

PAPPAGALLO



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Celebrating our Italian heritage

GRIAA sees return of Festa Italiana, makes plans for Italian American Heritage Month

By Mike Doyle

Following a successful *Festa Italiana* in August, the Greater Rockford Italian American Association is looking forward to October and the celebration of Italian American Heritage Month in Rockford. Each event is a hallmark of GRIAA's purpose, which is to "Preserve our Past and Plan our Future."

"The biggest thing is to create awareness of what we do," GRIAA co-chair Karen Cantele said. "Preserving our culture and helping our community are what we are all about."

First celebrated in 1989, Italian American Heritage Month was created by proclamation of the President and Congress to honor the many and varied contributions of Italian immigrants and their descendants in the United States, especially those in the arts, science and culture. More than 26 million Americans of Italian descent live in the U.S., which accounts for America's seventh-largest ethnic group. Historically, Italian-Americans have made up the second-largest ethnic group in Rockford, following those of Swedish heritage.

Among the events planned, which are subject to change, for the month in Rockford are:

- Monday, October 4, 2021 – Proclamation at the City Council Meeting with Mayor McNamara
- Saturday, October 9, 2021 – GRIAA Hall of Fame Banquet, Venetian Club, 6:30 p.m.
- Sunday, October 10, 2021 – Columbus Day Mass, 10:30 a.m. St. Anthony's Church
- Sunday, October 10, 2021 – Open house, 2-4 p.m. for the Zeke Giorgi Exhibit at the Ethnic Heritage Museum, 1129 South Main Street, with Barb Vella speaking at 2:15 p.m.
- Saturday, October 16, 2021 – Showing of the movie "Luca" at the Ethnic Heritage Museum, 2 p.m. BYOS (Bring your own snacks). Doors open at 1:30 p.m.

After a year off because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, *Festa Italiana* returned on the weekend of August 6-8 to large crowds, who enjoyed the smells and tastes of true Italian food, soaked in the sounds of live music and relished the joy of meeting and greeting friends and families on the festival grounds.

"It was a great year and people came out and supported us well," said Frank Tarara, *Festa Italiana* Chair. "We made some changes with the food, going with more fresh stuff on the grounds. Having fresh food makes a big difference, absolutely. That pulled people in. It also helped that we put some muscle in

by having local restaurants involved in the *Festa*."

Tarara is hopeful that trend will continue. "If we can get the local Italian restaurants out, it helps their business and helps to promote our Italian culture," he said.

Cantele said the goal is to create awareness about what GRIAA accomplishes. "The goal is to get out the word about GRIAA and its mission and what our organization stands for," she said. With funds generated mainly from revenue from *Festa Italiana*, GRIAA supports the adult and youth *Amici Italiani* Dance Troupes, the *Pappagallo* and other entities, but especially scholarships to Italian-American families to help defray the cost of Catholic school education. In the last 40 years, more than \$740,000 has been distributed for such scholarships. "The bottom line is raising funds for scholarships, but really culture and helping our community is what we



Festa Italiani Adult Troupe dancers Johnny and Gia Maria Fandel celebrate the return of Festa Italiana on Friday, August 6.

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GRIAA honorees

In the photo, Lou Giamalva (second from left) and his sons Tom, Jeff and Dave in front of a machine that repairs high heels at their family business, Palace Shoe Repair.



The Giamalvas will receive GRIAA's Special Recognition Award at the annual Hall of Fame Banquet, October 9. Also receiving Special Recognition are Fran Cicero Nelson and Jerry D'Agostin. Mike Doyle also will be inducted into GRIAA's Hall of Fame. Stories on Page 2, 3 and 10.



Fran Cicero Nelson



Jerry D'Agostin



Mike Doyle



Mike Doyle Named to GRIAA Hall of Fame

Pappagallo editor honored for contributions to Italian culture

By Paul Anthony Arco

As a longtime sportswriter, Mike Doyle covered many pro football players that made it to the Hall of Fame including legendary Chicago Bears Walter Payton, Dan Hampton and Mike Singletary. He even traveled to New Orleans to chronicle the Bears Super Bowl victory in 1986.

And while he never set NFL passing records or hoisted the Lombardi trophy, Mike can now say he's a Hall of Famer, too.

Mike, a passionate volunteer, is the latest inductee of the Greater Rockford Italian American Association Hall of Fame. He will be honored on October 9 at a celebration dinner at the Venetian Club.

"I am surprised and humbled by this honor," Mike said. "I'm surprised because there are so many people in the Italian community doing great things who could be honored. But I am a promoter of my heritage, and I think that's what they recognized. There are people on this list who came before me that I can't match. But in my own way, I did what I could."

Mike spent 25 years as a professional journalist with the *Rockford Register Star*, covering major and minor league sports, features and news stories. Following his newspaper career, Mike taught journalism at Belvidere and Belvidere North high schools, where he was the adviser for award-winning yearbooks and newspaper publications. "I was fortunate to work with many promising young journalists," said Mike, who is also the author of many books, including two perspectives on the Belvidere tornado that devastated the Belvidere community in 1967.

