

# PAPPAGALLO



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

Fall 2011

## **OCTOBER... Italian Heritage Month! Celebrate with Us!**



### **GRIAA Greater Rockford Italian American Association Hall of Fame**

**&**

## **Special Recognition Banquet**

### **Ben Todaro and Paul Mastrangeli Elected to Hall of Fame Three Others to Receive Special Awards**

On Saturday, October 8, 2011, Ben Todaro and Paul Mastrangeli will be inducted into the Greater Rockford Italian American Association Hall of Fame during a dinner ceremony at Cliffbreakers Restaurant.

Ben Todaro has significantly impacted the Italian American community for many years. He is president of the Sons of Italy Rockford Lodge. He is a longtime chair of GRIAA's Scholarship Committee, which is responsible for awarding grants to Italian American students. He sits on St. Ambrogio Society's governing board and is a member of the finance committee at St. Anthony of Padua Church. Ben is a past chair of Festa Italiana and for many years chaired Festa's pizza tent.

Paul Mastrangeli has also greatly impacted Rockford's Italian American community, but behind the scenes. Paul is GRIAA's longtime Finance Committee chair. He has used his

knowledge and expertise in tax and accounting to ensure that GRIAA, a charitable not-for-profit corporation, is in compliance with complex state and federal regulations and filings. He has volunteered countless hours of professional services. Without Paul's volunteered service to the organization, GRIAA would have less money to award in scholarships and host fewer cultural events and activities.

Special Recognition Awards for excellence will be given to three individuals. Dr. Joseph L. Nicolosi, who is known in the art world as "Nicolosi", will be honored for his nationally recognized paintings. Joseph and Carl Scandroli will be recognized for business. Over many decades, Scandroli Construction has built many notable structures in the Rockford area, including St. Anthony of Padua Church.

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**Italian American  
2011 Hall of Fame and Special Recognition Award Banquet**

**Saturday, October 8, 2011**

Cliffbreakers Restaurant

6:00 p.m. Social Hour

7:00 p.m. Dinner

Special Music provided by the Mike Alongi Trio

Italian Salad – Family Style

Pasta with Marinara Sauce – Family Style

**Choice #1 Petite Filet Mignon and Herb Crusted Chicken**  
(Tender Char-Grilled Filet Mignon and Chicken Breast with  
Roasted Red Potatoes and Green Beans with Red Peppers)

**Choice #2 Vegetarian Ratatouille Crepes**  
(Fresh baked Crepes stuffed with seasonal Vegetables in a fresh Tomato Basil Sauce)

Followed by Dessert of Tiramisu Goblet

**\$30.00 per person**

R.S.V.P. as soon as possible.

Please make checks payable to GRIAA. Send the following information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending \_\_\_\_\_ Choice #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Choice #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: GRIAA, P.O. Box 1915, Rockford, Illinois 61110-0415  
If you have any questions, please contact Gene Fedeli at 815-877-2888 or  
Rosie Scalise Sheridan at 815-978-4779



## SICILY ~ SICILIA!

### Sicily's History Timeline Part 2

In the last issue of Pappagallo, we left off with all of Sicily under Arab control; in fact, Palermo became the second largest city in the Arab world! And now, as the pendulum of history moves, we find that the powerful Arab control has run its course and now another ethnic group begins to raise its head.

The year is **1071**: the **Norman Count Roger de Hauteville** takes Palermo "for Christendom". In **1130 his son, Roger the II becomes King of Sicily** and Palermo is one of the most magnificent cities in Europe. Roger II achieved royal status in the field of art as the most famous monuments are the Palace Chapel, Mareldolce, the Cubas, the Cathedrals of Palermo and Cefalu.

With his successors **William I and II** the Zisa and the Cathedral of Monreale and the Benedictine cloister are still world famous for art and architecture! It was the Golden Age...literature and science flourished. Translations from Greek and Arabic reintroduced Ptolemy and Plato to the western world.

The **Swabian age was under the control of Frederick II** continued with rich cultural advances, but Frederick was constantly in struggles with northern Italy and German politics.

Upon his death, the crown was given to **Charles of Anjou**, the French pretender. This Angevin control was unpopular among the Sicilians who disliked their arrogance. Now, the part of Sicilian history that everyone seems to know: The Revolution of the **Sicilian Vespers** on March 31, 1282! Now, we have the quick physical elimination of the French and removal of the Angevins from the island, Forever! (Sicilians out there: send us the answer to how the Sicilians recognized the French. We want to know who really knows their history! A Challenge for you!) In **1302 the Aragonese begin their 200 year rule**. Alfonso V, King of Aragon is crowned with the title King of Two Sicilies.

In **1734 the Bourbons rule**. By **1806-1815 The British** occupy Sicily. 1848 Sicilian Revolution and in **1860 Garibaldi** and his "Mille" land at Marsala forcing the Bourbons off Sicily. In **1861 Sicily joins the Kingdom of Italy**.

**1915 Italy joins the Allies** in World War I. From **1922-1943 Fascism under Mussolini** rules. **1943 Italy is invaded by the Allies**. **1957 Italy becomes an EEC founder**. Today we celebrate Italy's **100 years of freedom...Viva Garibaldi!**

Steve Salvato in his extensive research has collected more than 76,000 Italian surnames. He states that 90% of the Sicilian surnames in Rockford are from the western part of Sicily, especially the towns of Sambuca di Sicilia, Aragona, Marsala, Rocamena, Piana degli Albanese, and Camporeale. They settled here and many still carry on their special holiday traditions and favorite recipes.

If you wish a deeper version of our long and complicated history, you are welcome to more research. True, some of us love it, but I worry about our fellow readers who might feel sleep is near...

### The Name and Symbol of Sicily

According to the Latin grammarian Marcus Terentius Varro, the word "Sicila" comes from the Italic "sica", which means "sickle, or "zankle" and means "land of the reapers". You may recall that Sicily was the "bread basket" of the Roman World. But, our Latin scholar was somewhat prejudiced...since this precious island's ancient inhabitants indicate that the "sike" could be translated as "fig" or "land of fecundity" or fertility! Going back through other sources, the Greek Homer in his poem, the Odyssey gave the island its name Trinacria since the island was shaped like a triangle.

