in stores at this time of year, I think of her.

Hot Cross Buns

1 package frozen breads rolls (Rhodes, 12-24 bag, for example)
½ cup raisins or currants
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon butter or margarine, melted
Frosting
½ cup powdered sugar
1 ½ teaspoon butter or margarine, softened
1 teaspoon milk or light cream
¼ teaspoon vanilla

Prepare rolls, adding currants and cinnamon. Pre-heat oven to 375-degrees. Grease 9-inch square pan. Once dough rises, divide it into 16 equal sizes and shape into round balls. Place in prepared pan and let rise or proof for 30-45 minutes until double in size. Bake 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Brush with melted butter. Remove from pan to cool. In a small bowl, blend all frosting ingredients until smooth. Form a cross with the frosting on each bun

with a decorating tube. Recipe courtesy of *Pillsbury Kitchen's Cookbook*.

My mother, Mary, the oldest daughter, remembered Easter being a time when all of the girls – there were seven – would get Easter outfits. They made at last one sales person's day at Weise's on West State Street – and that sales person was probably a woman. Each of the girls got a dress, hat, shoes and gloves.

Easter on many Italian homes in Rockford meant a day of preparing the wonderfully rich, egg and pasta collection spelled many different ways, but phonetically as ta'ano (pronounced tah-aah-new). Every family has its own tradition – ricotta, tuma or brick cheese, stuff the pasta with meat or not, meatballs in sauce or just plain.

Several years ago, my wife and I took over making the ta'ano when it got to be too much for my mother-in-law. This is our family recipe, which is adapted from Cucina Italiana or the Festa cookbook as it is know in our house.

Ta'ano Sicilian-Aragonese (Easter Casserole)

2 pounds Rigatoni pasta
5 pounds ricotta cheese
2 pounds grated Romano cheese
1 cup fresh parsley, minced
5-6 cups clear chicken soup or chicken broth
1 teaspoon salt
4-5 quarts boiling water
2-4 dozen eggs
2 pounds ground meat (beef, pork or turkey) made into meatballs

Pre-heat oven to 350-degrees. Make meatballs according to your own recipe (We use turkey). Cut into pieces and place in a bowl. Cook pasta in water, which has been salted. Partially drain and place into a large bowl. Beat 12 eggs well and blend with 2 ½ cups Romano cheese. Blend the pasta and egg and cheese mixture and set aside. Break Ricotta cheese into pieces and mix with 8-10 eggs. Beat until well mixed and Ricotta is broken into fine pieces. Now begins the assembling of ingredients from the three bowls into a large and deep baking pan. Grease the pan or place parchment paper on the bottom. Now begins the layering. First, a layer of pasta mix, then a layer of meatball mix, then a layer of Ricotta mix, then a layer of pieces of Ricotta or Tuma cheese. Sprinkle the layer generously with Romano cheese. Repeat all of the layering until the entire mixture is used up – but be sure to leave enough room to allow for the ta'ano to increase in size. Pour the chicken broth over the top. Blend 6-8 six eggs with 1 cup Ricotta cheese and add a little over time to help form a beautiful crust. Bake for 2-4 hours until all of the broth has been absorbed.

One of my favorite memories of my Nano (Sam LaRosa) was him cutting the first piece of the ta'ano fresh from the oven and seeing him bite into the hot slice.

By Mike Doyle



Viva Pasta!

Contrary to the once popular legend, we now know for certainty that Marco Polo did NOT bring our dearly, beloved Pasta back with him from China! In fact, the Greeks and Romans were eating pasta 1000 years before the birth of Christ! Today, one can see stone carvings of pasta making tools dating from 400 B.C. in Etruscan tombs north of Rome.

The Romans made all kinds of fresh pasta, including a wide flat noodle called *laganum*, known today as *lasagna*. A Roman gourmand, Marcus Apicius (from which we have the word *epicurean*) mentions pasta in his collection of recipes called *De re coquinaria* ("On Cooking" Latin). His book dates from the first century and is thought to be the first cookbook.

