

# PAPPAGALLO



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

Spring 2016

## Little Breads a Big Part of St. Joseph Altars

**Local group follows Sicilian tradition of baking *panuzzi* for St. Joseph Day**  
By Mike Doyle

The St. Joseph Altar, one of the most colorful and beautiful of Sicilian traditions, is an incredible feast for the eyes. The tables and shelves at these altars, such as the one held annually at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Rockford, are laden with specially crafted breads (*cuccadati*), cookies (including *biscotti*), cakes, flowers, fruit, candies, fish, as well as religious relics.

A recent addition to the altars at St. Anthony Church is the specially crafted breads that adorn the arches of the massive, bountiful display. These are called *vestadde* ("vest-a-day") which means to dress or adorn. Others call them *panuzzi*, or little breads.

A group of several women have been preparing the little breads at the Rockford home of sisters Joan and Colleen Gullo for the altar, which will be held the weekend of March 12-13 in the basement parish hall at St. Anthony's. St. Joseph's Day is celebrated on March 19. According to the legend, the altar originated in Sicily centuries ago at a time of great peril. During a period of drought, famine and much sorrow, the people prayed to St. Joseph, asking for his help and intercession. When the drought ended and crops prospered, the people, grateful that their prayers were answered, made offerings to St. Joseph with their most prized possession – food.

In his honor, the first altars were created with three levels, representing the Holy Trinity, each draped simply and beautifully in white linens and adorned with flowers. Then the people selected their finest grain, fruit, vegetables, seafood, and wine and invited all people, rich and poor alike, to share in their prayers, festivities, and good fortune. The tradition arrived on America's shores with Sicilian immigrants.

In the early to mid-twentieth century, altars were held in individual homes, most of them located in South Rockford. Because of the work involved to create an altar, St. Anthony's began to sponsor an altar, beginning in the late 1960s, where all of the efforts could go into making a truly remarkable tribute each year.

"As kids, we remembered the altars in homes," Joan Gullo said. "Then, it was floral with cakes and cookies. When Gene Fedeli (a GRIAA founding member) did the altars at the Graham-Ginestra Home, he would put up flat trellises and hang the little breads, called *vestadde*."

These are decorative breads, not meant to be eaten. A cultural hearth for these breads is Salemi, located east of Marsala in western Sicily, where they are called Salemi loafs. The book *Architettura dei pani di Salemi* ("The Architecture of the Salemi Loafs") says that "Salemi is one of the most original and precious witnesses of this noble



Note the ornately fashioned *panuzzi* at this St. Joseph Altar in Salemi, Sicily

and ancient tradition, with its loafs that for centuries have been artistically ... wrought into different shapes ... "

You can still find altars in the homes of local Sicilian families. One is Rosie Scalise Sheridan, who hosts an altar every other year, the most recent in 2015. On a trip to Sicily several years ago, Rosie made a special stop in Salemi to find out what she could about this tradition.

After coming across a small store on the piazza that had a small display of the breads, she was directed to a bookstore to buy a book about the Salemi loafs when someone else overheard them talking and led them to a small, neighborhood grocery store where they saw the breads being made. They placed an order and returned in a couple of days. "I filled big gym bags full of these beautiful breads," Rosie said.

"I have used these breads from Sicily for my altars," she said. "Then, one year, Gene and I were goofing around, and we decided to try and make them."

Later, Joan Gullo and her sister Colleen made a similar trek to Salemi, seeking information about the Salemi loafs. "When we had the opportunity to go there, we found the bookstore where Rosie had gone and a video of altars in the area. So we got inspired to make our own. Altars should be the work of the hands, something that shows your effort."

Following their first attempt in 2014, they made about 450 last year. This year a group of six to eight people gathered at the Gullos' home to make more little breads. "This year we (wanted) to make some on a little bit bigger scale," Joan said. "Now we have more confidence."

These are not your simple products, the organiz-

**Coming soon!**  
GRIAA and the Pappagallo are excited to make two big announcements. Look inside for these news stories:

- Pappagallo to add color, advertisements to its pages, Page 2
- GRIAA to sponsor guided tour of Sicily in September, Page 6

*continued on page 2*



## Pappagallo to add color, ads in future issues

In our continuing effort to improve the Pappagallo for its readers and Rockford's Italian-American population, we are announcing two exciting and significant changes to content. Beginning with the Fall 2016 issue, we will be adding full color as well as advertising.

Four pages of full color will be found on the front and back pages, as well as the inside front and inside back pages – Pages 1,2,15 and 16. This will allow us to use photo displays on Page 1 as well as illustrate stories that have colorful pictures. Pages 2 and 15 will be redesigned to include color. Page 16 will remain the same, except for the quarter-page color ad that will appear in the lower right corner. Most of the photos that are used in the Pappagallo were taken in color, so now we will be able to take full advantage of that. Other advertising will appear in black and white in the issue.

The ad rates have been set as thus:

- \$75 for an eighth-page
- \$125 for a quarter-page
- \$200 for a half-page
- \$175 for the quarter-page color ad on the back cover.

For information about ads, contact Mike Doyle, Pappagallo editor, at [odoyle584@gmail.com](mailto:odoyle584@gmail.com) or Frank Perrecone, assistant Pappagallo editor and GRIAA co-chair, at [frankperrecone@aol.com](mailto:frankperrecone@aol.com).



What can you say about an issue that has features on St. Joseph Day and Frank Sinatra? It's a fitting send-off to the black-and-white format that has been featured in the Pappagallo since its inception. We hope you are looking forward to color and the addition of ads as much as we are. In this issue, we present the GRIAA Immigration History project forms for the last time. If you have not submitted the history of your family to us, please consider doing so. In these family histories, many of us are aware of how and when our ancestors arrived from Italy. On Page 10, you will find a feature on the overall Italian immigration, focusing on South America and Brazil. You also will find many features on people, places, and things going on in the Rockford area and some fun pieces on what it is like to be an Italian-American. Fitting to the season, we have recipes for St. Joseph pasta (pasta con sarde) and ta'ano. We hope you enjoy this issue.

The Pappagallo newsletter is published twice a year, in the spring and the fall, by the Greater Rockford Italian American Association. The purpose of the Pappagallo is to keep its readers in touch with Italian culture by highlighting different regions of Italy and celebrating its history, customs, language and cuisine. It also features news, history and cultural events that pertain to the Rockford area. It is distributed to the public at no charge. To have your name added to our mailing list, contact us at Pappagallo, P.O. Box 1915, Rockford IL 61110-0415 or email one of us: Mike Doyle, editor, [odoyle584@gmail.com](mailto:odoyle584@gmail.com); Theresa Cascio, assistant editor, [tcascio7@gmail.com](mailto:tcascio7@gmail.com); or Frank Perrecone, assistant editor and GRIAA co-chair, [frankperrecone@aol.com](mailto:frankperrecone@aol.com).

continued from page 1

ers insist. "Each one is like a little piece of art," Rosie said. "It's not a cookie-cutter thing."

"They are made out of salted dough material," Joan said. "Salt, with the flour and a little bit of water. They're not edible. They're really meant to be more of a work of art, using Christian symbols, symbols of Sicily and of nature."

