

PAPPAGALLO



Funded by the Greater Rockford Italian American Association - GRIAA
P.O. Box 1915 • Rockford, Illinois 61110-0415

Fall 2013

October ... Italian Heritage Month

Celebrate with us!
**Greater Rockford Italian American Association
GRIAA**

Presents its annual
**Italian American Hall of Fame
& Recognition Banquet**

John Canova, Karen Cantele, Joseph A. Cavallaro Elected to Hall of Fame...
Artist Lisa Trapani Frost to Receive Special Award

Three individuals who have given countless hours and generous contributions to the Italian American community in the Rockford area are being inducted into the Greater Rockford Italian American Association Hall of Fame on Saturday, October 12, in a dinner ceremony and celebration at Franchesco's Restaurant in Rockford. The three new members of the Hall of Fame are John Canova, Joseph Cavallero, and Karen Cantele. In addition, Lisa Trapani Frost will receive a Special Recognition Award.

John Canova's involvement with Rockford's Italian community dates back to the original Festa Italiana. "We had the first few Italian festas downtown," Canova said. "It was less than successful. Nobody knew it was there. I met with Bob Corirossi and Whitey Marinelli, and we said, well, what about holding it at Boylan? I was teaching at Boylan at the time. We ended up talking to the principal, and that's how we got that going."



John Canova

And the Festa Italiana is still going strong, celebrating its 35th year in 2013. Canova was the chairman of the Columbus Day Committee, the forerunner of GRIAA, and served as Chairperson for the Festa Italiana in 1985. "I worked on the Italian Festa every year until recently," Canova said. "I also had a hand in resurrecting the Italian Open Golf Play Day."

Canova is retired after working for several years at Boylan as teacher, dean of students and director of finances and finished his career in the public sector as assistant superintendent of schools in the Bensenville and Harlem districts. He and his wife Roseann have one

daughter Kim, two sons, Joey and Johnny, and two grandchildren, Morgan Rose and Dominic Joseph. Canova is looking forward to visiting his ancestors' home in Sambuca, Sicily, someday.

Although Karen Cantele has German and Swedish roots, in her heart she is 100 percent Italian. Just ask the people who have come to know her and have found her willing to help at every turn.

"What drove me to nominate her is everything she does for everyone else," said her daughter Sarah Hays about her nomination. "She'll drop everything to rush in a help someone, to go and make something happen. There's such dedication in making things happen and working with other people that they, in turn, help in whatever she is trying to accomplish."



Karen Cantele

Such involvement and willingness to help others led her to be inducted into the Italian American Hall of Fame.

Cantele is married to Antonio Cantele, whose family came from a small northern Italian town near Venice. Antonio's parents, Antonio and Bortola Cantele, were charter members of the Venetian Club, so Tony and Karen also became involved as members of the club. "After I joined, I became a part of the council and got involved in fund-raisers and activities," Cantele said. "Then the next thing I knew, I became president of the women's auxiliary. I love it!"

Cantele, who is the choral director at Belvidere High School, leads a singing group called Swing Productions that performed at a Mass at Festa Italiana in 1993. From there, she met Gene and Shirley Fedeli and her involvement with GRIAA's largest event began. Cantele has three children – Sarah Hays, Anna Cantele, and Thomas Cantele. Her youngest, Anna, got involved with the Amici Italiani dance troupe as well. About 12 years ago, Shirley asked if Cantele would take over the Culture Tent at the Festa. From there, she became a member of the Executive Committee and, in 2007, she was General Chairperson of the Festa. "It was a bit daunting, but you have a lot of support," she said. "The Executive Committee is amazing to work with. You do your best and hope it all goes well."

Cantele serves as the treasurer for Rockford's Italian Sister City, and was an integral part of the Ferentino

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(Italian Heritage Month continued)

Mayoral Delegation visit to Rockford in 2006. She also hosted the Ferentino Student Delegation for a day of singing and sharing at Belvidere High School in 2007.

Even though she is not Italian, she understands the culture well, especially its family traditions. "I didn't have that," she said. "I didn't know my grandparents, and I lost my parents early. Meeting all of these people who are part of GRIAA has been so special. The community aspect of it with everybody helping makes it feel like a big wonderful family. And Tony and I really wanted to start preserving that for our family."

"She does so much for everyone," said her daughter. "She is involved in so many things. She just doesn't stop."

When Joseph A. Cavallaro was 75-years-old, he visited his parents' hometown of Linguaglossa, Sicily, which is near Catania, and he was surprised at what he found. Rather, what he heard. "He recognized that he spoke Sicilian well, but not Italian," said his daughter Vinni (Cavallaro) Farrell. "So before he went, he went to Rockford College and took courses on how to speak the Italian language. He had a dedication to that language and that tradition that was unparalleled."