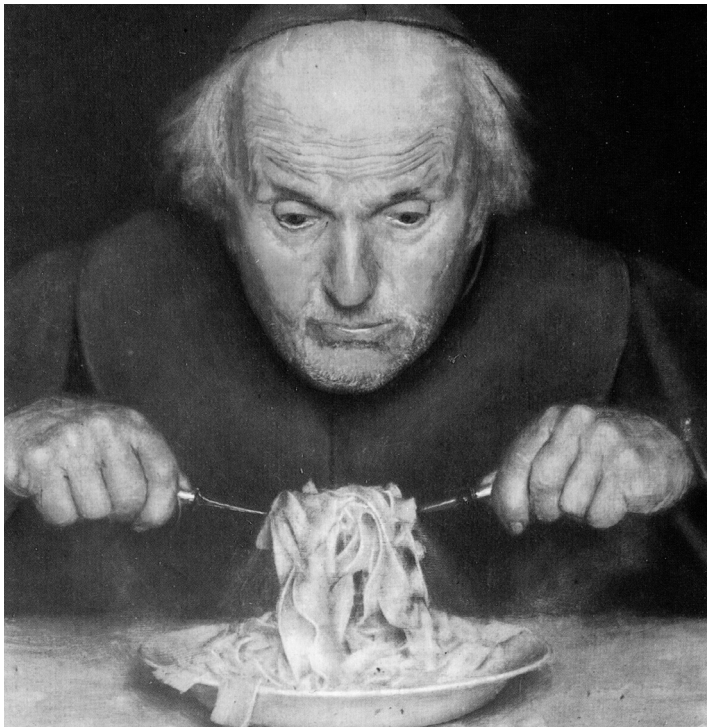
Wheat first cultivated by the Romans and then by the Arabs on the island of Sicily dried the pasta realizing that it had a longer traveling life. Dried Pasta or *pasta secca*, became a popular food in Italy, especially in the south. Later, during the Renaissance pasta in all forms was celebrated through art, literature and at the table.

By the 15th century, pasta became so popular that there were "pasta wars" where fierce competition between pasta shops caused a Papal decree that the pasta shops be at least 25 yards apart...no closer! Naples became the center of pasta productions by the 18th century. In fact, there were over 280 pasta shops in the city. With the discovery of durum wheat, the industry moved from the south of Italy to the big cities of the north. Pasta and the family meals are one and the same.

Food for Thought: Let us recall a lesson from the History books...When Columbus, and then other Spanish came to the shores of Mexico and brought back a "poisonous yellow oval plant" that they called "pomodoro" or golden apple, and were afraid to eat it!

Look what developed as the best thing to smother your pasta...

(Would we have survived without it?)



Spring and Summer 2013 in Italy

While St. Joseph's Day on March 19 is no longer an Italian national holiday, it is perhaps the single-most significant feast day to Italian-Americans in Rockford. And even though its roots are in Sicily, it is celebrated throughout Italy.

There are many feast days in Italy. Here are a few that are celebrated in the spring and summer.

Feast of the Ascension, May 9

There is a fascinating tradition that is a part of the Feast of the Ascension, which takes place May 9 and celebrates Christ's ascension into heaven from Mount Olivet 40 days after he rose from the dead. In many parts of Tuscany, including Florence, people would gather crickets, celebrating their presence as the first sign of spring. Today, crickets can be purchased in tiny, brightly colored cages.

Another interesting facet of the feast day occurs in Venice in the Piazza San Marco. The beautiful clock tower, Torre dell'Orologio, is topped by two bronze men who signal the hour by striking a bell. Underneath the two figures, known as the Moors, is a large, golden lion, which is the symbol of Venice. And beneath the lion is a niche containing figures of Mary and Jesus. Twice a year, on the Feast of the Epiphany and the Feast of the Ascension (known as *Festa della Sensa* in Venice), doors on either side of these figures open and the three Magi, who are led by an angel, pop out. While the angel blows his trumpet, the Magi bow and remove their crowns.

Festa del Ceri, May 15

Candles and wooden pedestals are significant artifacts in the *Festa del Ceri*, which is celebrated May 15 in Gubbio in the province of Umbria.

The feast's roots could be dated back to pagan times when locals worshipped the goddess Ceros. Other wonder if the date is a commemoration of a military victory by the inhabitants of Gubbio and 11 other cities in 1154. But the mostly likely link is a celebration of the city's patron saint, Saint Ubaldo, the Bishop of Gubbio who lived in the 12th century.

Saint Ubaldo died on May 16, 1160, and the city's inhabitants honored him with a pilgrimage with lit candles. Since then the procession is repeated on the eve of his death, May 15. One of the unusual aspects of this pilgrimage is that the candles are of the smaller votive variety. They are 12-feet long and are mounted on three large wooden pedestals. The pedestals are attached to heavy stretcher-like litters and are carried on the shoulders of 12 men. The large candles represent St. Ubaldo, St. Giorgio, and St. Antonio. And, characteristic of Italy's rugged geography, they are carried uphill.

The men who carry the pedestals, or *Ceri*, are called *Ceraioli*. They wear white pants and shoes, red sashes, and different colored shirts – yellow for St. Ubaldo, blue for St. Giorgio, and black for St. Antonio. The procession winds through the streets of the city to the Basilica of St. Ubaldo.