"Architetture dei pani di Salem" also provides another possible source of St. Joseph's Day. It explains that the altar with its tables and offering of food

date to the mid-sixteenth century when Isidoro de Isolani, a Dominican monk, used the generosity of St. Joseph to distribute food to the poor and outcasts. By the eighteenth century, the ritual had evolved into an "invitation to lunch for three poor people that personify Jesus, Joseph and Mary ... which, precisely, represents the Holy Family."

The baking of the Salemi loafs signals the start for preparation for the St. Anthony Altar, which is co-chaired by Colleen Gullo and Rosie Scalice Sheridan. Later in February, volunteers began baking the cookies, then in early March the *pignolate*, and cookies—white, chocolate, and fig. By the second week of March, the altar itself is well under construction, under the supervision of Carl Ambruoso. The day before the altar, the Pasta con Sardi sauce is made by the men of the parish.

On Saturday, March 12, the blessing of the altar is held after the 4:30 p.m. Mass, and the display is first viewed by the public. On Sunday, March 13, pasta is served from noon to 3 p.m. and is open to the public with no charge. Free will donations are accepted. Each person will get a plate of Pasta con Sardi, topped with bread crumbs, a piece of froggia, St. Joseph's bread, a piece of cake, and a small bag of cookies. Each year, the altar serves between 1,000 and 1,200 people.



Joan Gullo fashions little breads, called *panozzi*, for the St. Joseph's Altar at St. Anthony Church



A close-up of panozzi on an arch at last year's St. Joseph Altar



## GRIAA IMMIGRATION HISTORIES of ROCKFORD ITALIAN FAMILIES

Please use this form to help you gather and prepare your story.

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden names of wives and dates of birth of immigrants to America

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Dates)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Dates)

City or Village of Residence in Italy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Occupations: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Departed Italy: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Family Members Left in Italy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Port of Departure, Name of Ship: \_\_\_\_\_

Port of Arrival, Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Family Members Who Made Initial Crossing:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Family or Friends Already in United States to Greet /Assist Your Ancestors:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Locations Resided Before Settling in Rockford and Years, If Known:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**GRIAA IMMIGRATION HISTORIES of ROCKFORD ITALIAN FAMILIES**

Reasons for Settling in Rockford (include year):

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Addresses or Streets or Residence(s):

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Occupations of Immigrants/Years with and Names of Employers:

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Names of Children of Immigrants:

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Additional information you want to add about your family for example; family traditions, connections to St. Anthony School and church, the old neighborhood:

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For examples of family histories previously submitted to GRIAA, go to <http://www.griaa.org/culture-education-committee/>



## October 1 Deadline Set for GRIAA's Immigration Project

By Frank Perrecone

Several years ago, GRIAA started to reach out to Rockford Italian-American families to obtain family immigration histories for a book GRIAA expects to publish entitled "*Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families*." The deadline to submit family histories is October 1, 2016.

For complete information, including a helpful Family History Form to assist you in organizing and writing your family's immigration history, go to [GRIAA.org](http://GRIAA.org), click on the Culture and Education Committee link and scroll down. We even provide examples of some family histories that will be included in our book. You also can find a copy of the form on Pages 3 and 4 of this issue of the Pappagallo.

Although you don't need this type of detailed information to write your family history, I recently obtained copies of my grandparents' naturalization and registration documents from the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services for a \$40 fee to search and request records. There is a lot of immigration information contained in these documents. But, most families already collectively possess the information to adequately write the immigration history without resorting to genealogy research.

Requests may be submitted online using a credit card or by mail using a money order or cashier's check. To make an online request, visit [www.uscis.gov/genealogy](http://www.uscis.gov/genealogy) and click on "I would like to." Click on "Make a Genealogy Request" and then click on the yellow box that says, "Order Search/Record Here." Click the blue box that says, "Index Search \$20." Please be sure to read all of the instructions before submitting a request.

To make a request via postal mail, complete and submit the appropriate USCIS Genealogy Program request form, Genealogy Index Search Request (G-1041). This form can be found by going to [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov), clicking on "Search our site?" at the top of the page. Type "G-1041" in the search box and click the magnifying glass icon or hit "Enter" on your keyboard. Then click on "Download Form G-1041-USCIS."

If your family is not included in GRIAA's book, it is because no one from your family submitted the information to us. Don't be disappointed that your family is not included. Be part of Rockford Italian-American history by providing us with your family's immigration history.

## GRIAA accepts Hall of Fame nominations

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

Nomination forms are available by contacting Frank Perrecone (815-962-2700) or Frank Valentine (815-742-1691). You also can get information from the GRIAA website at [griaa.org](http://griaa.org). It is not necessary to specify for which honor you are nominating the individual. The committee will decide based on the provided information.

The induction and recognition ceremony will take place at the awards banquet in October.

## GRIAA participates in Midtown Ethnic Festival

GRIAA had a presence at the Midtown Ethnic Festival and Parade, August 30, 2015. About 30 nationalities participated. GRIAA's Culture and Education

Committee joined Ethnic Heritage Museum in sharing a tent. GRIAA co-chair Frank Perrecone and his wife Jody made materials and posters available highlighting our immigration history project. The adult dance troupe marched in the parade and performed on stage.

About 50 cultures were represented, including Latino, American Indian, Serbian, Greek, Norwegian, Laotian, Vietnamese, Filipino, Jewish, German, Turkish, and Swedish. The events took place in the Midtown District; the parade began on Seventh Street.



Members of GRIAA's Amici Italiani Dance Troupe march in the Midtown Ethnic Festival parade last August

## Boylan Italian Club

Rosaria Mercuri-Ford is the new adviser for the Italian Club at Boylan High School, and it's no surprise to learn that food is high on the list of agenda items. "We have been busy discussing our new agenda, electing the club's officers and preparing foods so far," Mercuri-Ford wrote in an email. "We made pizzas from scratch in the Foods room back in November. That took a while but it was a lot of fun. I was surprised to find out that the students had a pretty good idea on how to make pizza!"

Emily Godin is the club's president, with Reid Walter as vice-president and Maddie Hawley as secretary. Mercuri-Ford, who took over from Jimmy Sartino, said the club members are respectful and *simpatico*, always showing enthusiasm and interest. They hope to take a trip to an Italian restaurant but also play Italian card games like *scopa* and *briscola*.

Club members not only make traditional Italian food, they learn about the heritage of the dishes. After making *pizzelle* from scratch, they learned that *pizzelle* come from the Abruzzi and central regions of Italy. They're also called *ferratelle*, "since you need a special iron (*ferro*) to make them," Mercuri-Ford said. "In the old days, people used to make *pizzelle* on the chimney fire, later on the stove burners; that is why most irons had very long handles."

In their most recent meeting, club members made *capuccino* and *pandoro*. They also made plans for the group to go to the Capri restaurant in downtown Rockford.

Before coming to Boylan, where she has taught German for 14 years, Mercuri-Ford taught Italian at St. Peter's School and was a foreign language teacher in Rome for 10 years. Born in Molize, she grew up in Abruzzi before living in Rome for 16 years. She moved to the U.S. in 1984. This summer, she and another teacher will take a group of Boylan students to Germany, Switzerland, and France, including Paris. Following that trip, she plans to spend three weeks in her native Italy.