Joseph A. Cavallaro

That carried over into the affection he had for his family. Being Italian, said Vinni, had "such a profound and permanent effect on his children and grandchildren." In her nomination, Vinni noted that her father never held political office, ran a company, or was recognized in arts and sciences. It was his dedication to all things Italian that led to his induction into the GRIAA Hall of Fame.

Joseph and his wife Maria (LaLoggia) had three children, Vinni, Carmi and Joe. Vinni has two children (Kimberly and Robyn), Carmi three (Lisa, Monica and Marc), and Joe three (Angela, Elizabeth and Amanda). In addition, he had three great-grandchildren Tess, Brynn, and Dominic. In 1995, when his granddaughter Lisa Rongere was selected as the Columbus Day Queen, she wrote "With My Eyes Closed, an Essay of Love, Heritage, and Tradition." In it, she described colorfully the impact her "Nanno" had on her life through holidays, celebrations, and her Italian heritage. She concluded her essay with this:

"With eyes open, I see how important my Italian heritage is.

"It isn't something that I have or own, but something that has been given to me.

"Handed down from generation to generation.

"A heritage special and precious. I am simply the caretaker for my generation."

Joseph was active in his church, St. Anthony of Padua,

where he served as president of the Holy Name Society. He was one of the organizers of Festa Italiana and the Columbus Day Committee, which was the forerunner of GRIAA. He was also involved with the St. Joseph's Altar at the Graham-Ginestra Home.

But his most significant impact was on his family. In her nomination, Vinni wrote: "(For) all he has done for the church and the Italian community pales in relationship to what he has done ... in teaching his children and grandchildren the true meaning of pride in their heritage. He was teaching the Italian language to one of his granddaughters before she was three and (took) time with his only grandson to show him what a special relationship there is. He instilled in his children the importance of community involvement through the sharing of talents given to us by God. He (was), without compare, the absolute in ambassadors to the Italian nationality."

Joseph passed away before he could achieve official Hall of Fame recognition. He would have celebrated his 100th birthday this year and was a Hall of Fame member nonetheless. "For non-Italian people, it is impossible to translate or explain to them the visceral feeling you have when you see your relatives," Vinni said. "My dad was an amazing man. He would always say, 'Smile, God loves you.' That led us all ... that faith and family, in that order."

Special Recognition goes to Artist Lisa Trapani Frost

Lisa Trapani Frost, recognized locally for her art design, community involvement, and leadership, has earned the Special Recognition Award for 2013 by the Great Rockford Italian American Association. The daughter of Joseph and Martha Trapani, she graduated from Boylan High School and earned her degree from Northern Illinois University. After teaching art in the Rockford Public School District, she followed her dream by opening the Lisa Frost Studio. Examples of her distinctively bold and colorful art can be seen on her website www.lisafroststudio.com.



Lisa Trapani Frost

Along the way, she has touched many lives through her art. One of the most telling came after she taught at NIU's Visual Arts Camp "Summer in the Art" in 2001. The result was a show at which she charged admission, with the funds helping to finance art scholarships. As of 2012, she had funded 57 scholarships to the camp. In 2011, she received NIU's College of Visual and Performing Arts Alumni of the Year Award. She also served on the boards of the Rockford Public Library and the Discovery Center Children's Museum. She was a member of the Junior League of Rockford for several years and served as its



president in 2004-05.

Frost is married to Kevin Frost and they have two daughters, Maddie and Libbie.

In 2008, she entered a partnership with a national gift company Demdaco to develop a colorful line of products for the home, for holidays and for children. These products are sold nationally and internationally. She also started a community event known as Frost and Friends, which is a holiday shopping event that showcases artist and vendors. The event draws people from the Chicago area, Wisconsin and Iowa to Rockford.

She promotes her art through internships at the lisA fRosT studio. The interns are known as the Frostettes.

The Relics of St. Anthony of Padua Visit Rockford



Seven hundred fifty years ago, 32 years after his death, the mortal remains of St. Anthony, a most holy and magnificent preacher, were exhumed. He had been buried in a small church but St.

Bonaventure directed that his remains be moved to the new basilica built in his honor. As expected, his body had mostly been returned to dust, but, miraculously, those at the unearthing found that his tongue was intact as it had been when he was speaking of the wonders of God. His tongue can be seen today in a golden reliquary at that basilica in Padua where he is buried, along with other items from his time, including his cloak.

There are those rare occasions when you don't have to book a trip to Italy to see major relics of St. Anthony. On Friday, June 14, 2013, for the second time since 1995, some of his relics were brought to St. Anthony of Padua Church, his namesake church in south Rockford, as part of a nine-day tour of Illinois and Wisconsin. Following each of the two Masses that day, Catholics lined up to spend time before the beautiful traveling reliquary.