St. Anthony of Padua, June 13

St. Anthony, known by many as the patron saint of lost causes, is one of Italy's best known saints and, obviously, in the Rockford area as well through St. Anthony of Padua parish. His feast day of June 13 is celebrated in Padua, located a short drive west of Venice. St. Anthony's Feast Day is celebrated with a long procession through the streets and a celebratory Mass in the basilica that bears his name.

On his feast day, bread is blessed, and on the streets near the basilica, shops and vendors sell St. Anthony's Bread. It is part of a tradition that dates back to the 13th century when he restored life to a little girl in return for the mother's promise to donate to the poor the child's weight in grain. This is one of many miracles attributed to him. St. Anthony died on June 13, 1231, and on his feast day, throngs of people make their way through the basilica and leave scraps of paper with prayers and petitions. His tomb is literally covered with thousands of these little pieces of paper.

Feast of San Giovanni, June 24

The spring and summer calendar in Italy includes many other feast days, most of which were left behind by the Italian immigrants. One is the Feast of San Giovanni, in celebration of St. John the Baptist, which is celebrated with gusto in Florence on June 24. The feast features much music, drinking, and festivities, along with medieval tournaments. The biggest tournament is Historic Florentine Soccer, a rugged combination of wrestling, rugby, and soccer that dates to the 16th century.

Following the day's events, a palio of rowboats on the Arno River carry lit candles. The conclusion is a spectacular fireworks display.

Other spring and summer festivals or feast days

April 25 – St. Mark's Day, Venice. On this day, men give roses to the women they love.

May 18-19 – Infiroata di Noto, Noto, Sicily. One of the most colorful celebrations in all of Sicily, the Corrado Nicolaci in Noto is covered with floral designs.

May 30 – Corpus Domini, Orvieto. A procession of carpets of flowers.

July 2, Aug. 16 – Palio, Siena. The famous horse races in the center of Siena.

By Mike Doyle

Palmanova



You won't find the Italian city of Palmanova on many of those fat tourist guides, such as my well traveled book by Rick Steves.

But the city of about 5,500 people located in far north-eastern Italy has a fascinating history as a fortress. It was built in the 16th and 17th centuries to help protect the Venetian empire. Located northeast of Venice, it is actually closer to Trieste, Slovakia (55 kilometers away), and its unique design was created to stem attacks from mostly Ottoman invaders but also attacks from Austria.

Founded on Oct. 7, 1593, it featured the most modern military designs of the 16th century. Palmanova, designed by Vincenzo Scamuzzi, was built in the form of a nine-point star. In between the points were ramparts, which would help defenders protect each of the nine points. Surrounding it was a moat, and it had three gates.

In the early 19th century, outer fortifications were built during the time the area was under control by Napoleon of France. From 1815 to 1866, Palmanova was ruled by Austria, which is located just to the north. It became part of Italy in 1916.

Because of its domination by the French and Austrians, it's clear that it didn't live up to its potential as a citadel. It fell short in other ways, too.

Edward Wallace Muir Jr., a professor of history and Italian at Northwestern University, said in a posting on palmsies.tumblr.com, "The humanist theorists of the ideal city designed numerous planned cities that look intriguing on paper but were not especially successful as livable spaces. Along the northeastern frontier of their mainland empire, the Venetians began to build in 1593 the best example of a Renaissance planned town: Palmanova, a fortress city designed to defend against attacks from the Ottomans in Bosnia. Built ... according to humanist and military specifications, Palmanova was supposed to be inhabited by self-sustaining merchants, craftsmen, and farmers. However, despite the pristine conditions and elegant layout of the new city, no one chose to move there, and by 1622 Venice was forced to pardon criminals and offer them free building lots and materials if they would agree to settle the town. Thus began the forced settlement of this magnificent planned space, which remains lifeless



(continued from page 9)

(Palmanova continued)

to this day and is visited only by curious scholars of Renaissance cities and bored soldiers who are still posted there to guard the Italian frontier.”

Which is probably why it is not found in major travel guides.

But it is an interesting city, nonetheless. If you do visit it, you can only see the nine star points by plane or helicopter. The walls that made up the outer foundations are mostly overgrown now. What is left surrounds the Piazza Granda in the city's center. What remains of the hexagon is used mostly for temporary structures for festivals.

Today's Palmanova surrounds the Piazza Granda, in the city's center, where you also will find the city's cathedral. Completed in 1636, it has a relatively small bell tower, built so it wouldn't be a target for enemy artillery.

Despite its small presence in Italian history, it set the standard for future military structures. Palanova's fortress plan structure as a star fort was imitated by military architects for hundreds of years afterward.

Sources: Wikipedia, Stars and Stripes newspaper, Dec. 20, 2010

By Mike Doyle

Our Past — Unbelievable, but True

A painful reality of our world today is the many stories of greed and division that has led to destruction at so many levels, whether in our personal lives or around the globe. Imagine strong family ties, kindness, and generosity ruling the day — even in war time.