## Scholarship opportunities for Italian-American students

Several scholarships are available for students of Italian-American descent ranging from elementary and high school to college and post-graduate schools.

### Greater Rockford Italian American Association

Through this committee, scholarships are presented annually to area Italian American families to defray the cost of a private (parochial) education. Through the 2015 Festa Italiana, \$692,977 in scholarships has been presented. Visit [www.griaa.org](http://www.griaa.org), then onto the Scholarship Committee, chaired by Ben Todaro and Frank Valentine. Scholarships information can be viewed and printed by clicking on Application Form.

### Columbian Club Charitable Foundation

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

### Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans

One \$2,000 scholarship presented to a male high school senior of Italian ancestry. Deadline and presentation to be announced. Winner must attend presentation. Visit [www.jccia.com](http://www.jccia.com) or call 708.450.9050.

### Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans Women's Division

Several \$2,000 scholarships awarded to female students of Italian ancestry. Deadline is April 1. Presentation is May 1. Visit [www.jccia.com](http://www.jccia.com), call 708.450.9050 or email [jcc@jccia.com](mailto:jcc@jccia.com).

### Justinian Society of Lawyers

Ten to twenty scholarships of \$1,000 to \$5,000 awarded to law students of Italian ancestry based on academic ability and need. In 2014, 20 scholarships totaling \$37,000 were awarded. Deadline is early September. Presentation is in mid-October. Visit [www.justinians.org/scholarship-programs](http://www.justinians.org/scholarship-programs), call Anthony Farace at 312.255.8550 or email at [amf@amari-lovallo.com](mailto:amf@amari-lovallo.com).

### Sons of Italy Foundation, Illinois

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

## GRIAA to Sponsor Trip to Sicily in '16

By Frank Perrecone

The Greater Rockford Italian American Association will sponsor a trip to Sicily from September 4-14, 2016. Cities and towns on 11-day tour are Palermo, Segesta, Erice, Marsala, Agrigento, Taormina, Messina, Siracusa, and Catania. Included in the itinerary is a visit to the majestic volcano Mt. Etna, located near Taormina.

The trip also will include stops in Roccamena, Aragona, and Sambucca, the ancestral home of many Rockford immigrants.

A no-obligation, informational meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 23, 2016, at Lindstrom Travel, 5970 Guilford Road, Rockford. Tony Caruana, group travel coordinator at Lindstrom, and Frank Perrecone, GRIAA co-chair, will be available to answer questions, including flight plans, included meals, and overall cost. RSVP Tony at 815-398-8888 or [Tony@lindstromtravel.com](mailto:Tony@lindstromtravel.com). If you are unable to attend the meeting and would like information, contact Tony.

### Itinerary

**Sept. 4, 2016** -- Flight from Chicago O'Hare Airport to Rome.

**Sept. 5** -- Arrival in Rome, then a flight to Palermo, where the group will be met by its escort. Palermo on your own. (Astoria Palace Hotel).

**Sept. 6** -- Monreale Duomo, which features glittering gold mosaics in the cathedral's interior. Whisper service tour of Cathedral Vergine Maria Santissima Assunta, which dates to 1183, and view of Palazzo del Mormanni, seat of the Kings of Sicily during Norman occupation and the oldest royal residence in Europe.

**Sept. 7** -- Segesta for a short tour, then visit to Segesta Archeological Site, including the temple and the theater. Tempio Dorico is considered the finest example of a Doric temple in the world today. Walking tour of Erice and visit to Castello di Venere (Venus Castle). Short drive to Marsala with visit to City Centre. (Hotel Best Western Stella D'It in Marsala)

**Sept. 8** -- Roccamena, Sambucca, and Aragona. (Scala dei Turchi Resort and Spa in Agrigento).

**Sept. 9** -- Valley of the Temples, some of the world's best examples of Greek Doric architecture, in Agrigento.

**Sept. 10** -- Villa Romano del Casale, ancient Roman villa with beautiful mosaics, then drive to Taormina. (Mazzaro Sea Palace in Taormina).

**Sept. 11** -- Drive to Mt. Etna, including cable car ride to the volcano's crater. Return to Taormina for tour of Greek Theatre, built in the third century B.C.

**Sept. 12** -- Messina, 3,000-year-old city, for a tour.

**Sept. 13** -- Catomie del Paradiso, Ear of Denyse, Airfitatro, Roman and Greek theaters in Siracusa, founded in 743 B.C. by Greek colonists, once surpassed Athens in splendor and power. Duomo Cathedral, where composer Vincenzo Bellini is buried, in Catania. (Romano Palace Luxury in Catania).

**Sept. 14** -- Flight from Catania to Rome, then return flight to Chicago.



## Local museum highlights Midway Village Museum to present two cultural heritage events

Midway Village Museum and the Rock Valley College Center for Learning in Retirement (CLR) are holding Rockford's Cultural Celebration, Saturday, April 23, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the museum, 6799 Guilford Road in Rockford. This event will feature, among others, an Italian cultural display as well as ethnic music and presentations, family crafts, a "Many Faces, One Community" exhibit, lectures, panel discussions, ethnic food samples, and historical photos of Rockford's various cultures. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for children 5- through 17-years-old. Tickets are free to CLR members, RVC students, faculty or staff (with ID) and museum members.

Rockford's ethnic heritage will be celebrated a new way when Midway Village Museum presents The Rockford Plate Inaugural Gala, Thursday, July 7, on the museum grounds, 6799 Guilford Road. One of the six ethnic groups to be presented is the Italian community. (The others are Swedish, Polish, African-American, Latino, and Irish.) Culture and cuisine from Rockford's Italian past will be presented from 5:30 to 9 p.m. at the museum's Victorian Village. The event will transport guests to Rockford in 1900 where each of the six immigrant homes will feature food, music, traditional clothing, educational displays, decorations, and actors portraying actual Rockford immigrants. Guests will then be invited to the Main Street Celebration, where they will gather for live music and dessert. The cost is \$50 per person and the RSVP deadline is Tuesday, June 28. To reserve your place on the guest list, call 815.397.9112 or email your information to [admin@midwayvillage.com](mailto:admin@midwayvillage.com).

### Ethnic Heritage Museum honors St. Joseph

The newest exhibition in the Italian Gallery at the Ethnic Heritage Museum currently features the history of St. Joseph Altars in South Rockford. The display will include photos of individual altars held in homes in the neighborhood where many Italian-Americans grew up. The museum is located at 1129 S. Main Street in Rockford and is open Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m.

## Boone County Fair Queen wears her title with pride

By Jillian Paul

Winning the title of Miss Boone Bounty Fair Queen 2015 was, by far, one of the best experiences of my life. What made it even more special for me was the excitement I saw from my huge Italian family as they rushed onto the stage with hugs and kisses after I received the crown. That night, I was lucky enough to have family members in town from all over the country, as we had our family reunion the day before the pageant. For me, coming from an Italian background, winning the crown meant so much to me and my family. My great-grandparents came to America to find their American dream. (Pologruto, the family name, was Americanized at Ellis Island). If they could see me now, I know they would be filled with pride seeing me live out my own dream.