In explaining relics, Rev. James Ciaramitaro, OFM Conv., pastor of St. Anthony Church, said, "As Christians, we believe the soul of every baptized person becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Part of every Catholic funeral rite is to incense the casket to show one last act of reverence for the body that was once the dwelling place of God. So it is not difficult to understand why we would especially vener-



ate the earthly remains of a saint in whom the activity of the Holy Spirit flourished."

Respect for relics dates back to the earliest days of Christianity when followers of Christ were persecuted and had to celebrate Mass in the catacombs (underground cemeteries) in places like Rome. "It was safe for them to meet there because the pagans were afraid of death," Fr. Jim said. "Of course, with our belief in the resurrection of the dead, the Christians were not afraid of death, nor were they afraid of the remains of the dead, who were interred there. For altars, they used the sarcophagus of the martyrs, and this began the veneration of saint's relics and the later custom of placing small relics within the altar table."

Relics play a part in the spiritual journey of St. Anthony's own life. He was born Fernando Martins de Bulhoes in 1195 in Lisbon, Portugal, to a family of means. He was already well educated and an Augustinian Canon when, at 25, he prayed before the remains of five Franciscan martyrs who were killed for preaching to Muslims in North Africa. Their relics were being returned to Italy through the Iberian Peninsula, and they were given places of honor in the chapel of the residence where the future saint was living at the time. He prayed before the relics all night to discern if he should follow in their footsteps. When the dawn came, he chose to enter the Franciscan Order. The year was 1221 and he took the name Anthony. He asked that he might also become a martyr by preaching in North Africa. Fr. Jim noted, "God had other plans because St. Anthony became seriously ill in Africa. On his return voyage home, his ship was tossed by a huge storm and diverted to Sicily. Traveling up the Italian peninsula, he met St. Francis in Assisi. He spent the rest of his life preaching in Northern Italy and in France."



St. Anthony died on Tuesday, June 13, 1231. That date is his annual feast and public devotions to him are traditionally held on Tuesdays. He remains a popular and beloved saint and is the patron of those searching for lost items.

Boylan's Italian Club

Boylan's Italian Club begins meetings in October Jimmy Sartino, the adviser for the Italian Club at Boylan High School, reports that his group will begin having regular meetings in October. Members will meet every Wednesday after school to plan two upcoming events – a bocce tournament and a bonfire. One of the items on the agenda for October meetings is a field trip to Milwaukee in November.



**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 Bolognese 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 Clikeman Road, Rockford, Illinois 61101
If you have any questions, please contact Rosie Scalise Sheridan
at 815 962-9551 or sheridanrosie@yahoo.com**



Fedeli Open House

A bishop, a former city mayor and the current state's attorney were there. So were friends, family and dozens of other well wishers. The occasion on Sunday, August 11, 2013, at the Radisson Hotel in Rockford, was a happy -- yet sad -- affair because while Rockford's Italian-American community loves Gene and Shirley Fedeli, all were were saddened to see them leave for Michigan.

People began to arrive for the farewell open house for the Fedelis before its starting time of 2 p.m. and many lingered well past the closing time of 4 p.m. The guests of honor, long-time contributors to the Greater Rockford Italian American Association, greeted people with hugs, laughs, and tears. The line to meet them snaked through almost the entire length of the room. Nearly 300 people attended the event.

However, it was a festive gathering as people were able to spend a few moments with the Fedelis, and then make their way to tables of food. At one end were hors d'oeuvres, while piles of Italian cookies covered the tables in

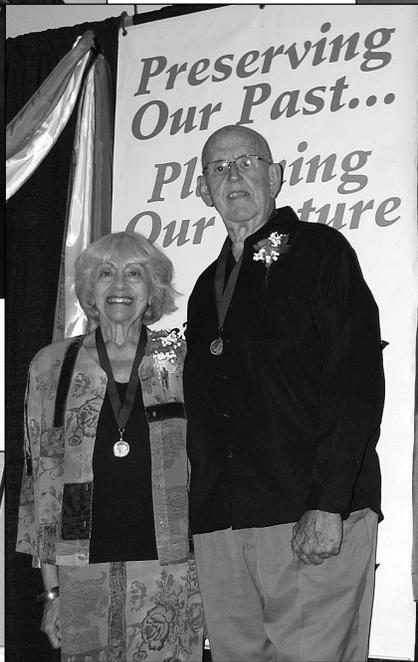
the opposite corner.

During the open house, GRIAA President Frank Perrecone spoke of the couple's tremendous altruistic contributions to the Rockford area. Unable to hold back tears, Gene spoke of the gifts that we all are able to contribute, and he called on the young people in the audience to take leadership to be the gatekeepers for the next generation in keeping alive our wonderful heritage and traditions. The Fedelis were presented with a plaque and a gift from GRIAA that will be a part of the Ethnic Heritage Museum in South Rockford, in which they were very involved. The museum will be building a flag garden on the south side of the museum. When it is created, an Italian flag in the garden will be dedicated in their names.