Hard to imagine, but true.

And people like Norma Agostini remember.

When America troops came by train to Rockford on their way to fight overseas, Norma remembers her parents getting ready to greet them by putting large kettles of water on the boiler to make coffee, to go with homemade coffee cakes and breads from a nearby bakery. Their stop in Rockford was sometimes a long layover, often a full day, and the soldiers were often not allowed to get off the train. “We would have to bring the coffee to them. One time a cousin of mine was on the train when it stopped right by our house and he yelled to my mom, ‘Please get my mom so I can say ‘goodbye; I’m going overseas.’ His mom lived in the neighborhood and my mom ran to get her,” she said.

The generosity didn't stop there.

Italian prisoners of war were also welcomed.

The POWs came to camps in Illinois to make ammunition, but on the weekends, they would be dropped off at people's homes, where the only rule was to not leave. Norma remembers being afraid -- at first -- of people who became friends.

“These were people fighting my friends and maybe killing them, but I quickly learned they were no different than anyone else,” she said.

Her parents, Peter and Beatrice Bonaguro, lived on Selden Street, near the Burlington Railroad tracks. So, they knew the schedule of American soldiers coming and going. The Italian POWs came in on trucks from

Savannah, where they worked at an ordinance depot, handling ammunition.

When the soldiers returned to their homeland after the war, the communication continued. Norma's parents wrote letters to several soldiers and her family has been to Italy many times to visit some of them.

“When we went to Italy, their families couldn't do enough for us out of gratitude,” she said.

“They learned tenderness and kindness from the Americans who were against them. It was very different from what we think of when we hear about prisoners of war today,” she said.

Local historian Suzanne Crandall said the war was going on at about the same time Italians were immigrating to America, so many of the POWs from Italy were related to people in Rockford.

“We were kind to our prisoners. We clothed them, gave them a comfortable bed to sleep in and home cooked meals. We didn't treat them cruel at all,” she said.

Suzanne remembers her parents welcoming soldiers into their home.

“There were five kids in our family and we were on ration stamps, but there was always room for one more. A lot of people “adopted” soldiers because they were young, homesick, and they wanted to treat someone else's son like their own.”

Imagine.

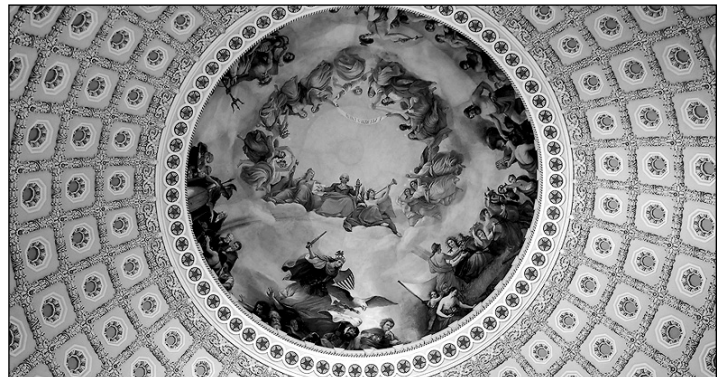
By Peggy Sagona Werner

Brumidi Honored?

After many years of lobbying Congress, the Constantino Brumidi Society under its president, Joe Grano finally succeeded in obtaining a Congressional Gold Medal for Constantino Brumidi also called the “Michelangelo of the Capitol”. His brilliant art has decorated the interior dome of the Capitol and many rooms and halls of our nation's most important building.

The sad thing was that the medal was presented with little prior notice to members of Congress or the public, therefore the audience was quite small. Also, it was presented in a small room in the Capitol rather than in the Rotunda where Brumidi's most famous masterpiece, “The Apotheosis of Washington” reigns in glory!

If you as an Italian American citizen or art lover wish to show your concern, you may call or write your Congressional representative by calling the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 1-202-224-3121. Mr. Joe Grano states that letters are more effective....so let's show our interest in this concern.





To Gene and Shirley Fedeli — Goodbye, Good Luck,



After almost 25 years of bringing the Italian spirit of fun, food, entertainment, and history to our doorstep every Fall and Spring on the pages of Pappagallo, Editors Shirley and Gene Fedeli will be moving on to the next leg of their life's journey.

They will be moving to Gross Pointe Park, Michigan, to live closer to their daughter, Lisa, and her family. The house will go up for sale, boxes of memories are being packed up, and other memories are being given away to friends, former students, libraries and teachers. They hope to move by summer's end.

The Fedelis want to be closer to family and replace frequent phone calls and photos with "being there." Their only granddaughter, Alexandria, is a championship swimmer at her high school. Gene's love for gardening will be shared with his daughter.

