

PAPPAGALLO



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'GRIAA Will Be Back'

Organization chair Karen Cantele outlines changes and plans in letter to readers

Dear Friends of GRIAA,

We at the Greater Rockford Italian American Association hope that you and your families are doing well. We all know that 2020 has been such a challenge for many of our small businesses and not-for-profit organizations, and that many of you have been supporting them as much as you are able.

While we have missed so many of the usual spring and summer activities that we love, GRIAA will be back with the activities we sponsor like the *Amici Italiani* Dance Troupes and enthusiastically support like Sister Cities events. We are working to secure dates for next year's events, and we will post them as soon as we are able. One event we are hoping to schedule is the Columbus Day Mass at St. Anthony of Padua Church. The Mass at 9 a.m. will be subject to guidelines, likely including the wearing of masks and proper social distancing. A short celebration may follow in the Memory Garden.



GRIAA Chairperson Karen Cantele

Although the 2020 GRIAA Hall of Fame Dinner has been canceled as well, we invite readers to nominate any deserving candidates for future considerations. You can find award criteria and nomination forms at griaa.org. Then click on the Italian Hall of Fame and Special Recognition Committee.

With the cancellation of our golf outings and *Festa Italiana* fundraisers, our mission to provide scholarships for students in grades K-12 who attend area Catholic schools is our most pressing need. We are so thankful for the continued support of our many sponsors over the years. Please help us continue to support our Italian-American students! To make a contribution to GRIAA, visit our website at griaa.org or mail to:

GRIAA
P.O. Box 2041
Loves Park, IL 61130

As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, we look forward to seeing you all in person in 2021.

Mille grazie,
Karen Cantele, GRIAA Chair



Meet the artist

John Naretta took up painting in his free time as a pharmacist as a way to "escape from the stress of life" for a couple of hours. He works in pastels, acrylics and oils, and his most popular line is called "Not a Simple Woman," that appears on wall art, apparel, coffee mugs, tote bags and in the illustration above. Story and more photos on Page 9.



Dr. Anthony Fauci

Described as perhaps the most influential Italian-American in the United States, Dr. Anthony Fauci has become one of the most recognizable figures of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and a member of the President's Coronavirus Task Force reflects on his Italian heritage in a story on Page 3.

Father James Ciaramitaro of St. Anthony Church, second from right, discusses recently displayed old society banners with members of the Holy Name Society. The banners are now on display in the Parish Hall.
Story and more photos on Page 2.





Two St. Anthony stories

St. Anthony the Abbot honored in January with bonfires in Sardinia



The bonfire in Dorgali, Sardinia, burns in honor of St. Anthony the Abbot. Known as "The Holy One," his feast day is January 17.

Every year on January 16, the people of Dorgali, Sardinia, remember St. Anthony the Abbot. In his honor, they create an enormous bonfire, which burns all night, and people carefully watch the patterns of the smoke, for they believe them to be signs of good fortune. The bonfire is held on the eve of St. Anthony the

Abbot's feast day, which is January 17.

St. Anthony the Abbot is also known as the Holy One, Anthony of the Desert and the Father of Monks. Unlike St. Anthony of Padua, who was born in Portugal and is venerated in Italy, this St. Anthony was born in lower or northern Egypt in 251 AD, where, according to legend, he worked as a swineherd. He decided to follow the teachings of Jesus in 285, sold all of his belongings, and went to live as a hermit in the desert. There, he suffered and was tormented by boredom and temptation, beaten by the devil, who was jealous of him, and tormented by visions of wild animals.

The power of prayer helped him overcome all of this, and he confessed his Christianity publicly in Alexandria. However, he was ordered to leave by the governor. He returned to the desert to find his fame and drew visitors. He retreated further into the eastern desert in the Red Sea Mountains, where a monastery in his name still stands. Although he did not establish the monastery, religious communities grew around him. He died at the age of 105.

Several diseases bear his name, including shingles, which is known as St. Anthony's Fire in Italy. His suffering is known as the temptation of St. Anthony in western literature and art. And it is said that he stole a burning spark from the kingdom of the gods and gave it to humanity, thus creating fire. Of course, history tells us fire was discovered much sooner, but the people of Dorgali remember St. Anthony the Abbot on his feast day, when he is thanked for his help during the past year and asked to perform miracles. Branches of rosemary are thrown onto the fire and traditionally, local food is distributed to townsfolk and visitors alike. Among the foods are various breads, honey, a sweet syrup, and *pistiddu*, a pie containing *vincotto* jam, a thick, dark and sweet jam.

Several cities on Sardinia follow the bonfire celebration, which is often used to start the *Carnivale* season. The town of Dorgali has charming, narrow streets and in the Church of Santa

Caterina with its seventeenth century altar. The countryside around Dorgali is beautiful and a prominent site is the Grotto di Ispinigoli, home to the tallest stalactite in Europe.

Source: *Italymagazine.com*

Historic banners from past now hang in St. Anthony Parish Hall



Two of the society banners in the Parish Hall of St. Anthony Church - the Young Ladies Sodality (left) and St. Mary Society (right).

When Father Jim Ciaramitaro returned to Rockford in 2010 to become pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church, he had an idea to decorate a wall in the church's Parish Hall with a collection of the colorful banners from the parish's past and present societies. That idea got set aside temporarily when Angie Scordato volunteered to paint a large Italian landscape scene on one of the walls. Her mural also depicts the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi and the Basilica of St. Anthony in Padua, the burial places of those saints, both of which are staffed by the Conventual Franciscans, who have served at St. Anthony's since 1933.

With the mural completed, Father Jim could then focus on updating the banners and hanging them on the opposite wall. Father Jim said, "They were in storage in a closet in the choir loft. They are beautiful and everyone is happy to see them again. It gives us a sense of our rich history."

Eleven banners are on display on the south wall, representing the societies that were formed by immigrants from Italy, including: the St. Mary Society (Sambuca, Sicily) the Aragona

Club, and the St. Joseph Society (Roccamena, Sicily). The original banner of the Holy Name Society is also on display.



Carl Ambruoso takes photos of the banners that are now in display in the Parish Hall of St. Anthony Church.



He's trustworthy and Italian

Dr. Anthony Fauci, Coronavirus Task Force member, reflects on his Italian roots



Dr. Anthony Fauci is one of the widely respected spokesman on the science of the Coronavirus Epidemic.

By Mike Doyle

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the grandson of Italian immigrants, is considered one of the nation's most trusted leaders as well as the face of America's response to the Coronavirus Pandemic in his role as the head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and a member of the President's Coronavirus Task Force. He has served American public health for more than 50 years and has advised every U.S. president since Ronald Reagan. His significant contributions to HIV/AIDS research helped lead him to getting the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush.