The Fedelis moved to St. Chair Shores, Michigan, to be near their daughter, Lisa, and her family. They are eager and excited to watch their granddaughter Alexandra Hughes compete at high school and state level swimming events.



GRIAA President Frank Perrecone with Shirley and Gene Fedeli before the start of the Open House



Shirley and Gene on the podium prior to the start of the event



Shirley with former Rockford Park District leader Webbs Norman



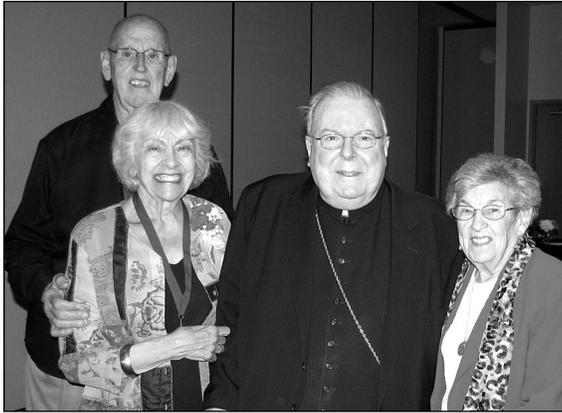
Rosie Sheridan shows off the dessert table



Gene accepts a gift of a bottle of wine



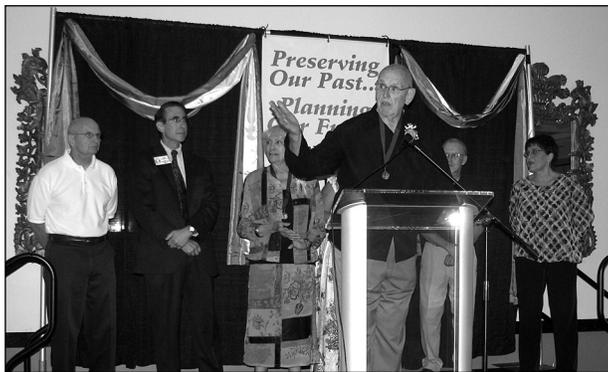
Fedeli Open House (continued)



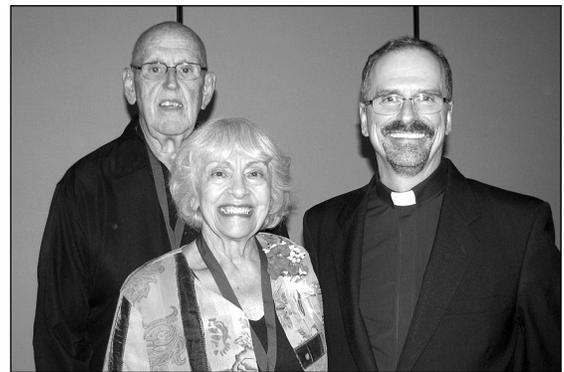
Gene and Shirley meet with former Bishop Doran and Rose Zammuto



Gene talks to former Rockford mayor Doug Scott



Gene tells the audience that he is hopeful that the young people take on the responsibility of following traditions



Gene and the Rev. Jim Ciaramitaro, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church

GRIAA's Genealogy Project Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families

By Frank Perrecone

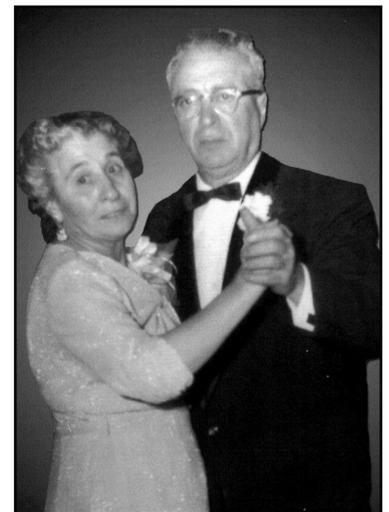
The Greater Rockford Italian American Association (GRIAA) is offering you the chance to share your family's history in a book expected to be published in 2016. GRIAA is reaching out to all Rockford Italian-American families. Under the guidance of Gene and Shirley Fedeli, GRIAA kicked off at Festa Italiana 2012 a four-year project entitled Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families. We want your family history included! Its easy to write. And our book will include your submitted photograph.

For example, you may want to include in your family history where your immigrant parents or grandparents lived in Italy, the year or approximate year they arrived in the United States and port of entry, the reason for settling in Rockford, the streets or addresses at which they resided and their jobs. You might also want to include information about your family, memorable family stories such as a living or growing up in the old neighborhood, attending St. Anthony Church or school or any other stories you want to share. As you can see, you and your family already possess the information we are looking for, so there is no need to conduct extensive research.