Since the symbol on the Sicilian flag shows Medusa's head with her "stone-cast" eyes surrounded by three legs, representing the three capes or points of the island, Trinacria had been a part of their history ever since. I'm sure that you've read about other versions regarding the Trinacria as well. That's the frustrating yet "truth" about Sicilian folklore.

### The Albanian Migration

Have you wondered why there is a rich "pocket" of Gheg-Gheg (gay-gay as some families pronounced it) culture in part of western Sicily? Here is some research that we found regarding it.

In the 1448 an Albanian patriot helped an Italian leader by sending troops to help quell a revolt in Sicily. Being successful with the campaign, the Albanians were given land as a reward and asked to stay rather than return home which was now controlled by the Turks. The next few centuries, they managed to maintain their own culture and language in their small settlements. The Sicilian towns named Piana degli Albanesi, Mezzojuso, Contessa Entellina and Palzzo Adriano were their first settlements. Many of your families may have been a part of this unique culture.

At the end of the 19th century and the first few decades of the 20th, Sicilians moved from their homeland to the United States, especially New Orleans where the New World seemed the place to bring up ones family. We have Cuccia relatives who were born in Louisiana.

Descendants of the Albanians who had moved to Sicily centuries before were part of this migration to the New World. See Micheli Scalisi's article on The Sicilian Language in this Pappagallo. He has examples of the Gheg-Gheg language, also called Arberesh. Micheli's email for more questions on this language is: [micheli.scalisi@gmail.com](mailto:micheli.scalisi@gmail.com)

Pappagallo would like to know where your family first



settled in the Rockford area. We are in the process of enlarging our map in the Italian Gallery of the Ethnic Heritage Museum. More information will be given in the next edition, but you can email Gene and Shirley Fedeli if you have some of this available. Please help us so we can continue to work on our long and rich history. Thanks!

## To sum up our multi-cultural island...

The Greeks taught the Sicilians about wine and sauces, the Romans brought wheat, the Byzantines how to cook with spices, the Arabs brought rice, sugarcane, coffee, pistachios, the making of sherbets and sweets, the cultivation of fruit trees and the technique called "la matanza", or how to hunt tuna, the Aragonese how to thicken sauces with crushed almonds. The Normans brought cattle, and the Spanish brought New World vegetables, pumpkins, peppers and tomatoes. In the end the Sicilian genius was to take all these things, ingredients and methods, and meld them harmoniously. The result is a cuisine that shines with the brilliance of the Mediterranean sun!

## Sicilian Proverb

S'avissi pignateddu,  
Acqua e Sali,  
Facissi pani cottu  
\_\_avennu pani

If I had a saucepan, water, and salt,  
I'd make bread stew  
...if I had bread

A well-known Sicilian Proverb

## Local Sicilian Specialties

**Anelletti gratinati:** little "rings" of cuttlefish, dipped in breadcrumbs, oil, salt, pepper, garlic, and parsley. Baked in oven.

**Bottarga di Tonno:** tuna roe grilled or boiled. Served with oil and lemon.

**Cannoli:** cylindrical pastry cases, filled with ricotta or crème and candied fruit, or chocolate.

**Caponata:** chopped egg plant, cooked in open pan with sauce of tomatoes, onion, minced herbs.

**Cassata:** A sponge-like cake with layers of ricotta, or custard, almonds and chocolate.

**Cuscusu:** a fish soup, with macaroni

**Farsunagru:** breast of veal or beef, stuffed with spices and hard-boiled eggs.

**Gelati:** Sicilian ices (known as the best in Italy), fresh fruit, and a variety of flavors.

## The Carts of Sicily

A rarity today and a proud, gloriously, artistic joy for all Sicilians of yesterday...

The beautifully hand-crafted, hand-painted history on



Le Corte di Carlo Magno

wheels, the Sicilian Carretto!

True, carts have been a definite necessity for survival in all history, but if you have ever gazed upon the Sicilian Carretto, you know what I mean when I say "What a unique art form!"

In the very early days, the carts were not decorated, but being Sicilian, listen to what developed. One understands that names are important so if you own a "tiraloru", your cart carries things of the earth as sand, gravel or dirt. If you own a "vinaruolo", you most likely would carry grapes or wine barrels. See if you can guess what a "frumentaru" would carry? No prize, just satisfaction that you understand the Sicilian language!

Not that we are possessive, but if you live in Palermo, your cart's panels are trapezoidal, but if you hail from Catania the panels of your cart are square! Let's not for-



Battaglia di Orlando e Rinaldo per Angelica

get our friends from Trapani...they have three-sided panels with a bar across the top. We do like to be unique! Giuseppe Pure (1846-1916) a doctor from Palermo collected information about carts and examples of them. His amazing work included 25 volumes entitled The Library of Traditions of the Sicilian People. If you are interested and can read Sicilian, it might be for you to enjoy!

Let's see how the tradition of the Sicilian Puppet Theater that all families enjoy especially during the summer is connected with the Sicilian Carts. (See photos above). So here's the quick history connecting the two, if you can



## The Sicilian Language by Micheli Scalisi

The Sicilian language is spoken in Sicily and southern Calabria and Puglia. It evolved from the Vulgar Latin spoken in these areas, but has also been influenced throughout its history by the languages of the many peoples who conquered the Island. These influences were generally very slight, consisting mostly of new, limited terminology. However, with the rise of mass media in modern times—all of which are conveyed strictly in Italian—the influence of Italian upon the Sicilian language has been far greater than any other language in the past. Moreover, Sicilian has never been part of the curriculum at any level of the school system. Consequently, the Sicilian language continues to rapidly erode and to become increasingly Italianized. Language is the most important aspect of a people and its culture, and as such we must protect and preserve it like any other precious Sicilian monument or tradition.

Auspiciously, in May 2011 the Sicilian parliament approved legislation to include the Sicilian language in the curriculum at every level, from elementary to high school. Visit <http://goo.gl/enLHo> (Italian) or <http://goo.gl/YYYY21> (English) for more information about this remarkable legislation.