While still teaching, Mike was recruited by Gene and Shirley Fedeli to join the GRIAA board as a director and member of the *Pappagallo* committee in 2012. He became the editor of *Pappagallo* in 2013.

Under his leadership, *Pappagallo* went from a black-and-white publication to a partial color publication. To help offset rising print and mail cost, Mike created an optional electronic version of *Pappagallo*, and he pursued advertising as another way to help with the cost of printing.

In 2016, Mike joined Frank Perrecone as co-editor of GRIAA's book, *Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families*, a project that was started by the Fedelis. The book was published in 2017 followed by a second edition in 2019 with additional immigra-



Mike Doyle and his nephews, Chris and Matt Stacionis, display the cannoli shells they made, using Mary LaRosa Doyle's recipe.

tion stories. The book includes 120 stories of Rockford Italian families who came to the United States and eventually settled in Rockford, several of which were written by Mike about his and his wife Nora's family.

Over the years, Mike has written a number of stories and photographed many local Italian-American events as an editor for the *Festa Italiana* magazine.

"Mike's overall impact on the Rockford area Italian-American community has been enormous," said Perrecone. "Under his leadership, *Pappagallo* has become among the finest newsletters published by Italian-American associations in the country. Readership of the annual *Festa* magazine is in the thousands and both prints of *Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families* sold out."

For Mike, the historian of his family, his Italian heritage began in the kitchen where many of his ancestor's favorite recipes were created. "My Irish-German father, Russ Doyle, made my sister and I aware of our Italian roots from my earliest memories," Mike said. Mike's mother, Mary LaRosa Doyle, came from a family of 10. His Nano Salvatore and Nana Gerlanda Falzone LaRosa lived on Montague Street, the hub of most family activities for three generations. And the family gatherings were always a cause for celebration. Mike is the oldest of 27 cousins, 26 of whom are still living.

After college, Mike spent two years in the army before returning to Rockford, where he soon met his future bride, Nora Cipolla. The couple were married at St. Anthony's.

"I was blessed to marry into a wonderful Italian family," Mike said. "My mother-in-law, Carm, made pasta every Sunday after 11:30 a.m. Mass, and, once invited, I was a regular, long before we were married."

As the family began to grow, Mike and Nora began to help Carm and his mother Mary make holiday dishes. From Carm, they learned how to make *Briulatte* and *Ta'ano*; from his mother Mary it was the Christmas cookies, the chocolate, figs, and other holiday treats.

"Around 2000, Nora and I realized that someone needed to learn the other family recipes so we could pass them down to our children," Mike said. "We began by making Carm's famous sauce, that she made every Sunday for her family." Since then, Mike has learned to make Carm's meatballs, homemade pizza,



The Doyle Family at Nora's retirement party in 2020. From left, Amanda Denning, Mike, Nora, and Emily Cork.

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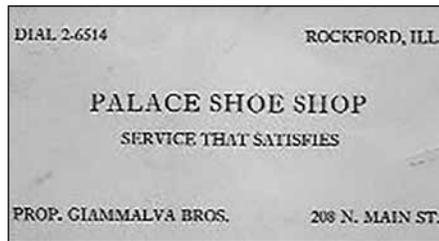


Giamalva Family honored with Special Recognition

Palace Shoe Repair's legacy of service a lasting hallmark of nearly 100 years

By Mike Doyle

For Lou Giamalva and his sons Tom and Dave, the iconic sign of the family business says it all – Palace Shoe Service. From the day brothers Joseph and Jasper Giamalva took over



Palace Shoe Service business card from the 1930s.

the shop in 1926 until Joseph's son Lou and his sons closed their door earlier this year, it adds up to nearly 100 years of service. For such service and longevity, the Greater Rockford Italian American Association will honor the Palace Shoe Repair and the Giamalva Family with its Special Recognition Award at the Hall of Fame Dinner on October 9 at the Venetian Club.

"This is such an honor," Lou said. Added Tom: "You think of all the Italian businesses, especially the ones when we were kids, and it's just the longevity of it. There are very few businesses that can hit that century mark. The Italian support has always been wonderful."

Though significant, it is just a sampling of their customer base. "Through the years, we've been able to pick up a lot of people, from two to three hours away (because of) the lack of shoe repair," Tom said. "That's true," said Dave. "We got them from all over."

And they kept these customers because of the legacy of service. Jeff, the third of Lou's sons, told the story of what a competing shoe repair store owner said upon his retirement. Jeff said, "When I was a young kid, this guy told me that, in all the years he was in business, there was one thing he couldn't compete with the Palace on – and that was service."

Tom said that was noticeable when you walked in the door. "A lot of guys hid themselves behind a wall," he said. "We always kept our shop open ... we did our work right in front of the customers." When times were tough, the Giamalvas were able to adapt.

"During the Depression, they fixed a lot of things for people who couldn't afford it," Tom said. "They'd say, 'You come back and pay later.' That built the business, too; those people never went anywhere else."