Posted at GRIAA.org is a "How to Guide" to assist you in

writing your family's immigration history. Once at our website, click on Committees and then click on Cultural and Education Committee and scroll down. We even provide examples of family histories previously submitted. We will put your family history on our website shortly after we receive it.

If your family is not included in GRIAA's book, Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families, it is because no one from your family submitted information to us. Be part of Rockford Italian-American history by sharing with us your family history. GRIAA expects to publish its book of family histories in 2016.



Mr. and Mrs. Sam LaRosa

For further information, please contact me at 815/962-2700 or frankaperrecone@aol.com.



Pope to visit St. Francis' Birthplace in Assisi

Pope Francis, who took his name to honor one of our most admired saints, will visit the birthplace of his namesake in Assisi for the first time on St. Francis Feast Day, October 4.

The pope said he chose his name because St. Francis of Assisi devoted his life to the poor, a virtue the new pope is seeking to accomplish during his papacy. Shortly after his election, Pope Francis said that choosing St. Francis "reinforces my spiritual tie with this land, where – as you know – my family's origins lie," according to the Catholic News Service.

Archbishop Domenico Sorrentino of Assisi is thrilled about the visit, saying "it was a great sign" of the pope's benevolence and consideration.

"It could be no other way for someone who took the name of Francis."

Those who have been in



The Upper Basilica of St. Francis

Assisi are awe-struck by the basilica, the saint's tomb, and the surrounding undulating hills that make up the city of Assisi. Francis Bernardone was born there in 1181, the son of a wealthy cloth merchant. He lived a life without want. While a young man, he fought for his province of Umbria against Perugia. Captured and imprisoned, it was while in captivity that he received a vision from Christ and changed his life completely. He took a vow of poverty, leaving all of his possessions and past life behind.

Living off the generosity of others, he wore old clothes but talked only of peace and rewards granted by God to the poorest of the poor. After he began to attract followers, his was blessed by the pope and founded the Friars Minor or Franciscans in 1209. In 1212, he founded the Poor Clares with St. Clare of Assisi. The Poor Clare convent in Rockford is found in that order.

He died on October 4, 1226, in Portiunca, Italy, and became a saint within two years.

Pope Francis, the first pope to take this name, is looking forward to visiting the hilly city and that he "intends to have a very comprehensive visit that lets him walk in the footsteps of St. Francis, along his spiritual path, the path of his conversion," said Archbishop Sorrentino.

The pope said he took the name because St. Francis of Assisi was so devoted to the poor, a virtue he wanted to be reminded of throughout his papacy. He told journalists shortly after his election that he was inspired to take his name because he was "the man of poverty, the man of

peace, the man who loves and protects creation."

Such words evoke the kind of tradition of peace and understanding that is part of Assisi's history. In 1982,



Pope John Paul II called all of the world's religious leaders to come for an inter-faith gathering in Assisi. This meeting of religious leaders included Rabbis, ministers, imams, Native American shamans, and Greek Orthodox priests, among others. Since then, Assisi has been called *la citta' della pace* – the City of Peace.

The message of peace can be seen on the lawn in the Upper Basilica. A hedge, pruned to form the word "pax" is located between the structure and a contemporary statue of the young Francesco on horseback following his return from war against Perugia, his body betraying his defeat. But, soon enough, he will embrace peace.

The basilica consists of two churches – the Lower Church, construction of which began in 1228 shortly after St. Francis' death, and the Upper Church, built about 50 years later. While both churches are expansively covered with some of Europe's most beautiful frescoes, the Lower Church is dim, while the Upper Church is brighter with some of the oldest stained glass in the world, which can be seen behind the apse. The difference becomes clear because the Lower Church is where the crypt of St. Francis is located, his body in a stone coffin. The walls of the Upper Church are richly decorated with frescoes of St. Francis' life. There are 28 in all, and they are wonder to see. Visitors and pilgrims strain their necks to get in all of the details, of which there are many. One memorable one



The Upper Basilica of St. Francis



Pope to visit St. Francis' Birthplace in Assisi (continued)

shows Francesco's rejection of worldly goods. If you study it well, you can see Francis stripping naked before his father. However, he is covered by the bishop, which completes the transition of a man of the world becoming a man of the church.

St. Francis was declared the patron saint of Italy in 1939, and the Franciscan order is the largest of the orders in the Catholic Church.