<u>Sicilian language</u>	<u>Sicilian dialect</u>	<u>Italian Language</u>	<u>English Language</u>
cannavazzu	stracciu	straccio	rag
ciaraveđđū	crapettu/caprettu	capretto	kid (animal)
maiu	maggiu	maggio	May
vàđđara	ernia	ernia	hernia

The Sicilian language can be divided into several dialects and sub-dialects, generally classified according to their phonology (right).



Here are a few examples demonstrating the differences between the Western sub-dialects (below).

### “Your sons are tall, strong and handsome, but my daughter is more beautiful.”

li to	figghi	sunnu	àuti	forti	e	beđđi	ma	me	figghia	esti	cchiù	beđđa.	Salemi
i to	figghi	sunnu	àuti	fuòitti	e	bièđđi	ma	me	figghia	è	cchiù	biđđa.	Palermo
i ta	figli	sunnu	ganti	forti	e	beđđi	ma	me	figlia	è	cchiù	beđđa.	Agrigento
i ta	filli	sunnu	gati	fùarti	e	biađđi	ma	ma	filla	è	cchiù	beđđa.	Alimena

Also noteworthy are two distinct linguistic communities within Sicily, Arbëresh and Gallo-Italic. Arbëresh (or Gheg-gheg) is the ancient Albanian dialect spoken by the descendents of 15-18<sup>th</sup> century immigrants from Albania to Piana degli Albanesi, Contessa Entellina, and Santa Cristina Gela. Gallo-Italic is a dialect brought to Sicily from Northern Italy in the late 11<sup>th</sup> and early 12<sup>th</sup> centuries by Lombards, Piedmontesi, and others. It's spoken in San Fratello, Nicosia, Piazza Armerina and several other Sicilian towns. Below are a just a few words from these dialects:

<u>Arbëresh</u>		<u>Gallo-Italic</u>	
Falem <i>hello</i>	Ëj <i>yes</i>	Ancö <i>today</i>	Frea <i>brother</i>
Ju parkales <i>please</i>	Jo <i>no</i>	Ëua <i>water</i>	P'rcò <i>because</i>



(continued from page 4)

consider history "quick"!

Who are these puppets? What is their story? The stories are mainly from the epic poem called the "Song of Roland" from Old French. The Italian chivalric poems of the 15th and 16th centuries incorporated this poem into the Italian theater. It became the heroic tale for all to hear, see, and learn. It is believed that the stories traveled via the pilgrimages from France to Italy and on to Sicily where Puppet Theaters grabbed the idea. They became so popular that the stories told would be repeated week after week throughout the year.

Some of the characters are famous heroes, as Orlando, Rinaldo, and Angelica, the damsel in distress. Rodomonte, the fearless champion of the Saracens who constantly battled the paladins. Of course, dragons hiding in caves along with hideous monsters waiting to attack, the constant clanging of swords, banging of the puppeteers feet and cheering of the crowd as an evil character's head flies into the audience! Bloody great, boisterous cheers from the children and drama at its height!

Now, these wonderful, exciting stories are gloriously painted on the Sicilian Carretto, not just on the outer side panels, but the front, back and inside of the entire Carretto. If you look carefully, you will see that the underside of the Carretto continues with the story design!

### **Sambuca di Sicilia**

The charming town of Sambuca is nestled in the Sicilian hills and overlooks Lake Arancio. The town originated



The Emir Saracen

from the Arab hamlet of Rahl Zabut. The oldest part of the town still preserves the Arab style where the streets are winding and the alleys are blind. There is a fairly new restaurant called Lu Saracinu that we have visited and enjoyed the typical food of the area. The view from the top is breathtaking! You see the entire valley stretched like a green carpet before you! In 1185 Zabut became the property of the Monastery of Monreale. Later, it became a fief of the

Barberini family and of the Beccadellis of Bologna. The first two decades of this century it was called Sambuca Zabut. Today, it is known as Sambuca di Sicilia.

The 16th century well-known Chiesa del Carmine stands in the Piazza della Vittoria. In 1615 it underwent substantial modifications and in the 19th century the interior was decorated with stuccos. There is a magnificent marble



The Statue of Santa Maria Udienza

statue of the Madonna dell'Udienza, attributed to Antonello Gagini that is greatly venerated. Our tour groups have visited this church and many participated in the huge weekend festival honoring the Blessed Mother of the Audience. Years ago, many of our Sicilian Sambuca families brought their traditions with them to Rockford. In fact, in the Church of St. Anthony of Padua you will find a statue of the Madonna dell'Udienza (Our Lady of the Audience) draped in a beautiful long blue silk cape holding the child, Jesus. A reminder of the great tradition and rich heritage that are kept to this day!

### **Marinated Tortellini with Vegetables**

By Nina Foti

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. 9 oz. cheese-filled tortellini, cooked and drained
- 1 red Bell pepper, cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1 green Bell pepper, cut into 1 inch pieces
- ½ pound small mushrooms
- 1 can 9oz. large black olives, cut into halves
- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- 2 tbs. chopped parsley
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 tsp. dried basil, crushed
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. salt and pepper

Combine tortellini, bell peppers, mushrooms and black olives into medium bowl, set aside. For Marinade: combine oil, vinegar, parsley, garlic, basil, oregano, salt and pepper to taste in a small jar with tight-fitting lid; shake until well blended. Pour over tortellini and vegetables. Toss gently to combine. Refrigerate, cover up to 24 hours. Before serving, bring to room temperature. Makes 6 appetizer servings.



## Dalermo

As one comes flying into Palermo across that beautiful "wine-dark" Tyrrhenian Sea of Homer, one has their breath taken away as the plane banks toward the huge looming monster-of-a-rock outcropping. Then, the plane tilts its wings away from Monte Pellegrino and toward the Conca d'Oro or "Golden Conch". Can this be the ancient home of the Phoenicians? The land of Hannibal who fought the Romans with elephants? It seems that everyone has a love-hate relationship with Palermo.

Today, the streets and even parts of the sidewalks team with hundreds of small cars with horns blaring, Italian being shouted and many hand gestures being given while your car tries to squeeze between the long lanes of traffic. What a challenge, and very exciting! Yes, there are traffic lights and police, somewhere, but never at hand or working when one needs them!