Gene and Shirley remember the beginnings of Pappagallo, when they bagged up bulk mailings from their living room. They later turned over that job to Adams Letter Service.

"We just wanted to have some communication among local Italians about Italy. We included recipes, featured regions of Italy, and filled the pages with news and entertainment about people and events in Rockford," Shirley said.

The free newsletter, which is supported by the Greater Rockford Italian American Association, grew to a mailing list of about 1,700. The newsletter travels as far as New Jersey and about 100 copies go west and southwest, where people have retired, but most issues are distributed in the Rockford area.

Shirley has written for the newsletter, as well as served as its editor. Her husband, Gene, is co-editor and was responsible mainly for behind-the-scenes organization and management.

The Fedelis were an integral and dynamic part of the Rockford Italian Community, involved in more causes than most people would dare to commit to in a lifetime.

Shirley was a sixth grade teacher at Bloom School for nine years, when she took some time off with her baby girl, Lisa. She went back to work in 1980 and taught religion and history at St. Peter's School until she retired in 2,000. Gene followed in his dad's footsteps by working for Barnes International for 38 years. He was also known for his annual palm-weaving courses throughout the community during Lent and his creative gift wrapping classes during the Christmas season. One of the causes close to Shirley's heart was her many years working at the Ethnic Heritage Museum, serving as its president most of those years and forty years as a member of Delta Kappa Gamma, having served as its vice president. They both have been greatly involved with GRIAA and have served as president of the organization.

As involved as the couple was in their community, being editors of a newsletter that reached out to the community was only natural.

"I enjoy writing, I enjoy history, and I love to read and do research. I've always been curious about the world in general," she said.

"When I was a teacher, I enjoyed the kids, the activities, the interaction and getting kids to think by making learning fun," she said.

The Fedelis are firm believers in making life happen – and that they did.

"When I think of saying 'goodbye,' it's a mix of wonderful and sad feelings. Good and bad is part of every life. Life is what you make of it, wherever you are."



Did You Know That...

The first woman in the world to receive a university degree was Italian? In 1678, Elena Lucrezia Cornaro received a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Padua where she studied ancient and modern languages, mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, and theology. When she died in 1684 at the age of 38, she was recognized as one of the most famous scholars of the civilized world. To honor her, the NIAF and NIAF board Secretary Agnes Vaghi sponsored two scholarships in her name for Italian American college women! Check this out if you are in need of a scholarship or see the scholarship listings in this issue of Pappagallo.



Late Italian Cardinal honored for helping rescue Jews during Holocaust

Jerusalem: The late archbishop of Florence, Italian Cardinal Elia Dalla Costa has been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem for the role he played in a widespread network set up to rescue Jews following the Nazi occupation of Italy. During WW II Florence was the scene of a major rescue mission in a joint effort by Jewish leaders and members of the Catholic rescuers as "the soul of this "activity of love"" Cardinal Dalla Costa guided initiated and encouraged Catholic clergy to participate in the network. He recruited rescuers from among the clergy, supplied letters to his activists so they could go to heads of monasteries and convents to ask them to shelter Jews, and sheltered fleeing Jews in his own palace for short periods until they were taken to safe places. Following the December 1943 arrest of the Jewish activist members of the network, the church under Cardinal Dalla Costa continued in its rescue efforts, despite the arrest and torture of some of the clergy. Through its joint work the network managed to save hundreds of local Jews as well as Jewish refugees from other countries. The title Righteous Among Nations is bestowed on those "few who helped Jews in the darkest time in their history". Those recognized receive a medal and a certificate of honor.

Italian Contributions to our earliest American history:

- William Paca from Maryland and Caesar Rodney of Delaware signed one of our most important documents, The Declaration of Independence!
- Three Italian Regiments with over 1500 men fought for our American independence.
- Captain Cosimo de Medici, Lieutenant James Bracco, Captain B. Tagliaferro and Lieutenant Nicola Talliaferro fought in the Continental Army!
- Francesco Vigo (1747-1836) whose name is our local Sons of Italy group is believed to be the first Italian to become an American citizen. He served as a colonel, spy, and financier during the American Revolution!
- Three of the first five war ships commissioned by the Continental Congress of the new American government, were named Christopher Columbus, John Cabot (check out his real name on Google) and Andrea Doria. Andrea Doria was a 16th century navy admiral from Genoa who was still fighting the Barbary pirates in his mid-80's!

Italian Trivia:

If you were in Italy where would you be if...
 ...you saw a huge circular building that held ancient games (city), (building)
 ...you visited a 15 foot statue on an Old Testament character (city)
 ...you saw the factory that makes Lancia and Fiats (city)
 ...you climbed a marble leaning tower (city)
 ...you visited the city where the Italian language was born (city)
 ...you took a photo of the "wedding cake" also known as the "typewriter" (city)
 ...you visited the home of Vulcan (country) (Answers on pae 14)

In Search of the Black Rooster

Sitting proudly in the heart of Chianti country is Greve, renamed in 1972 after the area's inclusion in the Chianti wine district. Almost midway between Florence and Siena to the south is the home of the Black Rooster.