The business flourished during World War II when shoes were rationed and repair shops in Rockford numbered in the dozens. "During the war years, I remember my dad going to work at 7 in the morning and working until 9 at night – seven days a week," Lou said. "They would have nine or ten people working there."

There was another aspect of service that no longer exists – shoe repair while you wait. Tom said that service was cut back

because of lack of manpower, but, he said, "We still offered 'while-you-wait' jobs within reason."

The family's legacy began with Joseph and Jasper, who were born in Texas, then returned as toddlers to the family's ancestral home in Bisacquinto, Sicily, where they learned the business from a shoemaker. The brothers eventually returned to the United States, first to Texas, then to Iowa and, finally, to Rockford, which was promising in terms of factory jobs and a growing Italian community. Joseph found work at Ingersoll, while Jasper became a tool and die maker. Joseph eventually began to work for a Greek who owned a shoe repair and shoe shine shop



The iconic Palace Shoe Repair sign is a landmark in downtown Rockford.

on the 100 block of North Main Street. Because it was adjacent to the former Palace Theater, site of films and vaudeville shows, it became known as the Palace Shoe Service.

When the Greek owner wanted to return to his homeland, he asked Joseph if he wanted to buy the shop. Joseph talked his brother into the venture, who initially regretted leaving his well-paying job. "My great uncle said he must have had a hole in his head," Tom said. "They didn't make any money the first three years. But they built the business on service."

In the early 1930s, the brothers moved the shop across Main Street to a location next to the former Orpheum Theater, site of the Nordloff Center today. In 1939, the old Kress five-and-dime store replaced the Orpheum as well as the shoe service and a drug store. The brothers moved one block north on Main to 208 North Main Street, which is where Lou got his start shining shoes. In 1947, the Giamalva brothers sold the shop to John Antonucci, with the idea that Lou, then in high school, would eventually become a partner in the business.

Lou worked for the former Rockcote Paint Company for six months, then returned to the shoe shop as Antonucci's partner. "Shoes were in my blood," said Lou, who, in 1963, bought the business from his partner.

In time, all three of his sons went to work for him. Jeff left the business in 2000, while Tom and Dave stayed until the end.

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Celebrating ... *Continued from Page 1*

are all about.”

That drive will continue with events planned to celebrate the first Italian American Heritage month. Events include a proclamation at the Rockford City Council meeting on October 4, the GRIAA Hall of Fame and Special Recognition Banquet on October 9, the Columbus Day Mass at St. Anthony of Padua Church on October 10, an open house for the new Zeke Giorgi exhibit at the Ethnic Heritage Museum, and a showing of the film “Luca” at the Ethnic Heritage Museum on October 16 at the Ethnic Heritage Museum.

Other events are planned to tie into the heritage celebration, including locally owned Italian restaurants offering specials during October. “We also are planning a Family Pasta Night, where people would share their posts of their families sharing a meal together,” Cantele said. “And some of the *Amici Italiani* dancers are going to deliver pizzas from some of the restaurants in costume.”

In addition, plans are also underway for GRIAA to have a booth serving hot food items at Stroll on State in downtown Rockford on November 27. Check the www.griaa.org website.



Dina Getty receives a proclamation from the State of Illinois from state representative Dave Vella, acknowledging the 15th anniversary of the Sister City agreement between Rockford and Ferentino, Italy.

Highest European temperature ever reported in Sicily

Siracusa, on the southern coast of Sicily, officially reported the highest temperature ever recorded in Europe with a reading of 120 degrees (48.8 Celsius) on August 11, 2021. The recorded topped the previous high of 116 recorded in Athens, Greece, in 1977.

The whole island of Sicily was caught up in a heat wave in August, which was reportedly caused by an anticyclone, nicknamed Lucifer, which moved north from Africa. Anticyclones are areas of high atmospheric pressure – or heat domes – where the air is sinking. During the hot and dry spell, the Italian health ministry issued “red” alerts for extreme heat in several regions and the government declared a state of emergency.

In Greece, thousands of people had to be evacuated from the island of Evia as flames spread.

The Mediterranean heat wave, which saw some countries record their highest temperatures in decades, resulted in the spread of wildfires in southern Italy and Sicily, with Calabria and Puglia the worse hit regions. Italian firefighters were involved in more than 300 operations in Sicily and Calabria during the heat wave. During one 12-hour period, they battled through the night to control blazes burning thousands of acres of land. Three fire-related deaths, two in Calabria and one in Sicily, were reported by Italian media.

High temperatures also were recorded elsewhere. In Tunisia, the capital of Tunis hit 120.0 on August 11, according to Reuters, more than two degrees higher than the previous record of 116 in 1982.

Sources: newscientist.com; bbc.com

2021 Hall of Fame and Special Recognition Award Banquet

Saturday, October 9th, 2021

Venetian Club, 2180 Elmwood Rd, Rockford

Please join us to honor our new inductees and we encourage all Hall of Fame members to attend and be recognized.