But, Palermo has breathtaking architecture, churches that were mosques and are again churches. You can tell by looking at their domes that usually indicate Arabic, but with golden crosses at the very top that indicate now Christian. An example is La Martorana when the Emir built it, he chose his Greek Byzantine craftsmen to make the splendid mosaics and domes. The Byzantine and Arabic iconography gave us Christ, the Pantocrator and the figure 8, the Arabic number of perfection! Palermo is definitely a quandary.

Then, speaking of food one must stop at the Antica Focacceria with its bow windows, marble slabs and gleaming brass stove. Here is where you will find the traditional place to devour "spleen"! Our tour group stopped there, of course, at least to see the "spleen". The dish is called "Pani cu'la meusa". After realizing what it was and what it looked like only one brave soul tried it. What did it taste like? You'll have to ask him! Wrapped in a thick beautifully baked piece of Italian bread, our guests were not sure what it tasted like. Also noted for another rustic snack, "Panini di Panelle", fried chick pea squares and it was delicious. (See the recipe in this Pappagallo).

Let's think of one of the best desserts, Gelato, one of the greatest gifts to man especially in Sicily's hot summers. Supposedly created by the Arabs as an ice, but developed to perfection by the Sicilians, one can relish it anywhere at any time and in any flavor.

In the words of a Sicilian proverb, "He who goes to Palermo without seeing Monreale leaves a donkey and comes back an ..."

Monreale is a golden example of the fusion of Arab-Norman art. The "golden" is definitely an understatement! The Cathedral and Benedictine monastery built by William II was inspired by a vision. The exterior is beautiful, but as one enters the huge space, one is in awe by its shimmering gold interior. In fact, most people stop in their tracks and gaze upward in silence because there are no words to explain it! There is a fusion of Arab simplicity that is wedded with the Byzantine majesty of thousands of meters of mosaics! One should bring a pair of binoculars to really

enjoy the intricate artistic work of flowers, fruit trees, and exotic birds along with the murals of Bible stories, Old and New Testaments. One needs to remember that the peasants could not read, so they just gazed at the lessons and stories.

Palermo is similar to visiting any large city, one needs to visit it for more than one day, or at least visit the library for further reading or on line to learn and see more.

## Saint Rosalie

The heavenly patroness of Palermo, the island's largest city, whose feast in mid July is one of Sicily's largest. It is thought that Saint Rosalie was born into a noble Norman family around 1130. Choosing the life of a hermit, she went to live in a cave on Mount Pellegrino overlooking the city of Palermo. She is believed to have died around 1164. It was during the Plague of 1624 that Saint Rosalie reputedly appeared first to a sick woman. Later, she revealed the location of her remains in the cave and told the sick woman to bring her bones to Palermo. These relics were found on July 15th and were carried in a procession throughout the quarantined city. The plague then ceased!

A chapel was built in the cave and she became the city's patroness. In the process, the name "Rosalia" became very popular in Palermo --while pilgrimages to Mount Pellegrino are less frequent than in times past. In 1630 the Catholic Church formally recognizes Rosalie's sanctity. This past May, our tour group visited the cave at the top of Mount Pellegrino. Many stated that it was so beautiful and well worth the trip up the steep hill.



St. Rosalia

## Agrigento

The ancient city was called Akragas by the Greeks and there is an amazing folk dancing group who still use that name. Perhaps you might recall that we had them dance for us at Rockford's Festa Italiana years ago. When traveling to Sicily, one must visit this ancient city and stay a few days to really enjoy its history, shopping and grandeur. The Temple of Concord, one of the best preserved Doric temples was built between 450 and 440 B.C. It is a masterpiece of proportions and style. The temples

*continued on next page*



are perched on a hill. A perfect way to see their architecture. As one climbs the hill in this beautiful grove of ancient olive trees you come upon the Temples of Demeter and the Temple of Juno.



Temples of Demeter and Juno

In this Valley of the Temples, every February the "Mandorlo in Fiore", The Flowering of the Almond Trees festival is held. It is visited by hundreds of tourists to photograph the glorious trees. They look as though they are covered in snow from the distance. If you have purchased tickets ahead of time, you will see the International Folklore Dancers in traditional costumes performing through the day and evening. It is really worth the try...tickets are hard to come by since everyone waits for them to be on sale.

**Maccalube**

In the soil, here and there streams of muddy clay like sludge are deposited forming small cones which grow slowly until the eruptive force can no longer hold the liquid from under the ground. Then, the process begins again. La fanghiglia che esce dalla sua bocca dei coni e si riversa sulle falde somiglia alla lava di un vulcano, ma la sua fuoriuscita avviene dolcemente e debolmente. I coni si formano e svaniscono in continuazione. The cones are formed and disappear from time to time. Durante la manifestazioni eruttive, masse di terra vengono scagliate violentemente a trenta, quaranta metri di altezza e una grande quantità di argilla fuoriesce dalle maccalube come se si trattasse del cratere di un vulcano. During the eruptions, land masses are thrown violently at thirty, forty feet high and a large amount of clay comes out of the Maccalube area. Oddly enough, the soil and clay are cool to the touch! When traveling to Aragona, our friends were concerned that I wanted to see this amazing site. They say that the Maccalube may seem to sleep for a long time, then suddenly erupt. So beware...

**Marsala**

Marsala takes its name from the Arabic Mars-al-Allah the "Harbor of God" because it has a very beautiful harbor. It was also the historic setting for Garibaldi when his Red Shirts leapt ashore in 1860 and found no resistance to their cause. So the story goes, they visited the Marsala "cantine" and left their guns behind, where they remain to this day!

One thinks of Marsala as a city of fine wine. The Stablimento Florio is one of the typical distilleries surround-

ed by traditional walled estates with elegant courtyards. The Florio founders are Sicily's greatest entrepreneurs, but the amber dessert wine was really developed by the British merchants, Ingham and Woodhouse. "Vergine", aged oak barrels at least five years old and are drunk slightly chilled leaving an aftertaste of bitter almonds. The Florio museum displays a collection of vintages, including misleading bottles sent to the United States during Prohibition, labeled as "seasoning" and "hospital tonic"...very clever!