I-Italy TV described him as "possibly the most influential (Italian) American in the U.S. today." In the wake of the pandemic, a poll from late April from businessinsider.com rated him highest among our leaders for trustworthiness at 64% ahead of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Dr. Deborah Birx. In June, the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) announced its Leonardo da Vinci Award for Leadership and Health and Sciences will be presented to Dr. Fauci in October, 2020.

One of the foremost research scientist and physician of our time also has a deep awareness of his Italian heritage – of family Sunday dinners, of grandparents that spoke Italian to him, of a love of Italian opera and of penne pasta with pesto. In an interview with I-Italy TV, Dr. Fauci said he was always proud of his roots. "There was a certain awareness," he said. "There was a strong link and pride to be Italian. I always had a very positive feeling toward Italy."

He is a second-generation Italian-American. His parents were both born in the Lower East Side of Manhattan but moved to the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, where he was born. His paternal grandparents came to the U.S. from Sciacca, Sicily, a port city on the Mediterranean Sea northwest of Agrigento. (In fact, it is said on a clear day, you can see Sciacca from Sambuca, the ancestral home of many of Rockford's Sicilians). His maternal grandparents were from Naples.

"My maternal grandfather was an artist, and, I think there were some political issues that they didn't talk about much," Dr. Fauci said in regards to why his grandparents emigrated from Italy. "He believed he was oppressed. My paternal grandparents came for the same reason most people did, for the opportunities in the United States."

His maternal grandfather became a commercial artist, while on the paternal side, his grandfather was an accountant. Most of his friends growing up were like him, second-generation Italian Americans.

"It was almost completely Italian," he said. "All of my childhood friends spoke English, but most of their parents spoke Italian. It was an atmosphere steeped in Italian American culture, so it was centered around being close and loyal to family and friends (with) traditions, and the holidays very much like what went on in Italy, whether it was a big dinner on Sunday or a Christmas Eve dinner that began at midnight and went on into the next day."

Dr. Fauci's father was a pharmacist, and he recalled helping his father waiting on customers and delivering prescriptions. He said that experience directed him into a field that helps people who are sick. "I decided I wanted to be a physician maybe half-way through high school," he said. He graduated from Holy Cross College and went to Cornell medical school, then had to decide between practical medicine and research.

Following his post-medical school training, he went to the National Institute for Health on a fellowship to study infectious diseases and immunology. "Much to my surprise, I liked research very much, and I was quite good at it," he said. Instead of choosing between research and seeing patients, he chose both. "I still see patients, and I run a big scientific lab and am asking important scientific questions," he said.

Clearly proud of his efforts in HIV/AIDS, he has trained researchers from the country of his ancestors as well. "(Because of that) and the nature of my work, many bright Italian scientists came into my lab to spend three, four, up to seven years training, and then they would go back to Italy," he said. "Right now, in Italy, there are several scientists in Milano, Genoa, Rome and Bari who are quite accomplished."

Dr. Fauci is married with three daughters. He said he only had time for one hobby, which is running. "I've been running for 30 years," he said. "I run marathons, 10Ks and I love it. It makes you feel good and keeps you in good shape."

In addition to a preference for penne pasta with a Genovese pesto, he likes to listen to Italian opera. "I like that more than any other type of music," he said. "I don't have time to go to the opera, but some Italian operas are absolutely beautiful."

Source: I-Italy TV



La traversata dell'Atlantico

An immigrant's account of experiences on his second ocean crossing

By Frank Perrecone

Editor's note: My brother, Paul Perrecone, recently found a passport and pocket notebook which belonged to our grandfather Leoluca (Louis) Saporito at our mother's house. The passport was used for his 1959 voyage from New York to Naples, Italy, to see his brother and sisters in Corleone, Sicily. The notebook, which chronicled our grandfather's experiences on the Italian superliner "Saturnia", was written in Italian and translated by Tony Tarara, who is fluent in Italian and Sicilian.

My grandfather came to America as a 14-year-old boy in 1907. It is not clear if he was accompanied by anyone. No member of his immediate family left with him. He settled in Rockford about 1914, later married and was a father to four children. Shortly after retiring from J.I. Case, he booked passage to Italy for his first and only return to his hometown. My grandmother, who was born in Louisiana, had no interest in going to Sicily.

After reading the translated journal, I wondered what ship-board conditions he likely experienced in crossing the Atlantic 52 years earlier. My only visual point of reference was the 2007 Italian film (subtitled in English), *The Golden Door*, a story of a poor Sicilian family emigrating from Italy to America with scenes aboard the ship. I do not recall my grandfather talking about the voyage nor any Italian immigrants speaking about their experiences.

In a Google search for information, I found a 1909 report presented to Congress from the United States Immigration Commission which had investigated steerage conditions on board ships carrying immigrants from Europe to America. Evidently, the commission suspected a problem with ship lines not adhering to U.S. law. To determine actual conditions aboard ships, commission investigators went under cover and posed as immigrants in 1908 and investigated nearly all main shipping lines transporting immigrants. Although U.S. law established minimum standards for onboard conditions, the investigators found abysmal conditions, especially on ships leaving from Southern European countries, such as Italy.

The majority of our ancestors likely traveled steerage due to impoverished conditions in Italy, especially in the south and Sicily. Although lines offered two classes of steerage, old-type and new, shipping companies by and large only offered old-type steerage to those from Europe's southern countries. New-type steerage which offered better conditions was available to people booking passage from Europe's northern countries.

According to the report, old-type steerage passengers were divided into three separate compartments, women without male companions, men traveling alone and families. Each compartment could hold 300 or more people with small two-tiered sleep-



A photo of Leoluca Saporito taken on his trip home to Corleone, Sicily, in 1959.

ing births much like bunk beds. A mattress, pillow and blanket was provided for use during the entire crossing. Each passenger was provided with a plate and utensils for use during meals. There was no storage space for trunks or baggage.

Most passengers slept fully clothed to keep warm. Since sea-sickness was common with passengers and due to nausea vomiting was commonplace. The shipping company did not provide buckets or receptacles for vomit which remained on sleeping area floors for some time before removal. Ship doctors did not consider sea sickness a medical ailment, so no attention was provided. Lavatories were small and filthy, offering little privacy. They were only occasionally cleaned; however, the crew made a point to clean them and the ship before U.S. port officials boarded for inspection. Passengers used "washbasins" to clean themselves, not showers or bathtubs. Towels were not provided. Passengers walked in a line to be served food, dispensed while holding out their plates, which they cleaned themselves.