Located in the hills, Assisi's streets are similar to San Francisco

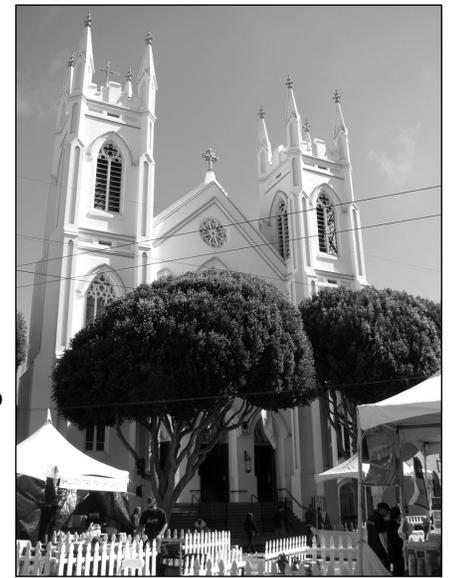
You don't have to travel to Italy to see a shrine to one of our most beloved saints. The National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi is in the North Beach neighborhood of San Francisco. San Francisco, of course, is named for him. The stunning white church began as the Church of St. Francis of Assisi and was the first parish established in California in June, 1849. Its original purpose was to serve the Spanish and Mexican citizens and military and to bring Christianity to the Native Americans of the area.

Although it survived the Great Earthquake of 1906, the Great Fire that followed destroyed the roof and interior. After restoration in 1919, it served the North Beach area as the parish church until it was closed in 1994. Four years later, it reopened as the Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi, and, in 1999, was designated a National Shrine by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Served by the Capuchin Franciscans, the shrine features beautiful murals that depict many of the significant events in the life of St. Francis.



Birds can be seen on the roof of a stone building below the Basilica of St. Francis. This area features many of St. Francis' beloved creatures.

As perhaps the most celebrated saint, St. Francis would be a real celebrity today, his picture making the cover of People magazine. And if it was, he probably would be surrounded by animals. One of the most touching frescoes in the Upper Basilica in Assisi is his sermon to the birds. In the fresco, St. Francis is surrounded by birds who are listening to him teach. His head is enveloped in a halo. When you get away from the bustle that is part of any major tourist attraction, you can really be wrapped in the glow that radiates even today from St. Francis. In a quiet moment, waiting for the people in our tour to gather, I found myself leaning on the wall of a winding road that opened up to the Umbrian countryside. I heard a chattering below me, and, as I looked down, I could see birds everywhere. St. Francis must have been smiling.



The National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi in San Francisco

Ethnic Heritage Museum

Memorable Stories from WWII on display through November 11 at the Ethnic Heritage Museum

Italians from Rockford who served in World War II are being recognized in a special display at the Ethnic Heritage Museum. The exhibit "Memorable Stories from WWII" runs through November 10, 2013, in the Italian Gallery at the museum, located at 1129 S. Main St. Men and women who served during the second world war are being honored, along with those with Irish and Polish backgrounds.

The exhibit features U.S. Army field boots from that period, along with signal flags, an Army Hell Cats dress uniform, a Navy dress uniform, and other items. Those who attend also can hear the story about a young woman who enlisted in the Waves against her mother's wishes.

The display is open to the public on Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. through November 10. Admission is \$10 a family, \$5 for individuals and \$3 for students. For information, contact the museum at 815.962.7402.



**The Abbey of San Fruttuoso
(Abazia di San Frantuoso)**

**Secluded Abbey of San Fruttuoso
hard to find, but also hard to forget**

Two unusual sites await an adventurous traveler on the Italian Riviera between the villages of Camogli and Portofino in the Province of Liguria. The first attraction is the Abbey of San Fruttuoso, an 11th century structure that is accessible only by water or by foot. The other is Il Cristo degli Abissi, a submerged bronze statue of Jesus Christ.

The abbey is located where the mountains of Portofino Regional Park meet the Liguarian Sea. It is notched into the hillside and features a small but popular beach. While the hiking trail is said to be a challenge, there are ferries that run every hour from the nearby villages of Rapallo, Camogli, Santa Marherita Ligure or Portofino in the tourist season. Some recent visitors have noted how crowded this little abbey has become, so other suggest taking in the sun at the small beach which features some of the clearest water seen.

The water is so clear that visitors can look down 60 feet and see the bronze statue that was submerged in August, 1954. The work features Jesus with his arms upraised. Versions of it are found in other museums, some even under water. The sculpture was created by Guido Galleti following a suggestions by a diver named Duilio Mercante. It is said to be placed near the site where Dario Gonzatti, the first Italian to use SCUBA gear, reportedly died in 1947. Because corrosion and crustaceans caused severe damage to the sculpture over the years, it was removed from the sea in 2003. Upon restoration, it was returned the next year. A replica of the statue can be seen at the abbey.

**A first-hand lesson
in the language** By Mike Doyle
*No capischo Italian?
Don't worry.
Neither did we*

In June 2008, my wife and I, and our next-door neighbors Peter and Deb Hightower were going through the boarding process at Civitavecchia, the port of Rome where our cruise ship was embarking for a 10-day tour of Italy, Sicily, Greece, and Turkey. When we presented our passports, I firmed up my courage and decided to try my hand at speaking Italian.



"Come si chiama? Giada?" I said to the young woman. "Si. My name is Giada," she replied.