Please visit www.GRIAA.org to print your reservation form or Email Karen at k.cantele@comcast.net



Reservations are required

Please join us for the 2021 Columbus Day Mass

Sunday, October 10th

10:30 a.m. at St. Anthony's Church

1010 Ferguson St., Rockford, IL



All members of the Hall of Fame, Past Inductees and their families, are invited to be a part of the entrance procession at Mass. Please arrive at 10:15 a.m.



Mike Doyle ... *Continued from Page 2*

Sicilian Sweet and Sour Chicken with vegetables, chicken with tomatoes, LaRosa Summer Salad (Italian potato salad), and too many other dishes to list. The Cipolla-Doyle kitchen is busy on the holidays and he, Nora and other family members gather to make traditional Sicilian dishes. Mike and Nora have made a special effort to pass these recipes on to their five grandchildren.

"Now that I'm retired, I have more time to do these things," Mike said. "It was important to keep both of our families' traditions alive. We realized if we didn't start doing it, we were going to lose it. Those Sunday dinners were always an amazing experience. It didn't matter how many people were coming. The important thing is to keep the tradition going."

Mike and Nora have traveled to Italy and Sicily three times. Their last visits to Sicily were week-long journeys with their own driver based on an itinerary that Mike created. "We were able to visit the hometown of all of our ancestors, and on the most recent trip, met Nora's second-cousins for the first time," he said.

In addition to his writing, Mike has been an avid *Festa*



Making pasta for ravioli was one of the cooking lessons Mike learned at the Myda Cooking School in Catania, Sicily, in 2017. Nora and her sisters, Vera Connell and Mary Jo Jarvi, were in the class as well.

Italiana volunteer since the mid-1990s, first in the wine tent and then as a volunteer cookie baker for six years. He's also helped in the pastries and cookies tent. He's also a member of St. Anthony Holy Name Society and volunteers at St. Joseph Altar at St. Anthony's. For the last two years he has helped the Gullo sisters make *pignolati* for the altar. And he makes a simple soup on Wednesdays during Lent.

There's nothing Mike won't take on. It's how he's wired. "I love to be involved," he said. "I've been blessed to have so many wonderful experiences and to share them with the people I care most about."

Giamalva Family ... *Continued from Page 3*

They were able to maintain their business model by adapting to the changing times. When shoemaking jobs were shipped overseas and consumers bought comfort shoes instead of dress shoes, the Palace began to focus on specialty lines, including Tauer & Johnson Shoes and Thorogood Work Boots.

As they look back, they can be proud of the lasting impact they made. "You look at the statistics, and you see how many second-generation businesses fail," Tom said.

It was not an easy decision to close a long-running family business. "There are so many customers that I remember coming in here when they were kids," Lou said.

"We had a lot of sad people at the end," Tom said.

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A curious tradition

Local Italian immigrants buried fig trees in winter

By Mike Doyle

Like other immigrant groups, when Italians migrated from the old country to the United States, they brought their traditions, especially when it came to food. Not willing, able or comfortable buying in American stores, many grew their own favorites, including tomatoes and grapes. While these and other products adapted to the varying climates of the U.S., the beloved and sweet fig did not.

The problem was that fig trees were not adaptable to the weather conditions where many Italians settled. The solution was to bury the trees for the winter. In December 2020, Reina Gattuso wrote about this ingenious idea on her website:

“They brought them in suitcases and in trunks, tucked into the corners of boats and, later, on airplanes.

Seeds that became *rapini*, cardoons, artichokes, *cucuzza* squash. Cuttings from knobby grape vines that flourished into backyard arbors. And, above all,



An example of a buried fig tree – the tree is bent and fitted into a hole. The hole will be covered with leaves or dirt then covered with the plywood.

bits of stick that grew into fig trees. Starting in the late 1800s, when Italian immigrants poured into U.S. port cities, the Mediterranean trees took root in unexpected places: Astoria, New Jersey; Cleveland; Pittsburgh; Bayonne, New Jersey; cities whose cold-weather climates seemed hostile to the plant. Yet the trees grew, even if their owners had to wrap them in burlap or bury them underground so they’d survive the cold winters.

“You can still identify historically Italian neighborhoods by the presence of backyard fig trees. ‘I’ve literally walked around Brooklyn looking in backyards, and I can tell,’ said Mary Menniti, the granddaughter of Italian immigrants who documents this and other stories of Italian-American gardens through the Italian Gardens Project. “Oh, there’s a fig tree in the backyard and a Madonna. That’s an Italian-American garden.’ ”

Local attorney Albert Altamore recalls that happening in South Rockford, where the majority of Italian immigrants settled and many buried their fig trees for the winter. “You could actually go by somebody’s property, and you could tell where the fig tree was,” he said.

Figs are an ancient fruit that flourishes in warm weather locations such as Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey and Iran. California is America’s largest producer of figs. All of those places can be found in the Mediterranean climate zone,

whereas, the thin bark and highwater content makes it difficult for them to withstand the harsh winters of northeastern and upper midwestern states. If you live in those parts of the U.S., you can’t work with any tree. Young fig trees that are less than six inches in diameter are the most flexible. They can bend without breaking and are able to recover from the process.