The report with these and other findings was presented to Congress. It contained a compilation of personal observations of commission investigators, not reports of dissatisfied passengers which might be subject to exaggeration. The author of the report, who was one of the investigators, crossed the Atlantic three times as a steerage passenger. The report in part concluded that "old-type storage as a whole, it is congestion so intense, so detrimental to health and morals that there is nothing on land to equal it." What's sad is that our Italian ancestors, who arrived in this country early on, likely experienced these conditions. Not surprisingly, the shipping companies denied the outrageous ship-board conditions. They described the report as absurd, nonsense and void of foundation or what we would call "fake news" or "a

Continued on Page 5



hoax" today.

In stark contrast to his first ship crossing, the *Saturina* must have appeared to my grandfather as a luxury liner. It carried a crew of about 500, passenger capacity of 1,665, with up to 370 in first class. It was built in Italy and its maiden voyage occurred in 1927. Cruising speed was about 19 knots. Diesel engines powered its 632 foot by 80-foot frame.

Before getting to my grandfather's experiences on his second crossing of the Atlantic, it is important to note that he only had a fourth-grade education. Although fluent in Italian and English, he probably had little reason over the years to use his Italian writing skills other than letters to family in Sicily. This is important because the following quotes are verbatim, with some light editing for clarity. Also, using his words best describes his ship experiences.

No doubt remembering the degrading conditions he likely experienced in 1907, my grandfather booked "First Class" passage, which he described in his journal, "You cannot imagine how beautiful first class is, how much beauty there is there." Passengers were served at tables of eight by "waiters wearing white jackets and white ties as well." Instead of 300 men sleeping in a large compartment and washing in a washbasin, he described his accommodations as, "To go to sleep I have to descend five flights of stairs. In my cabin there are five of us that sleep together. There are baths."

The ship's medical staff consisted of "three doctors and nurses, too. They treat the passengers well." Religious services were offered daily, "Everyday one goes to Mass and then there is Rosary every day since there are three priests on the ship. At 9 o'clock in the morning there is the Mass. They ring the bells just like we were in Italy."

My grandfather truly enjoyed the voyage. In describing his experience he wrote, "While I write this here on the ship, there is music and singing as if we were on dry land. You can't imagine what fun there is. I never thought it would be so beautiful aboard, that there would be all these diversions - beautiful Italy with its songs and music."

It appears from reading between the lines of the journal my grandfather had a conversation before he left with his brother-in-law, Nunzio D'Antonino, about the unpleasant ship conditions they encountered as immigrants traveling to America. Nunzio probably told him he was *pazzu* (crazy in Sicilian) to go through that again. My grandfather wrote in his notebook, "If Nunzio were to see all the luxury that there is on the ship, he would not believe it and beauty there is such that there is one of everything there is on land and such is the ship that all of this I never imagined. Therefore dear Nunzio, don't say that it cannot be and that it's difficult."

Passenger ships have come a long way from 1907, to 1959, to the present day. The degrading ship conditions the early immigrants experienced is now little more than a footnote in history. But for the generations of Italian-Americans born in the U.S.,

it is important to remember the sacrifices they made for us to prosper in this country. We owe it to them to carry on the Italian culture by preserving our past and celebrating our future.

Editor's notebook

In keeping up with these unprecedented times, several stories this issue deal with the Coronavirus Pandemic, starting with the Letter to Readers from GRIAA chair Karen Cantele on Page 1. We also take a look at the Italian roots of Dr. Anthony Fauci, one of the most respected and leading voices of the scientific effort to combat the virus. Rosa Mercuri-Ford describes a pandemic of a different time when she writes Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, about the impact of the Black Death Plague on Florence, Italy, in the 14th century. Because the virus kept us home for weeks on end, the recipe pages feature dishes that we discovered or rediscovered. And we missed major sports for so long, specifically baseball, that we have the All-Italian, All-Star Baseball team.

My collection of past issues of the *Pappagallo* dates to the third publication, which came out in the spring of 1991. The last numbered issue was the 10th from the winter of 1997. The original editor was Pat Maggio, who set the standard for publishing an excellent newsletter for the Greater Rockford Area Columbus Day Committee, which became GRIAA. Publication ceased for four years until the summer of 2001 when Shirley Fedeli brought the *Pappagallo* back to life with the help of her husband Gene and Peggy Sagona Werner. The Fedelis continued to guide the newsletter until they moved to Michigan in 2013, so my first issue as editor was the fall of that year. Frank Perrecone soon joined me as assistant editor, and we have tried to retain the commitment spelled by Shirley Fedeli to present "interesting articles and pertinent information to our Italian friends." By my calculation, this issue appears to be the 50th, which is truly an incredible accomplishment. We placed Volume L in the masthead information and will continue to number our issues and hope that you, our readers, continue to enjoy it.

Mike Doyle, editor

2020-21 Fall, Winter Festivals in Italy

Due to the coronavirus, many events in Italy have been canceled or postponed

November (Novembre)

11 – Feast of Our Lady of Good Health, Venice

December (Dicembre)

All month – Christmas Market on Piazza Navona, Rome; creches in churches throughout Italy

February (Febbraio)

6-8 – *Carnevale* in Venice and other locations in Italy



Nana said it best ...

The tenth issue of the *Pappagallo* in the winter of 1997 carried a feature of sayings and proverbs from Italian nanas and grandmothers. Most of the colorful sayings came from the book *Grandmother Said it Best* by Angeline Guzzetta-Jones and Josephine Anitore-Polizzi. Using other sources as well, here are some of the choicest gems, including literal and some common translations.

Mangia questa minestra o getto dalla finesgra!

Eat this soup or I'll throw you out the window. (Common translation: Shape up or ship out).

Morti e mariti, non si sa quando vengono

Death and husbands, one doesn't know when they might be coming!

Chi parla assai, fa sputazza

The big talker just creates a lot of spit! (All talk; no action.)

Si fanno cantando cantando. Se ne vanno volando, volando

Easy come, easy go.

Gallina vecchia fa buon brodo

An old hen makes the best soup. (An older girl might be a better catch.)

Issu este unu cantu de pane

He is a piece of bread. (He is a good and reliable man.)

Senza il pane tutto diventa orfano

Without bread, everyone is an orphan.

Chi non risica, no rosica

He who doesn't take a chance will never have a bone to nibble and chew on. (Nothing ventured, nothing gained).

La bugia ha le gambe corte.

Lies have short legs. (The liar may easily trip on his lies.)