The Via Pescatori is full of Tunisian fishermen and behind this street lies the Casbah, the Tunisian quarter with arched, tapering alleys. The Piazza Bagno has a "hammam" with baths and massage rooms. It seems as though you have been transported to North Africa where smoking water-bubble machines stand and the women are rarely seen in public, since they must "hidden" from stranger's eyes.

There is the usual supply of archeological displays and an especially interesting one where there is a reconstructed Punic ship that fought during the First Punic War, reminding us that this town was also ruled by Roman's enemy, the Carthaginians. This is also the Museum Park area where the well-known Medusa Head mosaic can be found.

**Aragona**

About 16 km from Agrigento in the Valle dei Platani on the hills of the Belvedere area is the charming town of Aragona, home to many of our Rockford families. It was founded in 1606 by Baldassare III Naselli, Count of Comiso who named it in honor of his mother, Beatrice Aragona Branciforti. In 1615 the Naselli family received the title of Princes of Aragona and ruled over the town through 1812.

The layout of the town is unusual with the streets in the outer part being standard while the inner section is an intricate pattern of lanes and alleys. The Church of the Carmine and the Chiesa del Purgatorio were built in the 18th century, while the Mother Church, Chiesa Madre is dedicated to the Re Magi, the Wise Men and displays a beautiful Nativity Scene.

Nearby is the famous Maccalube area near the outlying areas of the town. Many inhabitants still live and walk carefully and fearfully near it. It is a curiosity.



Macalube





## Recipes

### Roccamena

The name means “pleasant rock” and is about 60 km from Palermo. It is on the watershed between the Belice Rivers. It was a feudal town belonging to the Baccadelli family of the Marquises of Salaparuta. It became autonomous in 1846. Many of our Rockford families emigrated from this agricultural town. Those who visit this area for the first time are surprised by the beauty of its land. Rolling hills that seem to push into the craggy ancient rock formations and the cool breezes that now are harnessed by the wind turbines seen throughout this area. In fact, we were surprised to see so many turbines in this part of Sicily. I think that there are more in Sicily than in the Rockford vicinity!

### Poggioreale

A small farming community of about 1800 located on the Belice River Valley., Poggioreale is a part of the province of Trapani.

Poggioreale was founded in 1642 and the name “poggio” means “hill” and “reale” meaning “royal”. The founders from the nearby town of Gibellina considered to be fit for royalty and that is probably why it had that name. The economy is based on agriculture and fruit cultivation since the land is rich and the summers bountiful and long. Today, there is an irrigation system that helps to produce three seasons of produce.

The town suffered extensive damage in the 1968 earthquake which also destroyed the neighboring towns of Salaparuta and Gibellina. The beautiful new town of Poggioreale was constructed a few miles to the southeast.

Gene and I visited Poggioreale a few years ago to visit a friend who created some of the most beautiful St. Joseph Altar pieces ever seen. She asked us if we'd like a tour of the Old Poggioreale. Of course, we were interested and were amazed at its condition. It looked as though time had stopped...broken chairs in yards, a butcher's meat hooks still hanging on a rack outside of the shattered meat market, the theater with its second floor exposed yet showing off the now faded frescoes on the walls. As a history teacher, this was a wonderful place to re-live the early times, yet tragic to see traces of someone's home and



churches merely remnants of a time past...

Although nothing remains of the old towns of Salaparuta and Gibellina, the Old Poggioreale, has become a popular place by Poggiorealesi and their descendants (of whom I am one!) for pilgrimages.

### Chickpea Fritters

Panelle

Ingredients:

3 cups water

2 cups chickpea flour

1 teaspoon coarse sea salt

2 and 1/4 to 2 and 1/2 cups extra virgin olive oil

1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

2 tablespoons finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Special equipment:

Parchment paper

Deep-fat thermometer

Lightly oil an 8 by 4-inch loaf pan and line with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang at each end. Whisk together water, chickpea flour, sea salt, and 2 tablespoons olive oil in a 2 and 1/2 to 3-quart heavy saucepan until smooth, then cook over moderate heat, stirring constantly



with a wooden spoon (to prevent lumps from forming), until very thick and mixture pulls away from side of pan, 20 to 25 minutes.

Transfer mixture to loaf pan, smoothing top. Cool, uncovered, then chill, surface of mixture covered with plastic wrap, until firm, at least 3 hours. Lift chickpea block out of pan using parchment and transfer to a work surface. Gently flip over block and discard parchment, then pat dry. Cut block crosswise into 1/4-inch thick slices for panelle. Preheat oven to 300°F.

Heat 1/2 inch olive oil (about 2 cups) in a deep 10-inch heavy skillet until it registers 375°F on thermometer, then fry panelle in 5 batches, carefully turning occasionally with tongs, until golden and puffed, 3 to 5 minutes per batch, and transfer to paper towels to drain.

Keep warm on a baking sheet in oven while frying remaining batches. Arrange panelle on a platter and sprinkle with parsley and cheese. Serve immediately. Makes 10 servings.

Note: Panelle can be fried 4 hours ahead and kept, uncovered, at room temperature. Reheat on a baking sheet in a preheated 350°F oven 10 to 15 minutes.



## Sfincione Bagherese

The most traditional sfincione is made in the Province of Palermo, but this one is from Bagheria.

It is dressed simply with olive oil, anchovies, and fresh pecorino cheese and what makes it different is that it does not have tomato and because of the special type of bread crumbs that are used.

### Ingredients for the Dough

- 1 ½ lb. flour mix (½ semolina and ½ all purpose)
  - 1 cup flour for dusting
  - 1 cup warm water
  - 2 envelopes active dry yeast
  - 2 tablespoons of oil
  - 1 teaspoon of salt
  - 1 teaspoon of sugar
  - 13" X 8" baking pan
- Ingredients for the Condiments
- 1 cup of olive oil
  - 1 large onion, sliced
  - 4-6 anchovies
  - 6 oz. fresh Pecorino cheese, sliced thin
  - 4 oz. breadcrumbs made from the inside of day old bread
  - 2 oz. grated pecorino cheese
  - 2 scallions, chopped very fine
  - Oregano, salt and pepper

### Making of the Dough

Pour warm water in a bowl, stir in yeast, oil, sugar and salt. Add half of the flour and blend it in. Set the mixture aside in a warm place for 10 minutes. Put remaining flour on a flat surface and form a well and place the mixture in it. Start to blend the flour from the inside of the well, and keep incorporating the flour. Add a little more water, if it becomes too dry. Mixture should be soft and very malleable. Should it become too watery add more flour. Using your hands, bring all the flour together to form a ball. Fold and press with the palm of your hands; if dough is sticky, add some more flour. When dough forms a single

mass set aside.