Joseph Cipolla and his brother-in-law, Joseph Altamore, Albert’s father, were among Sicilian immigrants in Rockford who practiced the burying of fig trees in the 1950s and ‘60s. Their sons, cousins Frank Cipolla, a Rockford native who lives in Florida, and Albert, recalled the ritual which occurred in the early fall.

“We buried them every year,” Frank said about the two trees in the Cipolla Family backyard on Sanford Street. “We had two kinds. One was a light-colored fig, which had a light bark, and we had a purple fig tree. The purple tree had a big trunk; the white one was thinner – I don’t think it had grown quite as much, so we didn’t have to dig too much. We would just gather (the branches up) and put it to the side.”

The practice was to tie the branches of the tree to the trunk, wrap it tightly and dig around the trunk, exposing the roots. Then, they would dig a trench as long as the tree was tall.

Albert’s father had a large garden on Montague Street and devoted much time and effort to his fig trees. “Beginning in September, we would tie a rope around the tree and slowly start to bend the tree over, and tie it to a stake, doing a little bit every day,” Albert said. “Soon you have it parallel to the ground.”

Once the tree was nestled in its trench, it would be covered with soil, leaves, tarps. Albert recalled going to his Uncle Joe Cipolla’s house with his father. “We’d make a day of it,” he said. “My uncle liked to wrap the tree in tar paper. Then we threw all kinds of things on top of it, old doors, whatever you could find.”

The process was reversed in the spring. “As soon as the weather broke, we could uncover it and pull it back up,” Frank said.

“We’d release the branches and pull it up so it was perpendicular to the ground,” said Albert. “But you don’t want to start the process of taking it out too quickly. If it’s too early and you have a freeze, you damage the tree.” Joe Altamore’s process became more complex and elaborate after his family moved to their farm on Edwardsville Road and he had room to grow more fig trees.

Frank recalled how his father kept a close watch on his figs as they grew. One year, he was waiting on the first fig. He would lovingly tend to it – but a neighbor had his eye on that piece of fruit, too. “My dad couldn’t wait for it to ripen up,” Frank said. “Then that guy came and took the first fig!”

Joseph Cipolla was angry at first, “But, eventually,” Frank said, “my dad gave him a cutting from that tree.”

Source: reinagattuso.com



A Tuscan Adventure

Rockford native shares story of renovating 400-year-old farm house



Rimacini before renovation

By Sam Guerrero

A visit with friends in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1989 had consequences that my wife Ava Guerrero and I could never have imagined. Swiss friends presented us with a surprising offer to join in purchasing a property in Tuscany that would become a permanent residence for them and a vacation home for us. I was retiring at the end of the year with no special plan and no hobbies, so this seemed a Godsend. We quickly agreed.

Early the next year, we traveled to Tuscany and viewed the property. The house dated to 1551 and was a classic *Casa Colonicha*, a thick-walled stone farmhouse built by *padrone*, large landowners, to house *mezzadro* families (sharecroppers). As the needs grew, these homes were expanded to accommodate more inhabitants. This home had been expanded twice with the final section done in the 1700s. It had been unoccupied for over thirty years, so it was essentially a ruin. The ceiling had mostly collapsed, vegetation was growing inside and, in general, the property had deteriorated substantially. It was located approximately 18 kilometers east of Siena in the country between two villages, each with 300 inhabitants. In October 1990, we purchased the house.

The *mezzadria* system dated to feudal times and, at the end of each year, the *padrone* would share half the proceeds of the crop sale. Then, they had to pay rent to the *padrone*, leaving the *mezzadri* constantly dependent. In the 1960s when Italy's economy began to recover, the *mezzadri* left for work in the cities, leaving most of these houses vacant. The British led the visitors who, through the ensuing years, realized their potential for vacation homes. So, by the time we entered the market, choice properties were gone, necessitating a vision of what restoration could achieve; our Swiss partner, an Italian-speaking architect, had that vision.

Restoration began in 1991 and required three years to complete. When we arrived early 1991 work had already started after Christian had employed a local contractor who, with three

employees, was experienced in renovations. We quickly saw the potential that Christian's vision had projected and readily agreed to become a part of the project. We remained and began doing grunt work removing plaster from the walls of our unit-to-be. We returned two more times that year, pitching in wherever we could to prepare the home for rehabbing. We also returned the following year to continue removing plaster from walls in other apartments as well and doing landscaping work. Removing plaster and floor tiles was essential so that plumbing and electricity could be installed before new plaster and tiles were introduced.

Tuscany mandated that historical homes had to preserve the exterior appearance which necessitated using *geometri* (surveyors) to approve work. In addition, owning property necessitated a *soggiorno* from the *Polizia*, a *Certificato di Residenza* from the Commune and a *Codiice Fiscale* (tax code) from the Italian government, taking a year to accomplish.

In 1993, we began furnishing our apartment acquiring mostly *vecchio* (antique) furniture except for cabinetry, appliances and toilet fixtures, in order to keep a rustic appearance. Our prized *letto matrimoniale* (bed) was a 200-year-old, queen-size bed with hand-painted front and headboard. We also bought a used Fiat with a hand choke needed to start the motor.