Serb ache trova.

Save and find. (Save for a rainy day.)

Canta! Canta!

Sing! Sing! (It's useless to complain.)



Che sara, sara.

What will be, will be.

Si parla bene del morto.

Speak only good of the dead.

A mali estremi, estremi remidi.

Extreme conditions require extreme remedies.

"Prendi quel che vuoi," dice Iddio, "ma pagato!"

"Take what you want," says God, "but don't forget to pay for it!"

Mentra la ricchezza s'augmenta, l'amiciacia s'allarga.

When you become rich, all of a sudden you get many new "friends."

Il vile non puo mai riconoscere la generosita

Meanness can never recognize generosity.

Dopo la quarantine, un male ogni mattina

When forty years you attain, every morning brings an ache and pain.

Onorare i genitori, vuol dire venerare Iddio

To revere one's parents is to venerate God.

Una cosa e parlare di morire, un'altra cosa e morire.

It is one thing to talk about dying; it is another thing to actually die. (Talk is cheap.)

Profumo senza arrosto non mi va.

The aroma without the roast is not for me.

Dove c'e buona roba, rimane Venerdi e anche Sabato.

When people are hospitable to you, stay Friday and Saturday, too.

La porta si apre dal dentro.

The door opens from within. (Gossip starts at home.)

Non e cosa di caffè.

He goes for nothing, born loser. (He is not my cup of tea.)

A ciascun santo la sua candela.

Offer to each saint his candle. (Give true honor where it is merited.)

Meglio nero pane che nera fame.

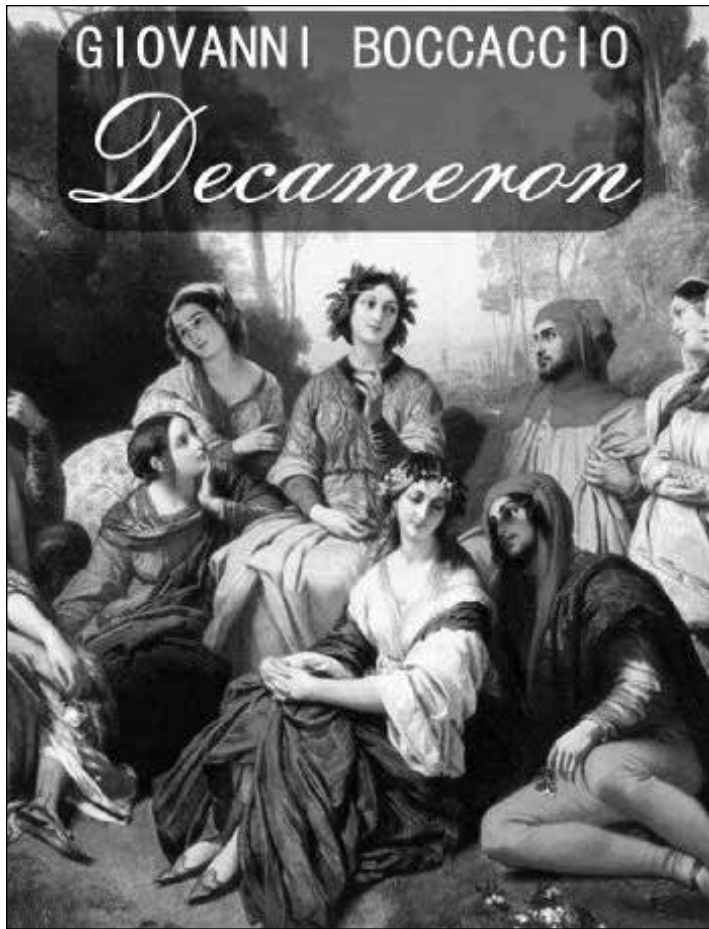
Better dark bread than the dark despair of hunger.





Pestilence, quarantine and ... 'Decameron'

Boccaccio's classic 14th century masterpiece is a tale for modern times



By Rosaria Mercuri-Ford

It was the year 1348, and the city of Florence was battling a deadly pandemic. The *Peste Nera* or Black Death, had exploded in major Italian ports in the spring of 1347 and would linger until 1350, only to reappear from year to year in a much subdued, endemic form.

The Black Death was caused by bacterial infections transmitted to humans by fleas found on certain types of rats. These abounded at sea ports and trading stations and soon infested the galleys carrying grains to and from most European countries and other lands.

In Italy, the plague unleashed countless deaths, vast misery and destruction in ports like Genoa, Venice, Messina and soon found its way inland, via the many trading routes.

The social and moral devastation caused by the Black Death hit particularly hard urban centers, such as the city of Florence, a thriving center of art, politics and trade. It is believed that 60 percent of the population perished in this affluent Tuscan center. The plague was eventually defeated by implementing the measure of *quarantena* which consisted in isolating the affected people for five to six weeks, while the healthy sheltered in place, thus

avoiding all contact with the sick and dying. Those who could do so, abandoned the urban centers altogether and sought refuge in the countryside.

This is exactly what a group of wealthy Florentine youth decided to do. After meeting at the Church of Santa Maria Novella, seven young ladies and three young men, aged 18 through 28, agreed to leave Florence on the very next day and head for the Fiesole countryside, where they would spend a fortnight in a villa.

At this beautiful villa, accompanied by housekeepers and governesses, the brigade would seek respite in the unspoiled and peaceful nature. We learn all this in the *Decamerone*, masterpiece by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375), written between 1348 and 1353, when Florence was still grappling with the aftermath of the plague.

In the *Decameron's* preamble (*proemio*), Boccaccio talks at length about the horrific human and social conditions and painstakingly describes the vicious disease which attacked the body with bodily growths (*bubboni*), and ominous skin discoloration caused by black spots (*macchie nere*).

The author proceeds to justify the youth's escape from the city, the only way to flee the ravaging plague which had already killed many family members and friends. He then introduces the leader of the group, Pampinea, who reminds the genteel ladies and young men of their natural right to preserve and defend their lives (*conservare e difendere*). Pampinea goes on to explain how they will take turns in being queen or king of daily events.

Four days will be reserved for housekeeping and religious observations, while the remaining ten days will be solely dedicated to enjoyable pursuits of walking, conversing, resting, dancing, singing and...storytelling! Everyone is to tell a story (*novella*) each day, according to the theme announced by the queen or king.

The endeavor would culminate in a collection of a hundred stories tied to one another by introductions, comments and songs.

The first stories of the *Decameron*, told in lively and playful tones, are in stark contrast to the preamble's somber reflections. As the days go on, witty stories of adventure, deception, trickery, comical situations, as well as stories of love and misfortune complete the rich literary framework.