Dust the working surface with flour and knead dough by pushing it firmly to the center, turn dough 90 degrees and press down again. Keep kneading until dough is elastic and a silky consistency. Knead for 10 minutes, or until gluten develops.

Form a ball, and cut across the top to facilitate the leavening process.

Cover and let rest for 25 minutes, in a warm place.

Press and fold dough, place it in an oiled bowl and refrigerate for a few hours.

### Making of the Condiment

Sauté sliced onion in 2 tablespoons of olive oil until golden. Set aside.

Crush anchovies in a dish and mix with 4 tablespoons of olive oil. Set aside.

In a bowl, mix scallions with 4 tablespoons of oil and add salt and pepper to taste.

### Making of the Sfincione

When ready to make sfincione, dust the working surface with flour, place dough in the center and flatten it to about ½ inch thick using a rolling pin or by pressing it down. Place dough in the oiled pan 13 X 9 X 2 inches. Set aside, covered in warm place, until dough rises. About 20 minutes.

Punch dough and stretch it if necessary.

Sprinkle or use a brush to coat the surface of dough completely with oil-anchovies mixture. Cover with sliced cheese and top it with sautéed onions.

In a large bowl, mix breadcrumbs, grated cheese, scallions and a pinch of oregano, spread it over the entire surface. Drizzle sparingly with olive oil and bake at 400 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes or until bottom crust is golden and crispy.

\*\*\*Note: It may seem to take a long time to prepare, but the results are worthwhile!

## Pasta a Trapanisi

The province of Trapani is the largest producer of capers and anchovies. These are two fundamental components that give this sauce a distinctive taste, especially when combined with the eggplant, peppers, olives and tomatoes.

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. spaghetti
- 1 Italian eggplant, cut in 1 inch cubes.
- 1 can 14 oz. Italian peeled tomatoes, cut in small pieces with juice
- 6 Tbls olive oil
- 3 clove of garlic, whole
- 2 salted anchovies, cut in small pieces
- 2 tablespoons of capers, rinsed well
- 10 pitted black olives, cut in half
- 2 sweet peppers, cut off top, removed seeds and cut in small pieces



*continued from page 10*

12 chopped fresh basil leaves  
Salt and pepper to taste

**Preparation**

**Sauce**

Over high heat, in a sauté pan combine the olive oil, garlic and anchovies. Cook for 2 minutes, add capers, olives and peppers. The eggplant (that was salted and drained for 30 minutes), pat dry with paper towels and add to sauce.

Cook for 5 minutes.

Add tomato sauce, basil, salt and pepper. Cook for 10 minutes. Now, ready to eat!

**Pasta**

Cook al dente the spaghettini in abundant salted water. When pasta is cooked, drain and return to the pot. Keeping on a low flame, toss in half of the sauce. Pour spaghetti in a warm large serving bowl, top with the remaining tomato sauce and serve immediately.

This pasta is served without cheese, but place a pepper mill on table.

**Caltanissettan Poultry Stuffing (Ripieno alla Nissena)**

The residents of Caltanissetta, a small city in central Sicily, are called Nisseni, and their mountainous region is famous for meat and poultry dishes.

**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup finely chopped white onion
- 1 cup grated hard Italian cheese (pecorino is best!)
- 1 cup "southern style" bread crumbs (including the ground crust)
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 medium-size eggs
- 1/2 tsp. white pepper
- 1 tsp. virgin olive oil
- Salt to taste.

(have your chicken or turkey ready to be stuffed, but in refrigerator)

Mix ingredients in large bowl, kneading the mixture until uniform in consistency. Add a little water if necessary to make it more workable. Take chicken or turkey out of the refrigerator. Then stuff mixture into its cavity before roasting.

Note: In Sicily, the chicken is sometimes garnished with fresh rosemary, and Marsala wine is poured over it at several points during the baking. That's Sicilian!

**Orange Salad (Insalata d'Arance)**

This typically Sicilian salad is excellent as a side dish, or a separate course leading into dessert.

**Ingredients:**

- 4 large naval oranges
- 1 large fresh crisp anise bulb
- 1 small lemon
- 1/4 cup shelled almonds
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon white sugar
- 1 tablespoon sweet Marsala wine
- 1 head of lettuce
- Dried coconut shavings
- A branch of fresh mint leaves

Separate mint leaves from stalk. Clean the anise and remove the tough heart, as well as the stalk and leaves. Peel the oranges and lemon. Cut the anise, oranges and lemon crosswise into thin slices. Toss together with almonds and mint leaves in a large bowl. Sprinkle with sugar, olive oil and Marsala wine, and toss again. Chill for a few hours. Toss again before serving. Serve on a bed of lettuce leaves.

Sprinkle dried coconut shavings over the top.

**Ex Votos...**

Have you ever heard of the ex votos? I remember as a child seeing some at St. Anthony of Padua Church. Have you seen them anywhere in Rockford?

If you have not heard about this continue reading. An ex voto is a votive offering to a saint or the Lord for a fulfillment of a special devotion. If a member of your family became very ill or contracted a disease that seemed incurable, you would offer special prayers to your patron saint or to the Lord for a miracle to occur. It is derived from the Latin term, ex voto suscepto "from the vow made". One would procure an ex voto from a shop (in the old days). They are still found in antique shops in Italy, if you are lucky as they are a great collector's item. They are shaped in a variety of body parts, examples are: a heart, an arm or leg, or a stomach or eye. Many times they were made from silver or a metal, and sometimes hand painted pottery. We bought a few in Sicily years ago. They have been on display in the Italian Gallery of the Ethnic Heritage Museum.