That year we also added a 40-foot long by 4-foot deep lap pool, completed our landscaping, restored two *cabanos* (outbuildings), dug a new well, created covered parking areas and christened the community oven on our property with pizza and champagne.

Thus, our project was completed and became our summer home providing us with some of our happiest years to its sale in 2009. We were so fortunate having dear friends occupying the property year-round while permitting us the luxury of using our unit whenever we pleased.

For me *Rimacini* also served to compliment my Italian heritage and a homage to my parents, Onofrio and Josephine Guerrero. While there, I always thought that they must be up there smiling that their son is living in their *patria* (homeland).

Salvatore (Sam) Guerrero, 91, is a 1946 graduate of East High and a 1950 graduate of Beloit College. A former vice-president of the Valspar Corporation, he transferred to Minnetonka, Minnesota, in 1970 and, following retirement in 1989, moved to Santa Rosa, California, with his wife, Ava. His daughter, Nancy, lives in Santa Rosa and son, Christopher and family, in Deephaven. Minnesota.



Rimacini after renovation



'Luca,' the Ligurian Riviera and the Vespa

Pixar film sweetly colorfully post-war Italy

By Rosaria Mercuri-Ford

The computer animated film "Luca," produced by Pixar and distributed by Walt Disney, is a nostalgic tribute to a long-gone, Italian lifestyle of the late 1950s and '60s, when the tribulations caused by the war seemed to be overcome, while hopes of renewed happiness and economic welfare filled the hearts and minds. Brilliant visuals of the Riviera, familiar opera arias, care-free pop hits and the ubiquitous Vespa accompany the adventures of the young protagonists throughout the whole film.

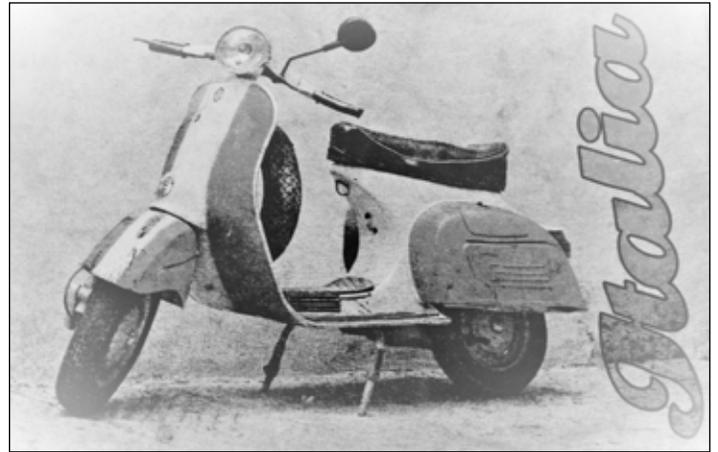
Enrico Casarosa, a native of Genova, familiar with the Ligurian Riviera and the natural beauty of its quaint villages, provided the original story. Casarosa later wrote the screen story "Luca" with Jesse Andrews and Simon Stephenson. They could not have chosen a more fitting name for the young character, for Luca is a very loved, classic name for boys. It is of Latin-Greek origin, meaning light, Luca has never declined in popularity, nor become a fad.

Luca Paguro, is a delightful sea creature – soon to become a boy – who inhabits the amazing depths of the rugged Riviera, together with his sea-monster parents, Lorenzo and Daniela Paguro. (*Paguro* is the Italian name for hermit crab). One day, Luca stumbles upon an old, round table-clock and a card-game figure which leave him wondering about the world above the sea.

During an excursion, he encounters another sea creature, named Alberto Scorfano who is sifting the seafloor for new finds – rolled objects into the sea – to take back onto the island "*Isola del Mar*," where he lives as a human boy. (*Scorfano* is Italian name scorpion fish). The two become friends and Alberto encourages Luca to venture out of the sea and thus experience human life on land. Defying his family's warnings, Luca swims to the surface, out of the water and ... turns into a wobbly human boy. Luca and his friend then climb onto the tower, where Alberto lives amidst objects rescued from the sea.

Everything is so fascinating to Luca, but what really takes his breath away is a poster on the wall featuring a sleek, red scooter. It is a Vespa, explains Alberto, a vehicle that takes you all over. "Wow," exclaims Luca, how he would love to have a Vespa! Well, these scooters are expensive, rebukes Alberto, but they could build a rudimentary one.

And the adventure of an unforgettable summer on a make-shift scooter begins – up and down the steep terrain, up in the air, and into the sea. Luca and Alberto venture to the town of Portorosso. Here they explore the quaint streets and squares, lined with sun-bathed houses nestled on the rocky terrain, their colorful awnings and shutters smirking at the blue sky. And, so many people just going about their life; old folks sitting idly on benches near a *cantina* (tavern); some men playing *scopa* (an



' ... Vespa scooters, the iconic vehicles for the average Italian of post-war time ... '

Italian card game) outside a *trattoria* (family-run eatery); children screaming in the *piazza* (square); women chatting while enjoying a *gelato*; boys kicking a *pallone* (soccer ball) into the fountain. All the while *vespe* of different colors are zooming past the slower *furgoncini* (very small van-like vehicles).