At the core of all narration are the new values of the mercantile class - entrepreneurship, travel, intelligence and wit. The *Decameron*, also known as the *Human Comedy*, is a classical masterpiece in vernacular Italian. While the form still reflects medieval traits, the realistic themes and characters laid the foundation for Humanism which paved the way to the Renaissance.



Frank Sinatra: An American success story

Legendary crooner a master with a microphone

By Jimmy Sartino

Assimilation often has themed the stories of the different ethnic communities coming to the United States. Previously, as I have written about the Italian gift of music to the world, I wrote about Enrico Caruso. His voice was a one of comfort, of love, to those Italian immigrants, mostly from 1880-1920, as they settled, often uncomfortably, into their new countries throughout the world.

That resulted in millions of Italian immigrants worldwide who were focused on integrating into their new homeland, not just pine for the comforts of the "old country." So, in the United States, can you imagine the pride of Italian-Americans when listening to the voice of Frank Sinatra, a son of immigrants, on a phonograph or radio singing in perfect English?

Caruso was only ever recorded in Italian, but, with Sinatra, Italian-Americans listened to fluent English. Sinatra was six-years-old when Caruso died, and he indeed grew up listening and admiring Italian opera arias. But Sinatra would take the Italian musical heritage and turn it into an American success story.

Where Enrico Caruso managed the phonograph well, Sinatra mastered the microphone. That is correct - singing into a microphone was an entirely new concept and would require an entirely different method of singing. This style of singing is often titled "crooning." Crooners could develop a more personal, even sentimental sound since the singer no longer had to focus on simply projecting the volume of their raw voice to the back seats of a theatre or concert hall. Needless to say, the technology of the microphone necessitated a new artistic approach never used before.

It is important to recognize that Sinatra was not just a product of raw talent, but a hard-worker.

He was not content to sound like another Italian kid from New Jersey; he desired a much further range of appeal. Being born in the U.S., Sinatra was exposed to and infused the music of his time: jazz, blues, and swing. In particular, he was a fan of Bing Crosby.

Among the many commendable efforts made by Sinatra to become the story of success that we know today was his effort to improve his diction, phrasing, and delivery. He did this by paying for lessons in elocution long before his success. These lessons paid off. Frank Sinatra singing in English, relaxed, cool,

crisp and crooning about love arguably became America's first *bona fide* pop idol.

It might be surprising

to our contemporary minds to hear that the "crooner" style was initially criticized as being overly sensual by the society of its time. Regardless of this critique, Sinatra did not hesitate to join this revolution. Unlike Bing Crosby who sounded like a father singing to children, Sinatra had the sound of a young man in love singing to his beloved. Sure enough, his appeal to young teenage girls changed popular music's appeal to younger audiences forever.

As history would have it, the initial "Sinatramania" would wear off, and Sinatra's popularity would wane from 1946-1952, but he would go on to produce popular music for decades after. In fact, Sinatra is one of the few artists who can claim a top 10 hit in five different decades:

1940s: *All or Nothing At All*, and *I'll Never Smile Again*

1950s: *Three Coins in the Fountain*, and *Learnin' the Blues*

1960s: *Strangers in the Night*, and *Somethin' Stupid*

1970s: *I Believe I'm Gonna Love You*

1980s: *Theme from New York, New York*

A lesser person might have given up, but Sinatra would evolve and go on to achieve many other great things in his career not only as a musical artist, but also as an actor, entertainer, anthropologist, civil rights activist and political supporter.

It is safe to say that he blazed a trail to make success in music a continuing path for other Italian-Americans to follow, and made it easier for all Italian-Americans to hold their heads high and proud.

Editor's note: A story in the Spring 2016 Pappagallo revealed that Frank Sinatra had his Big Band debut in Rockford. On January 26, 1940, "a skinny little kid," as described by Sam Caruana who was in the audience, sang for the first time with Tommy Dorsey's Band at the Coronado Theater. For those interested in Sinatra's life, trials and tribulations, Netflix is streaming a two-part documentary entitled, "Sinatra: All or Nothing at All."



An older and respected Frank Sinatra receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Reagan



A young Frank Sinatra in his days as a crooner



Figuring It Out As He Goes

Former pharmacist finds art to be therapeutic

By Paul Anthony Arco

John Naretta never set out to be an artist. But in the 1980s, while working as a pharmacist, the Rockford resident was looking for something to occupy his time away from work. That's when he started to dabble into art.

"During the winters it was, shovel snow and find something else to do," he said. "So I taught myself how to paint. I could never take a class because of my work schedule. I'm not a professional artist, I'm a naïve artist."

After he retired, Naretta joined the Rockford Art Guild, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the arts. "It helps artists and authors to connect with people of the same profession," he said. "I learn things from them and hopefully they are inspired from me." He also volunteers to help other artists hang their work at Katie's Cup, and is the art department superintendent for the Winnebago County Fair.

A Rockford native, Naretta grew up on the west side. He attended St. Patrick School, Boylan High School and Drake University in Iowa, before returning home. He started out at Love Drug for five years, before spending 18 years at the Kmart on Sandy

Hollow and 12 more years at Hilander on Rural, before calling it a career in 2012.

Naretta enjoyed his work as a pharmacist. "It meant the world to me when people thanked me for helping a loved one who was sick," he said. "That means more than money."

His mother was the first to pick up art when she signed



Artist John Naretta

up for an art class. She was good at drawing, her son said, but decided to concentrate on ceramics instead. She gave her paint tubes and pallet to Naretta, and he was on his way.

Naretta started painting by using pastels, acrylics and oils in dedicated space located in the corner of his living room. Once his four children were grown and out of the house, he eventually moved his studio to an upstairs bedroom.

In a way, Naretta views art as therapy. "It's a lot like music," he said. "It's a chance for you to enjoy doing something for a couple of hours that is an escape from the stress of life."

Naretta's bread and butter is an art line called "Not A Simple Woman" that includes wall art, apparel, coffee mugs and 13 ½ x

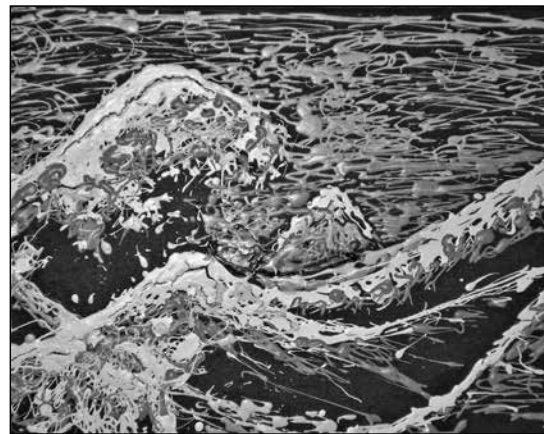
13 inch tote bags. He comes up with the design in his head, and uses acrylic oil paints which take longer to dry and blends the colors easier, and finishes with an acrylic varnish. It takes up to a week or two to finish a bag. "I get an idea where to put things, and I do it all in my head," he said. "Eventually I can see the potential and execute the idea."