Have you encountered this interesting part of our Italian/Sicilian tradition? Let us know!





## Festivals!

If traveling to Sicily soon, here are some interesting festivals. Check with Google.com to help you locate specifically the town and times.

### November 1 All Saints Day

**Palermo:** Legend has it that the dead leave their tombs and raid all the best pastry shops in town to bring children delicious pastries! A fair in the Vuccia district features many desserts created with almond paste. If you have never tasted almond pastries from Sicily, you have not yet lived!

### November 11 San Martino's Day

**Palermo:** Biscotti of San Martino, the cookies of the day come filled with creamy ricotta, jam or fruit preserves. Sfinci di San Martino are fried "donuts" dipped in honey.

### December 13 Santa Lucia Day

**Syracuse:** A torchlight procession honoring Santa Lucia who is remembered every year with "Cuccia", a dish made with wheat berries to recall her miracle of bringing grain to starving Sicily.

**Rockford, Illinois:** St. Anthony of Padua Church 1100 Ferguson Street. After masses on December 10th and 11th "Cuccia" will be blessed and handed out to all who attend. A young girl portraying St. Lucy will relate to the congregation the traditional story of her life and purpose. Check the church bulletin on line for mass times, join us this year!

### January 6 Epiphany

**Piana Degli Albanesi:** Women in Greek Orthodox costumes are part of a procession to the church for the Feast of Lights and the oriental rites connected with the baptism of Christ. Oranges are blessed, and then distributed to the community as a symbol of prosperity for the New Year.

**Nardo:** celebrates the Fests of Sant'Elia by demonstrating how ricotta is made and then is served with tagliatelle, a favorite dish.

### February, the 1st and 2nd Sunday:

**Agrigento:** A weeklong festival is held in honor of the flowering almond trees. In Greek mythology, the almond tree was considered the "father of the world" and the nut the symbol of immortality. There is an International Folklore Festival with unusual instruments, singing and folk dancing in regional costumes. Many groups come from all over Italy to contest for the prizes. Many sweets are made with the almond paste and served with almond ice cream (gelato)

**Salemi, Trapani:** Tiny snow white beads called "cavaduzzi" are intricately formed to look like grasshoppers. They are baked to commemorate San Biagio's intervention during a plague of the insects.

## La Canzone de 'Morti November Feast



The fall season especially the month of November has been a part of the life/death scene of most cultures. In Italy, especially Sicily the tradition of respect for our dead has been celebrated since the fifteenth century when the Church christianized it as Ognissanti or All Saints' Day. Tradition has it that the dead return to earth between the 1st and 2nd nights of November. In Sicily it is the departed relatives who bring presents! What kind of presents? (If you are a true follower of Sicilian traditions, you already know!) The children cannot wait for the sun to rise since Nonnu and Nanna have given their treasured, darling grandchildren the most delicious sweets ever! "Pupi di Cena", sugar dolls that have been poured into large molds and painted with bright colors is tucked into the shoes of our darlings..."the better to eat you, my dear!" But wait, secretly you have taught the darlings a bit of history, since the sugared "pupi" are the legendary heroes as Roland, and Angelina of the classic Sicilian stories. Also, one finds the beautiful ballerinas, babies, and silly clowns. Today, sadly to say, "pupi" named Superman or Spiderman...what can one say...it's today's world! (But let's cling to our traditions, anyway!)

I read some interesting articles about November 2nd where after attending church, many families go to the cemetery and lay out a banquet, complete with chrysanthemums, the flower of the dead and share stories about their families. Have you heard of this tradition? Write and let us know.

The famous Ossi da Morto, "bones of the dead" is a cookie that most of us remember. It is pure white (cook carefully!) cookie that resembles the tibia bone, it even has a crunch to it!

In our family, it is tied into the feast of St. Joseph in March, than with the November's feast.



**Olive Harvest!**

Greek settlers imported their beloved olive trees to Sicily in the 5th century BC and olive oil has been produced on the island ever since...

**A few facts:** - Sicily produces about 10% of Italy's olive oil:

- there are **6 DOP** (Protected Designation of Origin - similar to DOC for wines) for the olive oil producing areas of Sicily, more than any other region of Italy: Val di Mazara DOP, Valdemone DOP, Valle del Belice DOP, Valli Trapanesi DOP, Monte Etna DOP and Monti Iblei DOP. The most common varieties of olives for oil production are Biancolilla, Castiglione, Carolea and Nocellara.

So, on your next trip, make sure you look for some of these very special oils, they may be slightly more expensive, but worth the price!

**Olive oil production**

The olive harvest in Sicily takes place between the middle of September through the end of November. How beautiful to see the ancient, gnarled trunks of the trees loaded down with hundreds of the green or black fruit bursting with flavor.

So, how does the Sicilian farmer pick these small, fragile fruits? In traveling through Sicily we have noticed many nets carefully under the olive trees, but the premium olives are still picked by hand! Are they worth it? Taste them...!



**Fall 2011 G.R.I.A.A. Conversational Italian Courses**

The fall classes for Conversational Italian sponsored by GRIAA (Greater Rockford Italian American Association) is accepting your reservations for the classes listed below. Once again the classes are taught by Tony Tararà who has been our teacher for the last 5 years.

**Classes are held at St. Anthony's Church in the Pedrini Center. Dates and times are listed below. Classes are 10 weeks long and the price is \$30.00 per course.**

**Note: To enroll in the classes call Gene Fedeli at 815-877-2888 or Tony Tararà 815-399-2129 e-mail e.fedeli@comcast.net, antonino.tarara@sbc-global.net**

**Price for the 10 week course is \$30.00 Make Check Payable to GRIAA and mail to: GRIAA**

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

**Students are responsible for obtaining their own book. The book used for all three courses is Italian Now! by Marcel Danesi from Barron's ISBN-13: 978-0764130731. The book is available through Barnes and Noble either in store or by order or online at amazon.com and other sellers.**

**Level 1 Monday nights 6:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. October 3rd thru December 12th**

You will be introduced to the Fundamentals of Italian pronunciation. We will be learning basic language skills

such as Greetings and Introductions, Travel Vocabulary, Numbers, Food, etc. We will also be learning some basics of Italian grammar so you will have a foundation to build upon if you choose to continue to develop your Italian language skills.