The Black Rooster emblem is 700 years old and it is far more than a symbol. It is a proud designation and represents the strict government regulations, overseeing everything from the yield to production that upholds the reputation of *Chianti Classico*. Branded in 1384 as the emblem for the League of Chianti, today the label is placed on the neck of a bottle of wine from the *Chianti Classico* zone only!

But why a Black Rooster? Well, that is where the legend comes in... Red wine had been produced in this area since 1000 A.D. and Florence and Siena long feuded over rights to this region. Finally, around 1200, they agreed to end the feud with a competition.

Horsemen were to depart from the rival cities as hearing the crow of a rooster.

Wherever they met would determine the boundary lines and settle the dispute once and for all. While the Senesi chose a well-fed white rooster, the cunning Florentines chose a starving black rooster. On the day of the event the white rooster dutifully crowed at sunrise, but the poor hungry black rooster had begun to crow long before, thus giving the Florentine rider a considerable advantage. The Senesi horseman didn't get very far and borders were established with the region now belonging to Florence.

True or not, it makes a great story and that starving Black Rooster has been immortalized on every bottle of *Chianti Classico* since! Don't you think that he (and the cunning of the Florentines) (unless you from Siena) deserve a toast? *Salute!*





Rosie Scalise Sheridan

Rosie (Scalise) Sheridan was born on June 13, 1952. Her parents are Martha (DiBenedetto) Scalise and Carl John Scalise. Rosie's grandparents on her father's side were, Rosalie (Abate) Scalise, from Sambuca, Sicily and Carlo Scalise, from



Basaquino, Sicily. Her grandparents on her mother's side were Sam DiBenedetto from Vicari, Sicily and Carmela (Allotta) DiBenedetto from Tickfawm Louisiana.

Rosie has four siblings: Carl (John) Scalise, II, from Rockford, Illinois, Samuel Alex (Buddy) Scalise from Rockford, Illinois, Daniel Richard Scalise from Brush, Colorado and a twin sister, Patricia Ann (Scalise) Steinkamp from Longmont, Colorado.

Rosie married Craig Thomas Sheridan on May 30, 2003. Rosie's two daughters are Crystal Louise Woldford from Wheeling, Illinois and Trisha Lynn Woldford from Annapolis, Maryland. Craig's two children are Chad Thomas Sheriddan from Denver, Colorado and Tricia Ann Sheridan from Rockford, Illinois.

Rosie is active in her church and the community with the following groups:

- Member of St. Anthony of Padua Church
- Catholic Women's League Board Member
- CWL Charity Guild Co-Chair
- Member of Altar & Rosary Society of St. Anthony of Padua Church
- Ethnic Heritage Museum Board Member
- St. Mary's Good Time Club Member
- GRIAA (Greater Rockford Italian American Association) Board Member
- Amici Italiani Dance Troupe Member and Director
- Belvidere Girls Craft Group Member
- Ya-Yas Book Club Member

Rosie enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, reading, baking, crafts and gardening. Rosie's Sicilian passion is to promote and continue the tradition of St. Joseph Altars. She is anxious and willing to teach and work with anyone who would like to have a St. Joseph Altar. Rosie and her family host a St. Joseph Altar in their home every other year.

Rosie Scalise Sheridan is recognized for Giving Spirit in the Community

A single mom totally immersed in the lives and activities of her two children, Rose Scalise Sheridan remembers

when her girls were ready to leave home and a close friend asked what she does when she's not with her children.

"I clearly remember that day when she asked me what did I do for fun that didn't involve my children – and I couldn't think of anything," she said

That realization jolted her into action and Rosie became a member of the Amici Italiani Dance Troupe. Nine years ago, she married her husband, Craig, who also joined in the fun. A total of 17 years later, she became the dance director. From there, she was asked to be on the board of directors for the Greater Rockford Area Italian Association, the Ethnic Heritage Museum, and the Catholic Women's League. And there were other clubs, church activities, social gatherings and special events.

Her forte is event planning and fundraising. She has spearheaded dozens of fundraisers for a variety of causes and in all sizes, the biggest drawing a crowd of 600 people.

For all the ways in which Rosie has given to her community, she has been selected by the Ethnic Heritage Museum to be the Italian Woman of the Year. A reception in her honor will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. April 7th at the museum, 1129 South Main Street.

"There are so many worthy causes -- so many ways in which you can give a little bit of yourself to make a huge difference. I can't be involved in everything, but I can make time for what matters to me. Whether it's fate or destiny, I am most often motivated to do what I do because of family, friends and a love for my Italian heritage," she said.