There are 38 different designs in the tote bag line; 12 of Naretta's bags are featured on Fine Art America, the largest art site in the world. His work is also available at JR Finally Art Studio & Gallery in Rockton.

"My wife is my biggest critic," he said. "I will bring a bag downstairs and hang it on a rocker by the TV and ask her what she thinks of it. If it's too blue, for example, I go back upstairs and try and fix it."

Naretta doesn't paint every day. But he could. Now that he's retired, Naretta has the time to take some classes, but said he's happy learning as he goes. "I'm a stubborn Italian. You learn by

doing. I don't have any rules like I did when I worked in a pharmacy. If it works out, good; if not, I can always paint over it."



John Naretta's acrylic "dribble" painting, "The Wave," features several colors including white and shades of blue



Another in John Naretta's "Not a Simple Woman" line



All-Italian All-Star Baseball team

By Mike Doyle

While the Coronavirus robbed us of much of the Major League Baseball season, we can still enjoy aspects of America's Favorite Pastime. Four years ago, the readers of "The Italian Tribune" were asked to select the All-Italian All-Star Baseball team, and the results are not very surprising. One would expect a DiMaggio here and a Santo there, but there are some interesting selections. And one also would not be surprised at some well known players and managers with non-Italian names have roots in the boot.

American League

Catcher – Lawrence Peter (Yogi) Berra. A product of The Hill in St. Louis, Yogi was a Hall of Famer with the New York Yankees. He also became famous for his misuse of the English language.

Pitcher – There are three selections, right-hander, lefty or southpaw and reliever, and all are former New York Yankees. The southpaw is Andy Pettitte, while the most dominant right-hander was Vic Raschi. The best closer is Dave Righetti, a converted starter.

First Base – Slugger Jason Giambi of the Oakland A's and Yankees.

Second Base – Hall of Famer Tony Lazzari of the Yankees.

Short Stop – Another Yankee Hall of Famer, Phil Rizzuto, who also became a famous broadcaster.

Third Base – Frank Malzone of the Boston Red Sox.

Left Field – The first of the DiMaggios, Dom DiMaggio of the Red Sox had the speed and smarts.

Center Field – Possibly the MVP of this list, Joe DiMaggio was known as "The Yankee Clipper," "Mr. Baseball," Joltin' Joe DiMaggio. He is another Hall of Fame player.

Right Field – Rocky Colavito, a prolific slugger for the Cleveland Indians in the 1960s.

Manager – This is really controversial because the voters chose Joe Maddon over Joe Torre. Maddon took over an historically bad Tampa Bay franchise and brought the Rays to the 2008 World Series, where they lost to the Phillies. He later took a good Chicago Cubs team and turned it into a World Series champion in 2016. All the other Joe did was play well for the Milwaukee Braves, St. Louis Cardinals and New York Mets and manage four World Series Champion Yankee teams. The voters argued that Torre inherited a great Yankee team, while Maddon, whose last name was originally Maddonini, ended a long curse – but won it all in the National League.

National League

Catcher – Hall of Famer Roy Campanella of the Brooklyn Dodgers, whose career was cut short because of a devastating car accident that left him paralyzed.

Pitcher – The right-hander is Atlanta Hall of Famer John Smoltz, while Cy Young winner Frank Viola of Minnesota is the lefty. Coming out in relief with 424 saves is John Franco of the Cincinnati Reds and Mets.

First Base – Hall of Famer Mike Piazza of the Los Angeles Dodgers and Mets. Even though he made his name as a catcher, Mike

Piazza had plenty of time at first and any team, in fact EVERY team, would want his bat in the lineup. History revisionists have a good argument for the Cubs' Anthony Rizzo.

Second Base – Hall of Famer Craig Biggio of Houston.

Short Stop – This was a tough call. Larry Bowa of the Phillies, mostly, Cubs and Mets was a great ball player, but the Cubs' Joe Tinker is the pick. A Hall of Famer, Joe's father was said to have been an Italian railroad worker. He is the first player in the line of the famous baseball poem, "Tinker to Evers to Chance."

Third Base – Ron Santo, another Hall of Fame player gets the vote. He is remembered for clicking his heels when the Cubs made a serious threat for the pennant in 1969.

Left Field – We moved Jack Clark, who starred with the San Francisco Giants, over to left to get his fearsome bat in the lineup. Clark's mother was Italian.

Center Field – For whatever reason, the National League hasn't had the same depth at this position as the American League. It went with four-time All-Star and National League MVP Phil Cavarretta of the Cubs who was an excellent first baseman and right fielder. Perhaps a little slower than you'd want in center, but .355 average in '45 could not be ignored.

Right Field – No question about this one – the Reading Rifle Carl Furillo, who played for the Dodgers in Brooklyn and Los Angeles. Seriously, why is this man not in the Hall of Fame?

Manager – It is hard to argue with Hall of Famer Tommy Lasorda of the Dodgers but does Joe Maddon belong here instead?

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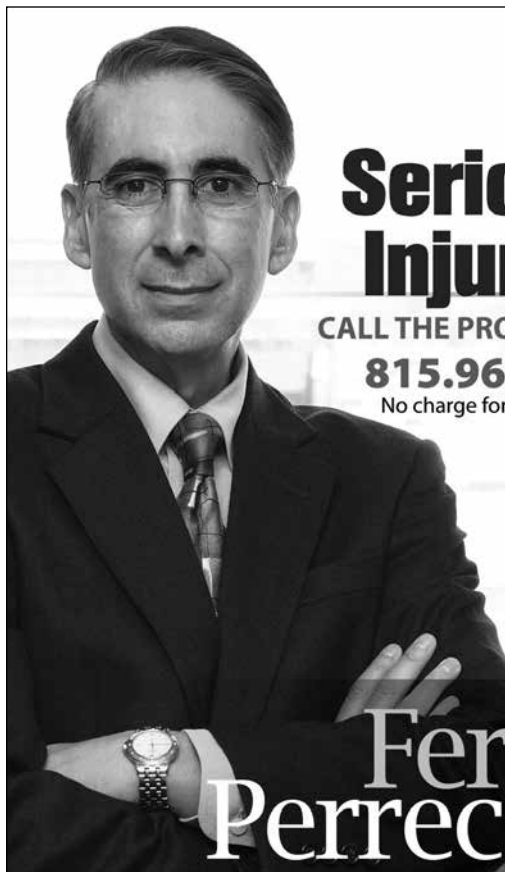
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Cooking at home during the Coronavirus

By Mike Doyle

The Coronavirus Pandemic brought home meaning to the words, self-isolation and lockdown. During the spring of 2020 when we were unable to enjoy normal activities, most of us spent lots of time in the kitchen (probably baking bread, given the absence of yeast for most of the spring). So we tried new recipes or dusted off old ones.