**Level 2 will meet on Thursday Nights 6:00 P.M. to 7:30 October 6th thru December 15th**

In Level 2 we continue to broaden your Italian with personal themes such as Family, etc. and we expand into more advanced travel skills such as asking Directions. We also expand upon Italian grammar by beginning to look at verb conjugation among other topics to help you to begin to construct your own sentences in Italian.

**Level 3 will meet on Tuesday Nights 6:00 P.M. to 7:30 October 4th thru December 13th**

In Level 3 we continue where Level 2 ended. Expanding vocabulary and introducing new conversational tools to expand your ability to converse. More of the class is conducted in Italian as well.





## Jornu di li Morti

In Sicilia, da tempo immemorabile, esiste una tradizione singolare. Per la Commemorazione dei defunti, che inizia già il primo Novembre, festa di Ognissanti, i bambini ricevono regali, che i genitori dicono, portati dai cari estinti, un modo abbastanza poetico di avvicinare i bambini alla morte e alla mancanza di persone di famiglia, ma anche un modo di rendere presente anche ai bambini, il ricordo di persone importanti nella vita familiare, quali possono essere i nonni.

Bassolrilievo di Giuseppe Deganello

Quann'era picciridda  
c'eranu i morti  
c'a' notti tuppuliavanu  
a tutti i porti...  
taci maci arrivavanu  
e...riali e' nicareddi purtavanu...  
Quannu s'arruspigliavanu  
i cacanidu  
u primu pinzeri  
pi' murticeddi avianu  
sutta u' lettu  
subitu taliavanu  
e... cu l'occhi sbarrachiati  
arristavanu  
castagni mennuli nuciddi  
ndo' scatulu di scarpi  
truvavanu i picciriddi...  
pupi di zuccaru  
marturana e strucciuli  
c'eranu pi' tutti i nicareddi  
"Fa' a' brava"  
p'un annu  
mi dicia me matrici  
ca' a testa sempri  
ci facia sfirriari...  
a' brava?...na' parola!  
pun jornu e...poi  
curria sempri fora...  
"i nanni ti vonnu beni"  
bedda mia...  
i riali ti portanu  
pa' allegria  
Ora nne putii  
pupi di zuccaru  
e marturana  
po' taliari  
...ma e' picciriddi  
sulu Halloween  
am'à nznari...  
Unni siti murticeddi?  
sutt'a terra cu' i virimiceddi?  
quann'era picciridda  
eravu ncelu  
ora scumparistivu  
cu' tutti i vostri pinzeri!

## NEWSFLASH!

Italy has surpassed France in production of wine, according to Coldiretti, the organization of Italian farmers (*Confederazione Nazionale Coltivatori Diretti*). What does this mean to the traveler who loves wine? *Cantine*, where you may taste and purchase wines, are numerous and many more labels are exporting abroad.

Italian wines are classified at three levels: *Denominazione di origine controllata* (DOC), which means the wines come from a particular geographic location and the grape variety is specified; *Denominazione di origine controllata e garantita* (DOCG), generally more expensive, wines produced under stricter controls and the origin is guaranteed; and *Indicazione geografica tipica*, table wines characteristic of given areas.

Of the more than 500 types of wines produced in Italy (not counting your Zio Giovanni's garage vintage), 330 are classified as DOC, fifty as DOCG, and 110 as IGT. Tuscany and Piemonte produce the most DOCG-rated wines, but there's hardly a square meter of Italy that doesn't offer excellent local wines.

Quantity... and quality. Great news for Italian wine lovers the world over! Since this Pappagallo is mainly about our beloved Sicily, let us not forget that Sicily is vying for that classification, too!

In the communes of Menfi, Montevago, Santa Margherita di Belice and Sambuca di Sicilia, the cultivation of vines is practiced over a huge area of the island. Throughout the course of history, the vine and its fruit have been a constant presence in this territory. But, until a few years ago, the industry has undergone radical changes thanks to the local varieties as Grecanico and the Nero d'Avola and the intro of some high quality grapes as Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet and Syrah. As we traveled through this area, our Sicilian friends explained that the richness of the wine depends on many things including where on the side of the mountain the vines are planted. So, look out Tuscany and Piemonte! Here we come!





# The Secret Life of Sarah E.?

Civil War

Advocate

Nurse



Fearless

Loyal

Bold

*Italian Gallery presents:*

*The Amazing story of a Civil War adventure...  
Narrated by gifted Amy Nyman who has portrayed many  
historical women throughout the Rockford area.*

*Come join us on Sunday, October 16, 2011*

*Program begins promptly at 2:30 p.m.*

*Admission: \$3.00 individual, \$5.00 family*

*Reservations needed, so call early 815-877-2888*

Ethnic Heritage Museum

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**Gene Fedeli,**  
**and Peggy Sagona Werner**



## **Ethnic Heritage Museum's Italian Gallery Events!**

**September through November 10, 2011**

- **Civil War Exhibit on the Garibaldi Guard**
- **View a copy of the last letter from Garibaldi to his wife, Anita**
- **See Noah Benfer's original 1861 36 star flag and honor medal**
- **Visit the pictorial gallery of our Italian Union & Confederate uniforms**
- **Read about Tom Milani's interest in the Civil War and his uniforms**
- **Camp Fuller...in your back yard!**
- **Save the Date: Sunday, October 16 "The Secret Life of Sarah E" ...**

**Spy, nurse and advocate for freedom!  
Presented by Amy Nyman, an outstanding  
first person lecturer.**

- **Reservations are required: call 815-877-2888**

**November 13 through December 25**

**Enjoy our Ethnic Heritage Museum's Annual  
"Holiday Traditions"**

**Remember we are open every Sunday from  
2:00 to 4:00p.m. Admission TBA, check our  
website below**

**Special tours can be arranged for your  
group. Call 815-96 2-7402**

**Or go to [www.ethnicheritagemuseum.org](http://www.ethnicheritagemuseum.org)  
for more events.**