It was my first true conversation using Italian words I learned while growing up in Rockford. What I learned from that trip and a second trip to Italy and Sicily three years later, was that knowing certain phrases helped, especially in touristy and well traveled areas. The four of us did struggle with the language later on that trip when we tried to board a train near our hotel in Rome. These Romans were not as patient with Americans (nor was the taxi driver who ignored my suggestions of a faster route to the Vatican).

The most common phrases that you can become comfortable with are the simple greetings.

Buono giorno for "good morning," and buona sera for "good evening."

It was common to say caio for "hello" and "goodbye," and grazie for "thank you." And it took only a few times to realize that prego meant "you're welcome" and not a reference to canned sauce.

On our second trip, Nora and I became accustomed to having cappuccino in the morning. At home, we set up our coffee maker to have it ready when we awaken, so we are used to having coffee the first thing in the morning. So, on most mornings at our hotels, I would go to the cucina to

get two cappuccinos to go. Most of the time, the cups were placed on a tray that had linen and other colorful items like flowers.

There were times when the hotel didn't offer that, so I had to adjust. We stayed three nights at the Hotel Regno on the Via Del Corso in Rome. While it had a wonderful continental breakfast, it did not offer cappuccino to go before it opened. But I did find a little store down the





street that was open early. However, the shopkeeper did not understand the phrase “to go.”

“To go?” he said, as if he was supposed to go somewhere. Finally, I fumbled through phrases until he understood that “to take” meant I wasn’t drinking two cups of coffee at his shop. Since then, I have figured out a better term to use when you want to take an item to go.

Try using *da portar via*, which means “for the road.” You might be a smile instead of a quizzical look.

Here is a quick conversation helper:

My name is *mi chialo* (mee)(kee-ah-moh)

What is your name? *come si chiama?* (koh-mech)(see)(kee-ah-mah)

I am American *Io sono Americano* (ee-oh)(soh-noh)(ah)(mer)(ree)(kah)(noh)

OK, the guide book I borrowed this from actually had a pronunciation of *Americano* ... as if the person you’re talking to hasn’t figured that out?

Hotels, restaurants and shops in the most popular and touristy cities are more accustomed to visitors. In our two trips to Italy, the most communication problems we had with hotel desk clerks were in Palermo. Despite the language differences, one clerk was able to suggest a restaurant that was so good we went back a second time.

Restaurant menus are genuinely easy to read because we are so familiar with Italian dishes. But what can be confusing is how many menus are structured with separate items under *antipasto*, *primo*, *secondo*, and *dolce*.

Antipasto is clearly the appetizer, while *primo* is the first course, which is quite often the pasta dish. The proteins often make up the *secondo* or main course, and *dolce* or dessert is where you find your wonderful cannolis. While people can order



from each course, it is common to make a selection from *primo* or *secondo* only.

On our second trip to Rome, Nora and I went to a restaurant in the Jewish Quarter that was so out of the way our taxi driver couldn’t find it. It was tucked into a corner of a square with only a small sign out front. We walked in at 8 p.m. to find it was empty. It was just that we were early. It was truly a neighborhood restaurant and none of the workers in the place spoke a single word of English. However, we had one of the best meals of our trip and were treated very well by our server and the owners, who called a taxi for us when we were finished.

After a while, two men were seated at a nearby table, and they soon became aware that we were Americans. After dinner, I ordered an espresso and Nora a cappuccino. One of the men overheard our order, leaned our way and said in a friendly way, “I tell my American friends that it is forbidden to order a cappuccino after 2 p.m.” We all laughed at that.

As we left, we said, “Grazie.” “Prego,” was the reply.



Recipes

Fall, winter recipes With an Italian twist

Here are some seasonal recipes that you may not have heard of – although all of us should know about Pannetone. The source is Albert Skaronea’s “A Gourmet Trip Thru Italy” that was printed in 1976.

Ricotta Cheese Apple Pie

- Pastry to line deep 9-inch pie pan
- 3 cups thinly sliced apples
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup ricotta
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1-1/2 teaspoons grated lemon peel

Pre-heat oven to 425 degrees. Line the pie pan with pastry, trim and flute the edges. Turn the sliced apples in, sprinkle with ¼ cup sugar mixed with cinnamon and nutmeg. Beat eggs slightly, combine with ricotta, ½ cup sugar and the cream, salt, and lemon peel. Mix and pour over



the apples covering evenly. Bake for 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to moderate, 350 degrees, and bake 30 minutes longer. Let cool. Makes 5-6 servings.

Zucchini Nut Loaf

1 cup grated unpeeled zucchini
 1 cup sugar
 1 egg
 ½ cup vegetable oil
 1-1/2 cups flour
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ¼ teaspoon baking powder
 ½ teaspoon baking soda
 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 ½ teaspoon nutmeg
 ¼ teaspoon grated lemon rind
 ½ cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Beat together zucchini, sugar, and egg. Add the oil and mix well. Sift flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Stir in lemon rind. Stir dry ingredients into zucchini mixture. Fold in pecans. Pour into a greased 8-1/2x4-1/2 inch bread pan. Bake in 325-degree oven for 60-65 minutes or until well done. Cool 10 minutes in pan. Turn out on a rack and cool completely. Wrap in plastic wrap and store overnight before slicing.