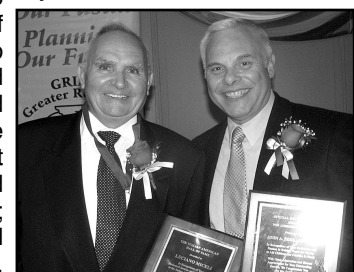
## Photo Highlights



In the above photo, Rosie Scalise-Sheridan is pictured with Rockford Diocese Bishop David Malloy at the Woman of the Year banquet. In the photo at right, Louis Micelli (left) and John Terranova were honored at GRIAA's Hall of Fame Dinner, October 10, 2015, at Cliffbreakers. Miceli was named to GRIAA's Hall of Fame; Terranova received the Special Recognition Award.



Rosie Scalise-Sheridan represented St. Anthony of Padua parish on Sunday, January 31, at the 24th annual Woman of the Year banquet at Giovanni's. In the photo above, she is joined by her daughters, Trisha Wolford Tharp (right) and Crystal Wolford.



On October 11, 2015, the Columbus Day Mass was celebrated at St. Anthony of Padua Church. Leading GRIAA's procession into church, co-chair Frank Valentine (left) carries the U.S. flag down the aisle, while former long-time board member Paul Mastrangeli does the same with the Italian flag.

Three members of the Rockford Italian Sister Cities Alliance greet visitors at the Around the World event, held December 31, 2015, at the Burpee Museum of Natural History. Rockford's sister city in Italy is Ferentino. From left are Sylvia (Tartaglia) Weber, RISCA Vice-

President Dina Getty, Sylvia's daughter, and Irene (Tartaglia) Drevdahl. The event showcased New Year's Eve traditions and celebrations around the world.



Boone County Fair Queen Jillian Paul is surrounded by her family following her coronation on August 18, 2015, in Belvidere. From left, sister-in-law Melissa Paul, brother Michael Paul, parents Tony and Jen Paul, brothers Jeff and Nick Paul. Jillian, graphic artist for the

Pappagallo, is believed to be the first Italian-American to become the fair queen in Boone County.





## **20 Signs You Grew Up Eating Food in an Italian American Family**

### **The Five Basic Food Groups: Pasta, Olive Oil, Cheese, Espresso and Wine**

- Growing up, there was only one kind of oil in your cabinets. And olive oil was pretty much used on and or with everything.
- Any time you had friends over, your parents would set out a five-course meal for them.
- Engagement? Funeral? New baby? Baptism? New dog? Everything's an excuse to eat.
- Pasta is always an appetizer. Even at Thanksgiving.
- And you knew better than to ever refuse a bowl of homemade pasta – or worse, ask for whole wheat.
- Your nana always had enough sauce stored in the freezer to feed a small town for weeks.
- And her recipe for it trumps the recipes of other nanas – and had one special ingredient, like lamb neck bone or pigs' feet.
- At least one person in your family owns a butcher shop. Or grocery store. Or a bakery. Or a pizzeria.
- Nothing store-bought can compete with your family's homemade desserts: cannoli, fig cookies, chocolate cookies.
- Even at the table, utensils in hand, everyone talks with their hands, gesticulating wildly during conversations.
- When all the other kids had a ham and Swiss, bologna or peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches in their lunch boxes, you had mortadella and mozzarella.
- Your mom calls you every single day to ask if you've eaten, what you've eaten, or if you've been eating enough. Even if you're 40.
- Wine was your first alcoholic beverage. (You were probably 5. You could not try espresso until you were 8).
- And regardless of your tolerance, two sips of your uncle's homemade wine, and you're blacked out for the night.
- On Christmas Eve, you're more excited about the Feast of the Seven Fishes than opening presents. And pumped for the Christmas Panettone.
- You may not know a single word of Italian, but you somehow find it necessary to pronounce "mozzarella," "manicotti," and "prosciutto" as though you were born in the Tuscan countryside.
- Italian wedding favors always have those tooth-destroying almond candies attached to them.
- Fresh basil, tomatoes, or parsley usually came from one of your relatives' gardens.
- You usually had to cancel all your Sunday plans for family dinner time.
- And you can't wait to pass the traditions on to a family of your own.

(Though you know that, despite your most valiant attempts, your best dish will never be anywhere near as good as your nana's.)

## **Top Italian t-shirt or sweatshirt messages**

(As seen on Facebook)

- I'm Italian. Therefore, I can't keep calm. Capesh?
- Legalize Marinara
- American grown with Italian roots
- Obi Wan Cannoli
- I'm not yelling. I'm Italian
- I don't need therapy. I just need to go to Italy

## **You know you're Italian from Rockford ...**

... If you have ever called the bathroom the *bacausa*. In truth, you won't find this word in any Italian dictionary. Here is the back story ... in the old days in South Rockford, most of the homes had their bathrooms in the back of the house. So that "back-a-the-house" became an original Rockford word. Example: "Ma, where'd he go?" "He went to the *bacausa*."

... When you understand when someone says he or she went to *Sannatni's*. That, of course, is a slurry sort of saying, "St. Anthony's School." Example: "I went to *Sannatni's*." "Yeah, when? Who was the scariest nun?"

... If you understand that South Rockford wasn't really geographically correct. What today is Southwest Rockford or the Southwest Quadrant was known as the part of town where Italians lived and raised families.

... If you know who is a *Medacani*. Anyone who is not of Italian heritage is an American or *Medacani*. This is not a disparaging term; it is only used to point out the cultural difference. This term is used in various ways according to your location. One variation of it was used on HBO's "The Sopranos." Example: "That wedding was so *Medacani*, they didn't even have any cookies."

... Where *sugo* is what we call tomato sauce, not gravy. There are several variations of this, such as *succo* and *salsa*, and none of them are wrong. Another pasta dish that has many ways of spelling is the Easter casserole with roots in Aragona, Sicily – Taano, tegano, taonno, tanno, tagano, tiano or (my favorite) ta'ano. The fact that we put gravy on mashed potatoes and not pasta isn't only acknowledged here. There is a t-shirt available on Facebook that reads: "You must be from New Jersey because actual Italians don't call it gravy."

... If your major holiday in March is St. Joseph's Day on the 19th and not St. Patrick's Day on the 17th. In keeping with that theme, you are more likely to have a *fave* bean in your possession and not a shamrock or four-leafed clover.

## **Festa to hold Little Miss Italian American Pageant**

The second annual Little Miss Italian American Pageant for girls 5-12 will be held Saturday, August 6, 2016, at the annual Festa Italiana. Competition will take place in two age groups – 5- to 8-years-old, and 9- 12-years-old – at the Gambino Stage, located next to the Culture Tent. Contestants will be judged on speech, stage presence, and the answers to prepared questions. For information, go to [griaa.org](http://griaa.org).





## Frank Sinatra's big break came in Rockford

'Skinny little kid' sang with Tommy Dorsey at the Coronado Theater in 1940

By Mike Doyle

Although Frank Sinatra's 100th birthday was December 12, 2015, it's not too late to tell the story about his connection with Rockford. It is a story full of interesting anecdotes.

Sinatra, who died at the age of 82 on May 14, 1998, actually could claim that an appearance here gave him a huge boost in his career. Two of his biographers, Spencer Leigh ("Frank Sinatra, an Extraordinary Life") and Jean-Pierre Haubach, ("Frank Sinatra"), provide details about how Sinatra came to perform in Rockford with Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra on January 26, 1940, at the Coronado Theater. But the most original source is the book, "Frank Sinatra: My Father," by his daughter Nancy Sinatra.