The first is from GRIAA Hall of Famer Rosie Scalise Sheridan, whose family gathered in a Zoom meeting to make homemade pasta. Rosie's choice was to make Chicken Pasta Casserole, while others made their favorite dishes and froze their noodles. Taking part in "family gathering" were Rosie's daughters, Trisha in Maryland, Crystal in Belvidere and her sister in Colorado. The casserole recipe follows. (You can find a recipe for homemade pasta in the Spring 2020 *Pappagallo*. You can also use packaged Fettucini.)



"The first pic is Tim Tharp, my son-law, at their home in Annapolis, Maryland. They are making theirs without a pasta machine," Rosie Scalise-Sheridan said.



"The second picture is my daughter Crystal Wolford's home in Belvidere and she was using my mother's antique pasta machine," Rosie said.

The first two pictures are snapshots from the computer screen as the Zoom meeting was happening.

"It was tons and tons of fun, a great way for us to stay connected

"The last picture is my dining room table, and you can see the laptop in the background. The fourth participant on Zoom was my twin sister Patty Steinkamp in Colorado. She had just finished working and was not making pasta but was chatting with us as we all made pasta," Rosie said. You can also see the pasta drying on racks in the middle ground of the photo.



during the lockdown and to try new recipes," Rosie said. "During the lockdown, we also made a mushroom risotto and our *Pupa Cu L'ova* Easter cookies."

Chicken Pasta Casserole

Cook 6 ounces of homemade pasta noodles. Drain. Combine noodles and two 12-1/2 ounce cans of chunk chicken breast, drained. Add to pasta:

1/2 cup mayonnaise
1 cup diced celery
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/2 teaspoon salt

Blend one 10 1/2 ounce can of celery soup and 1/2 cup of milk. Heat. Add 4 ounces of shredded sharp cheddar cheese. Heat and stir until cheese melts. Add to pasta mixture. Put in 2 quart casserole. Bake uncovered at 425° for 20 minutes. Makes six servings.

Two more recipes from GRIAA members follow.

Baked Rigatoni with Ricotta and Spinach

1 pound Rigatoni
6 ounces fresh baby spinach (4 cups packed), cooked and chopped
1 pound Ricotta cheese
Salt and pepper to taste
1 teaspoon fresh parsley, chopped
1 teaspoon fresh basil, chopped
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
8 ounces freshly grated Mozzarella or Fontina cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cook the Rigatoni until *al dente*, drain and return to pot. Add cooked spinach and gently toss to combine until leaves are wilted a little. In a large bowl, mix the Ricotta and 1/2 cup of Parmesan, salt and pepper. Combine the Ricotta mixture with the pasta and spinach. Place in baking dish (can be buttered). Top with Mozzarella or Fontina cheese (or both). Bake uncovered for about 30 minutes until cheese is browned and bubbly. Serve with remaining Parmesan cheese.

Tomato Sauce (*Sugo*)

Although this recipe appeared in the Spring 2020 issue, there was a mistake in the ingredients. With this corrected version, it has become the favorite in a GRIAA member's home.

28 ounce can crushed tomatoes with tomato puree
1 pound can tomato sauce
1 6-ounce can tomato paste
1 garlic clove, minced

Continued on Page 13



1 can water (use crushed tomatoes can)
 ¼ teaspoon baking soda (optional)

In a large pot, add can crushed tomatoes, then refill can with water and add. Add tomato sauce, tomato paste, garlic and baking soda. Stir and simmer over low to medium heat for 1-2 hours, stirring often. The taste of this sauce is enhanced with meat. Our tradition is to make meatballs when we make the sauce. We also add short ribs, sausage and often chicken breasts, then refrigerate the mixture overnight. *Source: Cipolla Family recipe*

Grandma Caruana's Homemade Italian Bread

Because I mentioned homemade bread, we had to include a recipe, this one from our family.

2 ½ cups warm water
 2 packages yeast
 1 tablespoon salt
 ¼ cup olive oil
 7 cups flour

Dissolve yeast in ½ cup warm water in bowl. Combine 2 cups warm water, oil, salt and 3 cups flour. Add softened yeast and work in remaining flour. Cover and let rise in a warm place for 1 hour. On floured surface, divide into two loaves. Shape the loaves into the pan and let rise until double in size. Bake 50-60 minutes at 400 degrees.

Olive Salad for Muffuletta Sandwich

If you have never been to New Orleans and had a Muffuletta sandwich at Central Grocery, where it was invented, you do not know what you are missing. The essential items are freshly baked muffuletta bread and homemade olive salad. You will get a lot in this recipe, but you can keep it refrigerated for months as long as it is tightly sealed.

¾ cup green olives, stuffed with pimento
 ¼ cup Kalamata olives, pitted
 ¼ cup Giardiniera (Italian pickled vegetables)
 1 large pepperoncini
 3-4 pickled onions
 2 tablespoons capers
 1 medium garlic clove, chopped
 1 teaspoon oregano
 ¼ teaspoon pepper, or to taste
 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
 2 tablespoons olive oil

Drain the green olives, Kalamata olives, Giardiniera, pickled onions and capers. Place them in a food processor along with the garlic, oregano, pepper, lemon juice oil. Pulse until coarsely chopped. Place in a container, cover and refrigerate overnight.

Source: Rick and Connie (Correnti) Wegner

Cubaita (Italian Almond Candy)

1-1/2 pounds shelled almonds, roasted and allowed to cool
 ½ cup granulated sugar
 ½ cup honey
 Grated rind from one orange
 ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

Mix together sugar, honey, orange rind and cinnamon in a two-quart sauce pan and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Continue to cook mixture. Test the mixture by dropping a drop of cold water. If the syrup forms a ball, then add almonds and continue to stir until the almonds are nearly completely coated. They should appear tacky. Sprinkle cold water on a prepared cutting board or marble candy slab. When mixture is ready, pour onto the slab. Working quickly, arranged the almonds into desired shapes, such as a log, cross, egg or clusters. Quickly form shapes but be careful not to burn your hands. Have a cold, damp cloth or cold water nearby. Moisten hands with cold water to avoid sticking. Allow to set, then use your creativity to decorate the pieces, using silk flowers, ribbons, candy sprinkles, for example. To store, place on a greased aluminum foil sheet and allow to dry.