Italian Style Roast Turkey

1 12-pound turkey (or the size of your choice)
 Salt and pepper
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1 tablespoon dried celery leaves
 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
 1 tablespoon dried basil
 5-6 tablespoons vegetable oil or butter
 2 cups water

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Rinse (if you choose to), drain and dry the turkey. Remove gizzards from the cavity and rub lightly with salt. In a small bowl, blend minced garlic, celery leaves, chopped parsley, dried basil and vegetable oil. Blend well. Rub cavity of turkey with the mixture, applying evenly throughout the inside. Do the same on the outside skin by brushing the balance of the oil and seasoning mixture. (Adjust the amount of vegetable oil if necessary). Place turkey, breast side up, in a roasting pan. Sprinkle lightly with pepper. Add 2 cups water and 4 table-

spoons of vegetable oil to the bottom of the roasting pan, distributing evenly around the base of the turkey. Note: This flavored with the drippings from the turkey will be used in making the gravy. Place in 325-degree oven. Baste turkey occasionally with the pan drippings. Cover turkey with foil until two-thirds done. Remove foil and let the turkey brown. Note: You may leave turkey uncovered until two-thirds done, then place foil on turkey to prevent excessive browning. A 12-pound turkey usually takes 3-1/2 to 4 hours of roasting time.

Christmas Eve Cake

6 eggs separated
 ½ cup sugar, sifted
 2 tablespoons orange juice
 Grated rind of 1 orange
 2 tablespoons white wine
 1 cup cake flour, sifted 3 times
 ½ teaspoon baking powder
 ½ teaspoon salt
 2 tablespoons fine sugar
 ½ cup chocolate sprinkles
 ¼ cup candied pineapple, finely chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat egg yolks over warm water until very thick and lemon colored, about 10 minutes. Transfer beaten egg yolks to a large mixing bowl. Beat sugar gradually in. Add orange juice, rind and wine. Mix well. Fold in sifted flour, baking powder and salt. Blend. Beat egg whites with a pinch of salt until soft peaks are formed. Gradually beat in 2 tablespoons of fine sugar. Fold gently into batter. Fold chocolate sprinkles and chopped pineapple into cake batter. Pour into an ungreased or oblong baking pan. Bake in a 350 oven for 30-40 minutes or until the cake is slightly golden and the top is gently firm to the touch. Do not overbake. Cool. Invert on a cake rack for 1 hour.

Filling

1 cup heavy sweet cream
 3 tablespoons powdered sugar
 1 teaspoon crème de cocoa liqueur
 1 cup chopped nuts
 1/3 cup grated chocolate
 Beat cream until stiff. Add sugar crème de cocoa. Fold into chopped nuts and chocolate. Cut cooled cake in half. Spread half of whipped cream mixture between layers. Pike remaining half on top of cake. Sprinkle with shaved chocolate curls if desired. You may use 2 large 9-inch layer or 3 8-inch layer pans in place of the suggested pan.



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Italian Heritage Month Mark your calendar

- October 12, 2013, Saturday, **GRIAA Banquet Hall of Fame and Outstanding Awards** Franchesco's Restaurant
- October 13, 2013 (Sunday), **GRIAA Columbus Day**, St. Anthony of Padua Church, 11:30 a.m. Mass, All are invited. Following Mass, a short ceremony will be held in the garden by the Columbus monument.
- December 8-9, 2013, **Saturday and Sunday Santa Lucia Mass**, St. Anthony of Padua Church, All Masses Honoring the Sicilian tradition of Santa Lucia and distributing "cuccia" to all Families
Blessing of the eyes following the 4:30 p.m. Mass Saturday

Festivals, holidays in Italy from September through December

September

19-22 – The 150th International Accordion Festival in Castelfidardo

October

5-6 – Maschera di Ferro celebrates the legend of the "Man in the Iron Mask" in Pinerolo in the Piedmont Region

5-6 & 12-13 – Truffle Fair in Moncavone in the Piedmont Region

November

1 – All Saints Day, a national holiday

9-10 – International Horse Show in Verona

December

24 – Torch Light Parade, at midnight on Christmas Eve in Cortina d'Ampezzo in the Alps, hundreds of people ski down the mountain slope carrying torches.

31 – La Festa di San Silvestro, a New Year's Eve celebration, focusing on food. The main dish is lentils, which symbolize money and good fortune for the coming new year. Other dishes include cotechino, a large spiced sausage, or a zampone, a stuffed pig.