In it, she quoted her famous father: "I took the train from Grand Central Station (in New York) to Chicago, then one to Rockford, Illinois, where the band was playing. It was like going from one school to another. I was timid. I was going to meet a whole new group of people. I had known Tommy a bit because, on the road, bands cross paths

from time to time. I was nervous, but I faked a couple of tunes and knew the lyrics of some songs, so that we did alright with the audience, a group of kids. It was a holiday prom or something like that. But apart from Jo Stafford, I didn't get a very warm welcome. I was cold-shouldered by that whole band. I think they were just saying, well, let's see what he can do."



Frank Sinatra in his early crooner days.

Well, "the kid" did OK, but according to Wikipedia.com, Dorsey had a different recollection of

the event. After opening the show with "Stardust," Dorsey said, "You could almost feel the excitement coming up out of the crowds when the kid stood up to sing. Remember, he was no matinee idol. He was just a skinny kid with big ears. I used to stand there so amazed I'd almost forget to take my own solos."

With either telling, Sinatra showed what he could do over the course of a memorable performance career on stage and screen as a "matinee idol", in the recording studio, and in concert.

Little else is known of that January day in 1940. A story in the Rockford Morning Star reported Tommy Dorsey's appearance. But it was hardly a big event. Instead it was billed as a "one-day stage entertainment" in a "one-hour revue." It was the first of two acts on the bill. The second was the film "The Honeymoon's Over."

Sam Caruana of Rockford was still a teenager when he and some buddies went to the Coronado that January night in 1940 and saw Sinatra. "He was just a band singer at that time," Sam said. "He would sit on a chair on the side, get up and sing a song, then sit down. To me, he looked like a skinny little kid." Sam and his friends often took in shows like the one that night.

"We used to go to all of those shows then," he said. "They used to bring the big bands into the Coronado and the Armory. Generally speaking, the audience would be young. They always used to have a movie afterward."

It's not surprising that he couldn't remember what it cost for a ticket. "Relative to the times, it was very cheap to get in," he said. "It couldn't have been very much if I was there."

Sinatra's career was boosted when he signed with Columbia Records in 1943 and became a hit with the "bobby-soxers." That same year, he made his first film, "Higher and Higher," and scored his first on-screen kiss with Rockford native Barbara Hale, a 1940 graduate of Rockford High School. The film was released the next year and had its Midwestern premier at the Coronado on February 12, 1944.

On Christmas Day, 1943, Hale was in Rockford to appear at a dance at the Shrine Temple, which was located directly across the street from the Coronado. Newspaper ads of the time report that couples could dance to Bill Engberg's Orchestra, and that the first 200 girls would get eight by-ten-inch color photos of Frank Sinatra. It cost 55 cents for a ticket to the event, which ran from 8:30 p.m. to 12:20 a.m.

Francis Albert Sinatra was born to Italian immigrant parents Saverio Antonino (Anthony) Martino Sinatra and Natalie Della Garaventa Sinatra in Hoboken, New Jersey. On February 14, 1914, Anthony Sinatra eloped with Natalie Garaventa. Her family would not pay for a wedding because Anthony was illiterate and a Sicilian. The Garaventas were from Lumarzo in northern Italian region of Liguria. Frank was born December of the following year. Frank Sinatra may have passed through Rockford at some point later in his life, but there is no record of another appearance. Had he ever looked back on that night at the Coronado, he truly could sing one of his standards, "The Best is Yet to Come."



Frank Sinatra and Rockford native Barbara Hale starred in the film "Higher and Higher" in 1940. It was Sinatra's first movie.



The courtyard of the Immigration Museum in Sao Paulo, Brazil, which formerly was the immigration reception center for newcomers to South America, including thousands of Italian families.

## Italiani del Mondo

### North America was not the only destination for Italian immigrants

By Mike Doyle

About every half-hour, visitors to the Immigration Museum in Sao Paulo, Brazil, hear the shrill steam whistle of a locomotive. The engine pulls a small train into the station at the museum, replicating the same experience that many of our ancestors had upon arrival at Ellis Island in New York. Sao Paulo was the main destination for newcomers from Europe who were destined for Brazil during the great movement of people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These newcomers departed their ships at the port of Santos and took the train to the Immigrant Hostelry in Sao Paulo, where they were processed for entry into a new land.

However, unlike immigrants to America who were generally on their own following their arrival protocols at Ellis Island, the newcomers to Brazil stayed at the Immigrant Hostelry. There they were not only acclimated to Brazilian culture, but taught trades, educated, and cared for until they were assimilated into the local scene.

Today, Italian Brazilians are the largest number of people with full or partial Italian ancestry outside Italy at 31 million. The United States and Argentina have nearly the same number with 17 million. Canada lists just over 1.5 million and Australia has less than a million. From 1876 to 1905, during the greatest period of immigration, 4,150,000 people emigrated from Italy to North and South America. According to [Italianlegacy.com](http://Italianlegacy.com), more than 29 million people left Italy from 1861 to 1985, leaving for other countries in Europe, the United Kingdom, North America, South America, North Africa, East Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

We know that there are a lot of people like us – who left the Old Country for a better future – because we can find pizza and pasta pretty much anywhere in the world. Among the first Europeans to reach Brazil were Genovese sailors, but the large movement of people began in the

mid-19th century. Although Brazil didn't outlaw slavery until 1888, leaders realized that its days were numbered so it began to recruit immigrants. They focused on Portugal, Italy, and Spain because these were white and Catholic countries.

The first Italians arrived in 1875 but the biggest boon came between 1880 and 1900 when one million arrived, seeking work in coffee fields and industrial plants. They were mostly from Veneto, Lombardy, Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna. The Immigrant Hostelry opened in 1887 and served newcomers from more than 70 nations for 91 years. Upon arrival, immigrants were housed in dormitories, visited the medical center as they prepared for assimilation. The center offered a post office, pharmacy, laboratory, telegraph office, police station, laundry service, kitchen, dining hall and dental services. The last arrivals, a group of immigrants from Korea, came in 1978.

Upon closing, the complex became an historical site and is now the

Immigration Museum. Many original artifacts – dentist chairs, medical instruments, kitchen tools, radios, switchboards – are on display along with recreations of the dining hall and dorms. One of the tasks assigned to newcomers was to write letters to



These drawers at the Immigration Museum contain preserved original copies of letters recent immigrants to Brazil sent to their families back home.

the people they left behind, telling of their experiences, hopes, and dreams. Many of these original letters are displayed on a wall inside open drawers. In another part of the museum, a long wall is paneled with wooden planks from floor to ceiling. On it are engraved first and last names of many of those who came to stay. It doesn't take long to find names of many Italians.

Italian Brazilians have had a lasting impact in Sao Paulo and all of Brazil. One of the most popular soccer clubs is Italian. Three presidents of Brazil are of Italian descent. While Italian restaurants are found all over Brazil's largest cities, there is no more unique place than the curving block on Av. Handava in the center of Sao Paulo. There you will find five restaurants, a sandwich shop and an Italian food store owed by one family – the Famiglia Mancini.