"I'm a planner. Even with my own family and friends, I'm the first to offer my home for a gathering. It just comes naturally to me," she said.

The cause she says is most rewarding is recognizing those people who have been personally acquainted with breast cancer.

In 2001, Rosie was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her prayer for a cure was answered and she vowed to always show her thankfulness to God with a St. Joseph Altar every other year. The first altar was dedicated to breast cancer patients and survivors.

She hosted her sixth altar this year.

According to legend, the St. Joseph Altar originated in Sicily many centuries ago, during a period of drought and famine. In desperation, people turned to St. Joseph for help and intercession. When the rains came, and the crops prospered, their prayers were answered. In thanksgiving, the community made offerings to St. Joseph in the form of their most prized possession – food. They selected their finest grains, fruits, vegetables, seafood and wine and invited everyone to share in thanksgiving and festivity. The custom and devotion continues today.

"Most people who visit the altar are Italian and know what it means, but I want others to understand that it's not just about food, but about thanksgiving and tradition. There's a reason for everything on the altar and where it is placed," she said.

The week before the baking begins. Ten pounds of cocoa, 50 pounds of sugar, 35 dozen eggs, 30 pounds of margarine, and 175 pounds of flour are needed to make the 5,000 cookies to give to hundreds of people.

"It looks overwhelming, but if you take it step by step, a



(continued from page 13)

day at a time, it all comes together," she said. Rosie not only wants to be a host, she loves to teach others about the St. Joseph Altar and keep the tradition alive. "My mission is to see more altars in homes in Rockford. When I was growing up, you could go from one home to another to see altars. We will probably never get back to that because the local Italians don't all live in one place like they did at one time in Southwest Rockford." Rosie hosts an altar every other year because it takes that long to prepare. She takes advantage of sales throughout the year to buy what she needs for the altar. Friends will donate their time and help cook, and family will travel from all parts of the country to do their part. "I never know who I am going to meet. People are generous to St. Joseph and they want to bake and cook, bring supplies, or make a donation. So, it always seems to just take care of itself."

By Peggy Sagona Werner

Cuccidati Workshop!



On December 15, 2012 the new addition of the Ethnic Heritage Museum was the site of a cuccidati (fig) cookie demonstration. There were two sessions consisting of ten enthusiastic participants in each session or workshops. Rosie Sheridan, Colleen Gullo, and Gene and Shirley Fedeli were the demonstrators. Dough and fig filling were provided and students brought a cookie sheet and rolling pin. The fee for this wonderful Italian cookie making session was \$10.00. The money was then given to the museum.

Rosie and Colleen prepared a batch of dough and demonstrated how to roll the dough into narrow strips. They showed the amount of fig filling needed for each strip and how to shape into cookies. Then, it was the students turn to roll out the dough, fill it, and cut the cuccidati shapes. All were able to make enough cookies to fill their cookie sheets to take home and bake using the recipe given.

The discussions and conversation brought back many warm memories of childhood and the baking of this traditional Italian Christmas cookie. We hope all will continue to take the time to make the cookies and share the recipe with family and friends. We encourage you to put to use old family recipes and traditions and make new memoirs with your children and grandchildren.

By Colleen Gullo

Answers to Italian Trivia:

Rome, Coliseum
Florence
Turin
Pisa
Florence
Rome
Sicily/Italy (either acceptable)

Have you checked out our wonderful Rockford Public Library for...

We, the people... of Winnebago County, C. Hal Nelson, editor created for the Winnebago County Bicentennial Commission. It is no longer in print, but a great read about our Italian early settlers and their influence on our fair city of Rockford. It's winter! So cuddle up and read!