Luca and Alberto dive in the summer frenzy with the local children and later manage to wreck a new Vespa belonging to the town bully, Ercole. They are quickly rescued by a fearless young girl, Giulia, who, on a *furgoncino*, is delivering fish from the *pescheria* (fish depot) to the villagers. The three youths become good friends and enjoy *trenette al pesto* (thick fettuccine in pesto sauce) together. They soon decide to enter a triathlon contest, usually won by Ercole, and hope to win and purchase a Vespa, with the money they would receive.

The fantasy animated film "Luca" revisits with genuine nostalgia, a simpler way of life, when people were content with much less and spent relaxing summers in the sun. Everyone seemed to enjoy catchy pop songs – at times just plain silly, like Rita Pavone's "*Viva la Pappa col Pomodoro*." All the while the rumbling sound of Vespa scooters, the iconic vehicles for the average Italian of post-war time, filled the younger people with a sense of freedom and hope.

**Editor's note: "Luca" will be shown on
Saturday, October 16, at 2 p.m.
at the Ethnic Heritage Museum,
1129 South Main Street, Rockford,
as part of
Italian American Heritage Month.**



Rockford-Ferentino connection

Sister City celebrates 15th anniversary of agreement

By Valeri DeCastris

It's been 15 years since Rockford signed a Sister City agreement with Ferentino, Italy, but more than 100 years of close ties have existed between the cities.

This partnership celebrates the contributions of Italian Americans to Rockford and Ferentino's importance in Rockford's immigration history.

Rockford's Italian Sister City program began with the De-Castris and Giorgi families having discussions here and abroad as a project of the Greater Rockford Italian American Association (GRIAA).

In 2005, a committee formed, which met regularly to create and support a formal partnership.



A group enjoys the camaraderie and good food at the 2017 Taste of Italy.

Larry Morrissey and Piergianni Fiorletta, the mayors of Rockford and Ferentino, respectively, signed a Sister City agreement at Rockford's City Hall in May 2006. Nine public officials from Ferentino's City Council and

its Pro Loco Association presented the arts, culture and history of Ferentino traveled here for the ceremony and a week of official meetings and festivities.

Ferentino is an ancient, walled hill town of 21,000 people southeast of Rome. It has three distinct architectural periods – medieval, post-medieval and Romanesque- ruins of markets and amphitheatres and elaborate stone gates. Its major industries are pharmaceuticals, soaps, textiles, clay bricks, electronics and foods. Saint Ambrogio, a fourth-century Roman army calvary centurion, who was tortured and executed for his Christian faith, is highly revered and codified in its legal statutes. In 1918, immigrants from Ferentino formed Rockford's St. Ambrogio Society, which is Rockford's last remaining Italian social club that existed in south Rockford, a historically predominant Italian American enclave of the city.

The Rockford Italian Sister Cities Alliance (RISCA) is the committee that has worked for fifteen years, sponsoring student and adult exchanges, student pen pal programs, an Italian floral garden and commemorative plaque at the Keeling-Puri Peace Plaza, cultural and educational displays and peace poles at Rockford's and Ferentino's City Halls and the St. Ambrogio Club. Rockford also once hosted the State Sister Cities Association's annual meeting and RISCA members have been involved in the Rockford Sister Cities Advisory Commission and Sister Cities International, created in 1956 by President Eisenhower.

Rockford's Italian Sister City programs are for all citizens to participate in and benefit from, not only for those of Italian descent. All are needed and welcome.

Many businesses, non-profit organizations, public officials and institutions have provided generous support over the years. The Taste of Italy, RISCA's main fund-raiser usually held in November, will not be held in 2021. In its place, RISCA is selling a coupon book featuring local restaurants. All sales from the book benefit RISCA's student exchange program. The books are \$20 apiece and are available at Pomodoro, Nothing Bundt Cakes or from RISCA members.

For additional information, visit RISCA on Facebook, its website at ourrisca.org, griaa.org, saintambrogio.com or proloco.ferentinol.fr.it



Exchange students from Ferentino, their teachers and their hosts at the Taste of Italy dinner in 2019.

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D'Agostin, Nelson receive Special Recognition

Long-time Festa workers honored for their volunteering

By Mike Doyle

Two hard-working and giving Italian-Americans with a total of 77 years of volunteering for the *Festa Italiana* will receive Special Recognition awards at the GRIAA's Hall of Fame banquet Saturday, October 9, at the Venetian Club. Jerry D'Agostin and Fran Cicero Nelson will be honored at the event, then recognized at the Columbus Day Mass on Sunday, October 10, at the 10:30 a.m. Mass at St. Anthony of Padua Church. They are the first Special Recognition awardees to be honored for volunteering.

Jerry's volunteering with *Festa* dates back when the event was held for the first time on the Boylan High School grounds. "An old friend, Dennis Dal Pra, asked me to help with the electrical work," he said. The system needed a make-over, which he was able to do. That was 40 years ago, and he still sets up the lighting and electrical service for the event. "I would never have been able to do this without the help of all the other volunteers,"

The first Italian settler in U.S.