In a bit of a twist, on our visit to Brazil in September, 2015, we found out that Vicente Cardone, our tour guide in Rio de Janeiro, was of Italian descent. He was from Buenos Aires, Argentina, which is the home of many others with roots in Italy, including Pope Francis. Jorge Mario Bergoglio, or Pope Francis, was born in Buenos Aires to Mario and Regina (Sivori) Bergoglio. Mario emigrated from the Piedmont region in 1929 to escape fascism under Mussolini.

The Italian government has a name for all of us in all these places whose roots are in Italy – *Italiani nel Mondo*. Italians in the world.



## The Station Master

### The remarkable untold story of a brave man who saved many lives



Andrea Albisetti, born in 1885 and station master of Tradate, a town located between Varese and Milan in Lombardia, was a model government employee like many others, as per the image of him that remains. Yet he wouldn't have held on to his job (or life) long, had the authorities known back then what was just uncovered in January, 2016.

One of Albisetti's job responsibilities as station master was to receive the mail that came in from Rome and Milan every day. However, during World War II, the mail happened to also contain the secret arrest orders for dissidents and Jews. Albisetti would simply back light the envelopes by holding them up against a light bulb, read the names they contained, and then tip-off those people that same evening before the mail was opened and read by the authorities the following morning, thereby giving those to be arrested the time to leave town and go into hiding.

It appeared that Albisetti "took his history with him" when he died. In a stroke of good fortune, it recently became known. Just how that story resurfaced was the result of extensive research by a high school history teacher, who was able to put the pieces together.

Here are three of the main pieces:

- Like so many other young Italian men at the time, Dorligo and Serajevo Albisetti, two brothers from Tradate, were sent off to the Eastern Front in Russia in World War II. (A heart-wrenching, tangentially-related yet unconfirmed local legend holds that the person who blew the whistle sending the train of the two conscripted brothers off to war was their father.) Only Serajevo returned; Dorligo was decorated posthumously and has been commemorated every year since then by the Tradate Chapter of the National Alpini Association.

- The incredible story (like all the others) of a "Shoah Violin" found by Carlo Alberto Cerutti, a collector in Turin years ago. The violin's original owners, siblings Maria and Enzo Segre Levi, were in hiding in a country villa near Tradate during World War II. Tragically, Maria was caught, deported, and killed at Auschwitz, while Enzo managed to

escape but committed suicide after the war. However, many years later, their father told a group of friends how "a station master read my name through a back-lit envelope, and, instead of putting me on a train for Milan (which meant San Vittore – the prison – and deportation) he put me on a train in the opposite direction."

- Alberto Gagliardo was a history teacher twenty years ago at Marie Curie High School in Tradate with a deep interest in local stories such as the one above. He would give his students the task of researching and finding other similar stories, which, they gladly did. Not surprisingly, a few of the stories from these teenagers contain the mention of a mysterious station master, nameless in all cases. One story was told by Oscar Stenfeld, an elderly gentleman, to Federico Colombo, the student who conducted the interview as part of his history class assignment. "However, like all the others, Stenfeld too couldn't remember the name of the station master," recalled Colombo. The stories ended up in a book by Gagliardo, *Jews in the Province of Varese*.

Today Colombo, a former student, is a 34-year-old history teacher at a non-profit school for disadvantaged young



This vintage photo shows the Station Master on the job

people. In addition, he is the president of the Tradatese Historical Society, where he received a request from the Tradate mayor, Laura Cavallotti. She asked if he could

help her with the Tradate Shoah Violin Commemoration planned for Feb. 20, 2016. So he began digging through archives and putting material together, including information about the station master whose name nobody remembers.

Nobody remembers the name, Colombo said, "...because nobody had ever made the connection!

Anyone who knew the story of the World War II *Alpini* Albisetti brothers didn't know about their father or what he had done. And those who knew the stories about the nameless station master, such as the surviving Jews, didn't know that he was father of the two Albisetti brothers from Tradate who went off to the Russian Front."

So how did Colombo figure it out? "My father was an *Alpino*," he said, "and he shared the story of the Albisetti brothers with me. So when I began researching the story of the Shoah Violin for the upcoming commemoration, I remembered that old interview of Stenfeld I had done for Prof. Gagliardo's assignment, and I simply put the pieces together."

Source: *ItalianNotebook.com*



## The Last Mule of Anzi

### Blame it on the Pandas

The old traditions are what we find so appealing about Italy. Things have changed in modern times, that is certain, but many of the long-held customs and crafts are – at least for the moment – still alive.

One of the first things we saw when we visited my ancestral village of Anzi, in the Basilicata Region, for the first time was a man with a mule ambling along in a narrow, stepped lane.

We found it sweetly reassuring that, in a world where technology blitzes forward at a mind-boggling rate, some things are better left to tradition.

Through our many visits to Anzi we would see this man, striding along



With the hills in the background, the last mule of Anzi is loaded and ready for its trek

his clip-clopping mule, which was usually bundled with firewood. We would wave as we passed him, and exchanged *buongornos* and polite chit-chat as he delivered wood to an old *signora's* doorstep. In an ancient hamlet with leg-numbingly steep and narrow streets, the mule makes sense. How else are you going to get a load of heavy wood home?

All around town there are stone circles affixed to many buildings, placed there to tie up a mule. At one time, my cousin Michele told me, there were probably thirty working mules in Anzi. They would be utilized to haul tools and implements to the fields, tote grain sacks to the flour mill, and transport olives or grapes to be pressed. Now there is just one.

"*La Panda ha ucciso il mulo*," Michele's wife Melina stated flatly. The Panda killed the mule? What?

"The Panda, the car by Fiat," she said. It became the workhorse of rural towns like this because it was narrow enough to fit through many of the streets, had enough power to accelerate uphill to reach them, and came in a four-wheel drive version that could be taken to the fields. It was also economical, didn't require feed, a stall, or poop-scooper clean-up.

Completely logical. It was only then that we took notice of just how many older model Pandas were still in use in Basilicata, and now understood why. The new Panda is much larger and less desirable in towns like this; old ones are greatly in demand.

Yet the mule guy continues unfazed. His customers are mostly *anziani*, elderly folks, but he can be seen around town every day guiding the mule up the stepped, inclined alleyways with bundles of wood to fuel their stoves and fireplaces. It is an old-world tradition that will likely die when he does, but for now he and his mule carry on.

Source: Valerie Schneider in *ItalianNotebook.com*



Rocco Gallicchio works in his studio

## The Ceramicist of Calvello

### Quality found with artisan who does it the old way – by hand

Rocco Gallicchio is a soft-spoken guy. His eyes flit embarrassingly when paid a compliment and his hands seem to have permanently taken on the dusty-white hue of the clay that they work with daily.

Rocco is one of just a few remaining ceramicists in a town that once brimmed with them. He ardently carries on, hoping to revive the fires of the dormant kilns and renew Calvello's once-glorious reputation as a center of southern Italy's ceramic trade.

Calvello lies in a high valley in the middle of Basilicata, a mountainous region wedged between Puglia and Calabria. Since the Middle Ages, ceramics constituted a mainstay of Calvello's economy, the craft purportedly transported here by Benedictine monks. The Calvello artisans developed their own unique style that is still employed by the purist Rocco.