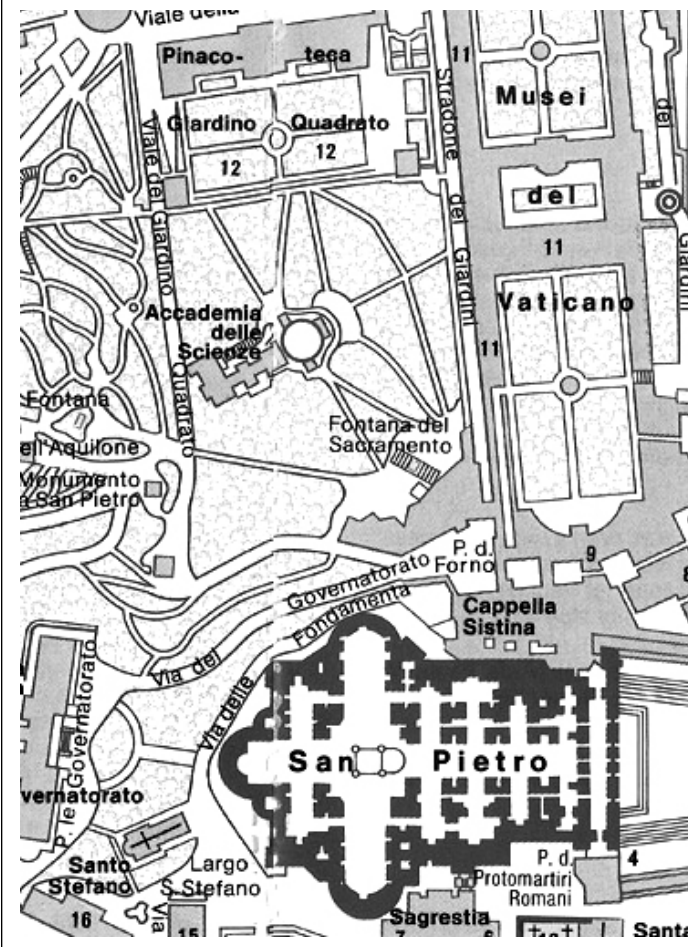
Places to Visit...

If you have not had the experience of visiting the amazing Cuneo Mansion & Gardens in the Chicago area, make sure to add it to your list of magnificent, exciting villas "a la vecchio Italia. Check out the address: Cuneo Mansion & Gardens 1350 N. Milwaukee Ave. Vernon Hills, IL 60061 phone: 1 847-362-3042

Did You Know?

The world's smallest country is located in Italy. It is Vatican City, which covers only one-sixth of a square mile.

The origin of Italian surnames dates from the end of the 1500's when parish priests were obligated to register parishioners with their Christian names and surnames in order to stop marriages between blood relatives.





Hall of Fame
and
Special Recognition Award Banquet



Saturday, October 12, 2013

Franchesco's Restaurant

6:00 p.m. Social Hour

7:00 p.m. Dinner

Music provided by The Vince Chiarelli Combo

8:00 p.m. Awards Program

Menu

Mixed Field Greens: Tomato, Cucumber, Carrots and House Dressing

Mostoccioli in Bolognaise Sauce

Choice #1 Combo Entree:

Chicken Oregano

(lightly washed with special Herbs and Spices and served with a Lemon and Oregano Sauce)

Parmesan Crusted Tilapia

(Farm-raised Tilapia topped with an Artichoke Cream Sauce)

Roast Sirloin

(Tender Sirloin, Sliced and topped with a Roasted Shallot Sauce)

Julienne Carrots, Zucchini & Squash with Red Pepper & Basil

Choice #2 Vegetarian Entree:

Ratatouille

(Zucchini, Eggplant, Red Bell Peppers, Ground Tomatoes, Garlic, Basil and Goat Cheese,
wrapped in a Crepe and topped with Swiss Cheese and Pomodoro Sauce)

Dessert of homemade Cannoli Cake

\$30.00 per person

R.S.V.P as soon as possible

Please make your check payable to GRIAA. Send the following information:

Name _____ Phone _____

Number Attending _____

Entrée Choice #1 _____ Entrée Choice #2 _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Mail to: GRIAA, 7020 Cliekman Road, Rockford, Illinois 61101

**If you have any questions, please contact Rosie Scalise Sheridan
at 815 962-9551 or sheridanrosie@yahoo.com**

Greater Rockford Italian American Association - GRIAA
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Rockford, IL 61110-0415

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Your editors:
Shirley Martignoni Fedeli,
Gene Fedeli, Mike Doyle
and Peggy Sagona Werner



GRIAA—Greater Rockford Italian American Association Seeking Italian American Hall of Fame and Special Recognition Nominations

GRIAA is accepting nominations for persons of Italian heritage whose exemplary lives have made significant contributions to the community in the arts, sciences, business, industry, education and government. Other considered categories are civic, volunteer or philanthropic activities. Such contributions should reflect a notable community impact, and highest standards and ideals. The primary difference between Hall of Fame and Special Recognition is that the Hall of Fame candidate must have positively impacted the Italian American community.

To print Nomination form Go to www.griaa.org click on Committee then Italian American Hall of Fame and Special Recognition.

It is not necessary to specify which honor you are nominating the individual for. The committee will decide based on the provided information.

Completed forms must be mailed to:

GRIAA
P.O. Box 1915
Rockford, Illinois 61110-0415

Deadline is on or before August 15, 2013

For further, information go to www.griaa.org or contact Whitey Marinelli (815-227-9424) or Frank Perrecone (815-962-2700).

The induction and recognition ceremony will take place at the awards banquet on Saturday evening October 12, 2013 at Francesco's Restaurant.
**To reserve a seat for the banquet print out
Reservation form on page 15.**