Source: The Tarara Sisters in Cucina Italiana: Rockford Style

Sesame Seed Cookies

2 cups sifted flour
 ¾ cup sugar
 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 2/3 cup shortening
 2 egg yolks
 ½ cup milk
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1/3 cup sesame seeds

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease cookie sheet. Into bowl, sift flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. With pastry blender, cut in shortening until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add egg yolks, milk and vanilla. Mix with fork until dough holds together. Knead several times or until smooth. For each cookie, shape rounded tablespoonsful of dough into each oval, to resemble little loaves of bread. Roll in sesame seeds, coating completely. Place on prepared cookie sheet. Bake 15-20 minutes or until brown.





Members of the Italian Legion pose in front of the Aragona Club in this 1939. All those pictured were veterans of the Italian government army. Photo courtesy of the Midway Village Museum.

Sister City group copes with COVID-19, looks to future

By Dina Getty

Like all other community events and fundraisers, the Rockford Italian Sister Cities Alliance (RISCA) has had to cancel its signature fundraiser, Taste of Italy. Funds raised from the Taste of Italy go directly to offset costs for students who visit Rockford's sister city of Ferentino, Italy.

In November 2019, several area high school students hosted Ferentino students in their homes. It was the hope that those generous American students could visit their new friends in Ferentino. The trip was scheduled for March, with plans to postpone until October, but COVID-19 had other plans. It was a disappointment for all the students and their families to have missed out on the experience of Ferentino.

COVID-19 also upset St. Joseph's Altars from around the community. However, the ladies of St. Bridget's Church donated their altar cookies to RISCA. Their generosity helped RISCA earn some money to help offset the huge loss from not having its fundraiser. RISCA wants to thank the ladies of St. Bridget as well as the ladies auxiliary of the St. Ambrogio Society Club who supported RISCA during their cookie sale at the club's fish fry in July.

In other news, RISCA was asked by the local *Pro Loco* newspaper in Ferentino to describe and make comparisons between how Rockford residents were coping with the pandemic in comparison to what the Ferentino community was experiencing. Mayor Tom McNamara was kind enough to contribute to the article, and encouraged our Sister City of Ferentino to remain vigilant and safe during these times. RISCA and community leaders in Ferentino have kept lines of communication open and both are committed to continuing the student exchange program in 2021.

If you would like to help RISCA in its financial challenge to support a student visit in 2021, you can send a donation to: RISCA at 5718 Settlers Close, Loves Park, IL 61111. RISCA will be

hosting Taste of Italy VI on November 7, 2021. Our plan is to have new student friends from Ferentino as our guests of honor.

RISCA wants to thank everyone in the community for their past support of our organization and the generosity and loyalty you have shown to our local students and Sister City students of Ferentino, Italy.

Museums open with limitations

The two local museums with Italian-themed collections are open to a limited number of visitors and each follow the Clean Hands and Open Doors Pledge. All visitors must wear masks and adhere to social distancing. Hand sanitizers are provided as well.

Among the displays at The Midway Village Museum, 6799 Guilford Road, is the "Many Faces, One Community" exhibit, which features artifacts and scenes that depict the lives of early immigrants from Italy to Rockford. For tour information, call 815-397-9112.

The Ethnic Heritage Museum is open for tours Sundays from 2-4 p.m. The Italian Gallery is one of six nationalities that is represented. The museum is located at 1129 S. Main Street. Call 815-962-7402 for information.

Amici Italiani troupes seek dancers

One of GRIAA's most treasured endeavors, the *Amici Italiani* dance troupes, have openings for dancers of Italian heritage from first grade to adults.

The *Amici Italiani* Youth Dance Troupe is open to young people from first to eighth grade. Practice for this troupe begins in late May or early June. For information, contact Anna Mirabile at 815-871-7789 or Pauline Urso at 815-218-0073.

Dancers 14-years-old and older are sought for the *Amici Italiani* Adult Dance Troupe. For information contact, Rosie Scalise Sheridan at 815-978-4779 or Bea Ricotta at 815-520-1010.



Preparing for a feast ... that never happened



Many hours of work goes into making the items that are displayed at St. Joseph Altars in Rockford and the area. All were cancelled because of COVID-19, and the cookies, cakes, breads and other items were donated to various groups. In the photo above, the "Cubaita Crew" displays the fruits of their labor. These are almonds that are formed into crosses, hearts, fish and other items for the Easter season. (From left) Austin Gille, Gracie Kasputis, Mary Anne Ferruggia, Jill Kapala (in back row), Toni Bortoli, Patty Weyraugh and Rosie Scalise Sheridan.



(Above) Volunteers in Rosie Scalise Sheridan's kitchen are part of a Cubaita workshop that help to make the seasonal candy. These items were intended for altars at St. Anthony and St. Bridget's churches.

The photo at left shows examples of what they made and a decorated heart with a cross is below.



Josephine LaRosa (at left) and Norma Conti roll out and cut the Pignolati dough to prepare them for frying.



(Below) Tom Conti brings two plates of Pignolati pieces ready to be fried.



Mary Ann Feruggia (right) and Joan Gullo melt sugar and honey for the candy that will coat the pieces of Pignolati. In the background are Tom Conti (left) and Tom Creamer

Josephine Ognibene (left) and Sylvia Hendricks separate the clusters of Pignolati after they have been coated with candy.



In the photo above, Nina Pace in her kitchen surrounded by bread she has baked. At right, she is in her garden amid tomato, green beans, Italian zucchini, cucumber and basil plants.



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Participants in a Cubaita workshop create the almond treats in Rosie Scalise Sheridan's kitchen. More photos on Page 15.

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2020-21 Calendar Items

All dates are tentative and subject to change

October

11 – Columbus Day Mass, 9 a.m. and celebration following in the Memory Garden, St. Anthony of Padua Church.

December

12-13 – Santa Lucia Celebration, all Masses, St. Anthony of Padua Church.

March

13 – St. Joseph Altar viewing, St. Anthony of Padua Church following 4:30 p.m. Mass

14 – St. Joseph Altar, St. Anthony of Padua Church, noon to 3 p.m.

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