Rocco does everything by hand. He collects the clay from a nearby source, which he keeps secret. He throws the clay by hand, molding it into lovely, rustic objects; everything is created according to traditional methods. He gathers minerals, roots, and berries to make the paints he uses. He makes his own brushes from goat hair.

The bird is a recurring theme, as it has been for centuries in Calvello. Rocco refuses mass production methods, preferring that each piece have the natural, slight variations that are inevitable in handmade products. His products speak of Old World quality, artisan pride, and rustic charm.

He labors on in this ancient craft, creating a name for himself but also hoping to interest some of Calvello's youth into the trade. He has recreated ancient patterns for monasteries and provided the wedding favors for Sofia Coppola, daughter of Francis Ford Coppola, when she wed in her ancestral town of Bernalda, Basilicata.

Pay a visit to Rocco's shop and take home a unique piece of Basilicata tradition.



The bird pattern that is a traditional example of southern Italian ceramics

Source: Valerie Schneider in *ItalianNotebook.com*



## Spring, summer festivals, events and holidays in Italy

### March (Marzo)

19 – St. Joseph's Day (Italy's Father's Day)  
12-27 – Exhibition of Eggs, specially crafted egg-inspired creations, Pallazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome  
25 – Good Friday  
27 – Easter



The Tower in Siena looms over the Piazza del Campo in Siena, site of the Palio races

### April (Aprile)

2 – Palio della Rana (frog race), Fermignano  
21 – Rome's birthday celebration

### May (Maggio)

8 – Festa del Grillo, Florence (Festival of the Crickets)  
26 – Feast Day of Corpus Christi

### June (Giugno)

14 – Taormina Film Festival, Taormina, Sicily  
24 – Festival of St. John the Baptist

### July (Loglio)

2 – Palio horse race, Siena (Also, August 16)

### August (Agosto)

14 – Hazel Nut Festival, Panzano  
28 -- Bravio della Botti (barrel rolling race), Montepulciano



A plate of *Cicerchie* looks appetizing

now officially recognized by the Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture as a "a product of Italy's traditional agriculture." But she certainly knows how to cook them -- her *zuppa di cicerchie* has no rival.

On a recent visit to Peppa in Assisi, Umbria, a pot of the soup was simmering on her wood stove, the pot encircled by slices of bread, toasting for *bruschetta*. As a side dish, wild *cicoria* Peppa had foraged in the fields was sautéing in her family olive oil with garlic from her garden.

Peppa added a pinch of salt to the *zuppa*, broke up the toasted bread into our bowls, drizzled olive oil over the *bruschetta*, and then spooned on the *zuppa di cicerchie*, rich in potatoes, seasoned with sage and garlic, a splash of homemade tomato sauce. As we shared the savory soup, Peppa reminisced about her life on the land as a child of poor farmers. Like most of our rural neighbors of her age, her schooling ended in third grade ... the labor of everyone was needed on the land.



You've never had a breakfast like this

We ate a lot of *cicerchie* in those days. Mamma made us filling soups for our breakfast at about 9 a.m. – and

*avevamo tanta fame* ("we were so hungry"). We'd all been working the fields since dawn." The rural breakfast soup was always a legume: *fave*, lentils, *fagioli*, chickpeas – or *cicerchie*. Central Italy's farmers once cultivated *le cicerchie* in abundance as this "poor man's" legume needs no fertilizer, resists parasites, and survives in droughts.

Peppa will be eating *cicerchie* fairly often this winter: the wood stove is fired up daily and the stovetop is perfect for simmering soups. And Peppa affirms that the rule to good health is legumes three times weekly. She no longer has to eat her legume soups in the morning, though, for the energy needed for the fatiguing day ahead. Nowadays, her *zuppa di cicerchie* turns many a *pranzo* or *cena* into a gourmet feast.

Source: Anne Robichaud in *ItalianNotebook.com*

## Cicerchie, the poor man's legume, makes a breakfast soup special

With a subtle flavor – almost a culinary marriage between *fagioli borlotti* (Italian variety of a dried bean) and chickpeas – *la cicerchia* has a vaguely quadrangular shape and a characteristic irregular form. You'll never find two *cicerchie* alike. The expression, "just like two peas in a pod," doesn't apply for this legume.

Peppa might not know that *cicerchie* (translated as "chicklings" or "pulses") were cultivated in Mesopotamia as early as 8000 BC for use in breads, *focacce* and soups and that this protein-rich legume – over 20 varieties – is



Like snowflakes, no two beans in this bag look alike





## Lenten, Easter and Spring Recipes

### Pasta and Beans: *Pasta e Fagioli*

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
 1 teaspoon rosemary or sprig  
 ½ teaspoon thyme  
 2-3 sage leaves  
 1 bay leaf  
 1 medium onion, finely chopped  
 1 stalk celery, finely chopped  
 1 small carrot, finely chopped  
 2 cloves garlic, chopped  
 Salt and pepper to taste  
 1 15-ounce can cannelloni beans  
 1 16-ounce can whole or chopped tomatoes  
 2 cups water  
 32 ounces cans chicken broth  
 ½ cup ditalini or other small pasta (Don't overdue the pasta)

In deep pan on stove, heat olive oil and add onion, celery and carrot and cook until softened. Add garlic until cooked (not browned) and herbs and seasonings. Add beans, tomatoes, water, and about half the chicken broth. Heat to boil then allow to simmer 30 minutes. One way to cook the pasta is to add it to the sauce and and cook until pasta is done. Keep in mind that the pasta absorbs much of the sauce. Or cook the pasta to almost *al dente* and add to the sauce. Add additional broth if necessary. Top with grated cheese and serve with crusty bread.

### Lemon Spaghetti

2/3 cup olive oil  
 2/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
 ½ cup fresh lemon juice (from about 2 lemons)  
 ¾ teaspoon salt  
 ½ teaspoon black pepper  
 1 pound spaghetti  
 1/3 cup chopped fresh basil  
 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest (from about 2 lemons)

Whisk the oil, cheese, lemon juice, salt and pepper into a large bowl. Set lemon sauce aside. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the spaghetti and cook, stirring occasionally until tender but firm, about 8 minutes. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the cooking liquid. Add the spaghetti to the lemon sauce and toss with basil and lemon zest. Toss the pasta with enough of the reserved liquid, ¼ cup at a time, to moisten. Salt, pepper to taste.

### St. Joseph's Pasta: *Pasta Con Sarde*

½ pound fresh fennel  
 1 can sardines in tomato sauce (8 ounces) or ½ pound fresh sardines  
 2 cloves garlic, minced fine

1 small head cauliflower  
 Salt and pepper to taste  
 1 cup onion, chopped fine  
 2 cans tomato puree (No. 2)  
 2 6-ounce cans tomato pasta  
 5 cups water  
 4 tablespoons olive oil

Split sardines, removing middle bone and break fish into small pieces. Clean fennel and cook in 1 quart salted boiling water, about 15 minutes or until tender. Drain, cut into small pieces. Clean and cut cauliflower into small pieces and cook in 1 quart boiling water, about 10 minutes or until tender. Drain. Sauté onion in saucepan with 4 tablespoons olive oil until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Add garlic, chopped fennel, tomato paste, tomato puree and water. Simmer for 1 hour. Add sardines and cauliflower and continue cooking until sauce is thick. This makes enough sauce for approximately 2 pounds of pasta. For the Modica or St. Joseph Bread Crumbs, toast 2 cups unseasoned bread crumbs in 1 teaspoon olive oil over low heat until lightly browned, stirring constantly to prevent burning. Remove from heat and add 1 teaspoon sugar. Sprinkle over cooked spaghetti and sauce.

### *Pane di Sant Guiseppe* St. Joseph Italian Bread

3 packages yeast  
 2 cups warm water  
 ¾ cup sugar  
 4-4 ½ pounds sifted flour (use 2 cups for proofing)  
 ½ pound butter  
 3 eggs, beaten  
 2 tablespoons salt  
 2 cups scalded milk  
 1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water

Dissolve yeast in warm water. Add a level teaspoon of sugar and 2 cups flour. Mix well, cover and place in warm place until bubbly. Cream butter and sugar. Add beaten eggs to the creamed butter and sugar. Sift remaining flour and salt together. Using an extra large mixing bowl, put creamed butter, sugar and egg mixture in bowl. Add yeast mixture and stir well. Add scalded milk and flour, a small amount at a time, mixing well. Add enough flour to make a soft kneaded dough. Knead dough well, and let rise in a large bowl until double in size (1 hour). Punch down and let rise again for 30 minutes. Shape into 6 loaves and let rise until double in size in well greased bread loaf pans. Brush with egg mixture. Bake in 400-degree oven for 15 minutes. Lower heat to 375 degrees and bake for 30 minutes longer or until bread is done and golden brown.

(Source: "A Gourmet Trip Thru Italy" by Albert Skaronea)

continued on next page



*(Recipes continued)*

## **Ta'ano**

2 sticks melted margarine  
4 ½ dozen eggs beaten with 2 ½ teaspoons salt  
1 ¼ teaspoons pepper  
1 ¼ quarts Italian cheese  
5 pounds Ricotta cheese  
4 pounds Rigatoni pasta  
3 cans chicken broth  
2 pounds sliced Tuma cheese

Combine margarine, eggs, salt, pepper, Italian cheese and chicken broth in both. Mix well and layer pasta (cooked in well-salted water), Tuma cheese and liquid in a very large pan. Bake at 350 degrees approximately 4 hours until knife comes out clean.

## **Fried Asparagus Patties**

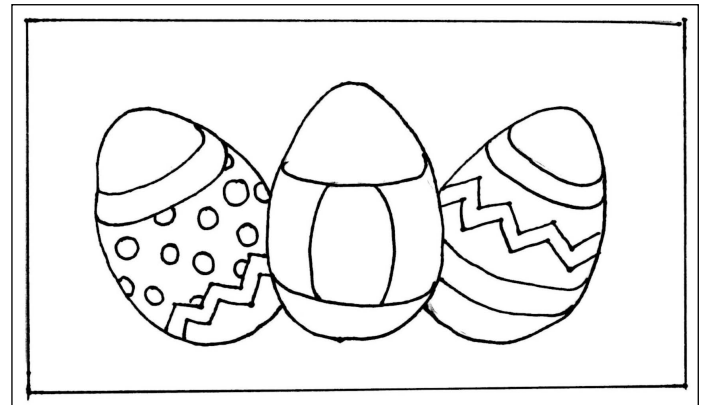
1 pound asparagus  
1 cup bread crumbs  
4 eggs  
1 cup Romano cheese  
1 onion, chopped  
3 cloves, garlic, minced  
Salt, pepper and garlic powder

Wash asparagus and cut into pieces about ½ inches in size. Sauté onions and garlic. Add asparagus and simmer until asparagus are tender. Add mixture to remaining ingredients, form into balls and fry in oil.

## **Easter in Italy**

Easter is early this year -- March 27, 2016. Last year, it was April 5. Eggs have long been an Easter tradition, but, long before the birth of Christianity, the egg was a symbol of ancient Rome. According to Explore-Italian-Culture.com, the Romans believed "omne vivum ex ovo," that all life comes from eggs. The egg has historically been seen as a symbol of new birth following the barren landscape of winter.

Evidence exists that the ancient Romans decorated eggs with vegetable dyes, using onion skins, beets, and carrots, and they were given as gifts during the spring festivals. Later, Italians dyed eggs red for Easter because of a story involving the death of Christ. The story goes that following His death on Good Friday, Mary Magdalene traveled to Italy to spread word of the Resurrection. In an audience before a skeptical Emperor Tiberius Cesar, the egg she brought as a gift miraculously turned red, symbolizing the



blood of Christ.

Easter in Italy is a religious observance and the Easter egg tradition reflects that. During Lent, the weeks before Easter, neither meat nor dairy products could be eaten. The tradition of eggs eaten on Easter Sunday began as a result. In order not to waste food, eggs were hard boiled then painted as gifts and eaten on Easter Sunday. In Italy today, decorated eggs are no longer given as gifts or left by the Easter Bunny, but chocolate ones are. In case you haven't noticed, Italians take traditions seriously, and chocolate eggs have become more elaborate and detailed. Chocolate eggs range from tiny solid milk chocolate to larger and showy eggs that are hollowed out and usually contain a trinket or small gift. You will find them wrapped in foil with bows and ribbons.

## **Italian Rum Cake**

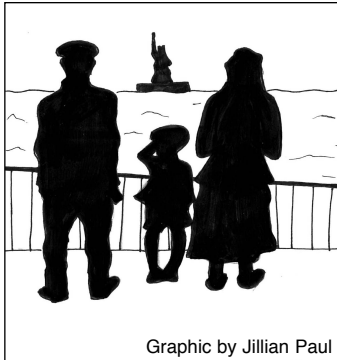
1 20-ounce can crushed pineapple in syrup or juice  
1-½ cups sugar  
½ cup butter, softened  
3 eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
2-½ cups all purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon allspice  
½ teaspoon salt  
½ cup dark rum  
1 cup raisins  
1 cup chopped almonds  
Rum glaze

Drain pineapple, pressing out 1 ¼ cup juice or syrup. Reserve ¼ cup for cake and 3 tablespoons for icing. Cream sugar and butter. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, allspice and salt. Beat in flour mixture in thirds, alternately with reserved ¼ cup pineapple liquid and rum. Stir in pineapple, raisins and almonds. Spoon into well-greased 10-inch Bundt pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 to 55 minutes until toothpick comes out clean. Invert on wire rack to cool completely. Spoon Rum Glaze over cooled cake. **Rum Glaze recipe:** Beat until blended 3 tablespoons dark rum, 3 tablespoons reserved pineapple juice, 2 tablespoons softened butter and 3 cups powdered sugar.



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**Italians emigrated to many  
places, page 10**

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## 2016 Calendar Items



### **March**

13 – St. Joseph Altar, St. Anthony of Padua Church, 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

### **April**

23 – Cultural Heritage Celebration, Midway Village Museum, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### **June**

27 – Women's Italian Open at Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club, 8 a.m.

### **July**

7 – The Rockford Plate Inaugural Gala, Midway Village Museum, 5:30 p.m.

### **August**

5-7 – Festa Italiana at Boylan High School  
12 – Men's Italian Open at Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club, 12:15 p.m. shotgun start

### **October**

8 – GRIAA Hall of Fame Dinner, Giovanni's

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