The first Italian to come to American was Pietro Cesare Alberti in 1635. He was a Venetian seaman who settled in what eventually became New York City. In those days, foreigners coming to British-held North America were not considered immigrants. While there were foreign populations groups that came to the colonies, many seeking political or religious freedom, there was relatively little immigration from 1770 to 1830. During that era, people arriving from foreign countries could just get off their boat and were considered Americans. The first significant wave of immigrants came in the mid-1800s when Irish fled their homeland because of the Potato Famine.

A small group of Italians came in the mid-1600s from the Piedmont Region. They were Waldensians, Protestants of French and northern Italian origin. The great migration from Italy began in the 1880s when 300,000 arrived. That number increased to 600,000 in the 1890s and to more than two million in the first decade of the 20th century.

2021-22 Fall, Winter Festivals in Italy

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

September (Settembre)

25 – *Festa de Pano* (Bread Festival), Savigliano

October (Ottobre)

9 – December 5 – International White Truffle Fair, Alba

November (Novembre)

12 – Milan Coffee Festival

December (Dicembre)

All month – Christmas Market of *Via San Gregorio Armeno*, Naples

January (Gennaio)

31 – Celebration of San Costanzo, the patron saint of Perugia

Jerry said.

Once the *Festa* was up and running, he said he saw others running tents and having a good time, so he wanted to join in. "I came up with the idea of an Italian Margarita," Jerry said. "We started in 2003 and now it's pretty much run by the families. We have a great time; everybody wants to work there."

Fran has been a *Festa* volunteer for 37 years, has served in several roles, including as a member of the Steering Committee and as the event's Chairperson in 1990. "Volunteering is in my blood; it's in my heritage," she said. "There is nothing like the *Festa*. I am pleased with its success and its ability to award scholarships every year.

"I love working on the board and with the steering committee. I look forward to Mondays, the day after the *Festa*, when we are there washing pots and pans and looking forward to the next *Festa*. All of the volunteers work tirelessly and do a fabulous job," said Fran, who is not ready to quit. "I'll do it as long as I can."

Fran's volunteering is wide in its scope. She has received the Bishop Arthur J. O'Neill Award for excellence in education for teaching religion at St. Anthony. and St. Bernadette churches and the Outstanding Community Service Award from the Rockford Area Association of Realtors and has been recognized for other community service projects.

Each recipient was grateful for the recognition by GRIAA.

"I was very surprised and very happy to be nominated," Jerry said. "This is very cool."

"I certainly appreciate it," Fran said. "A lot of people deserve such an award for all of their work."

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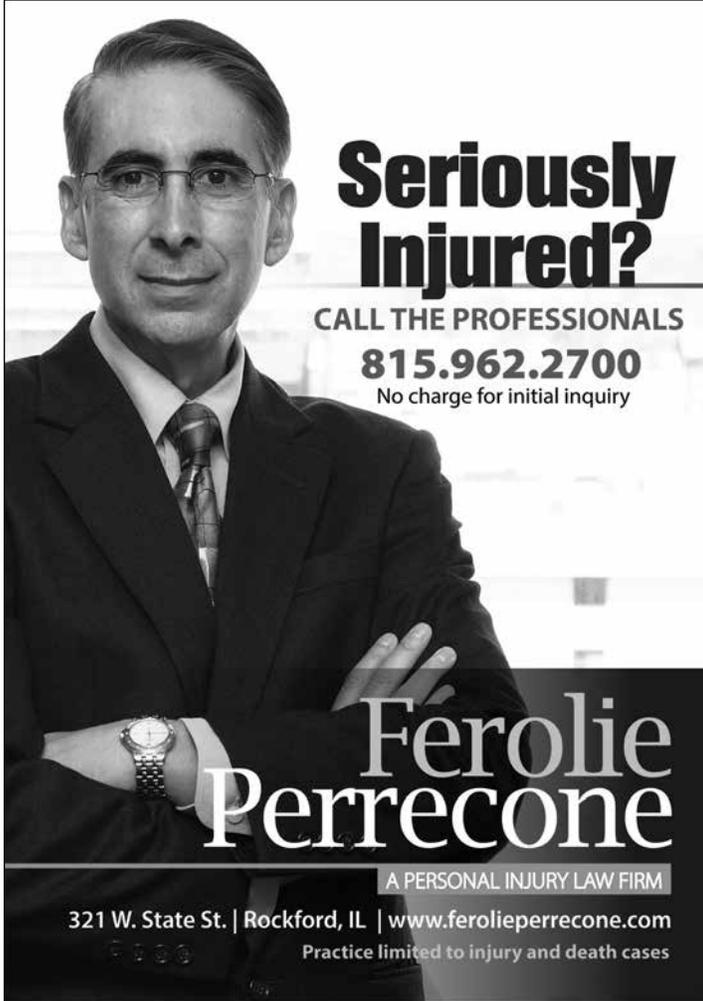
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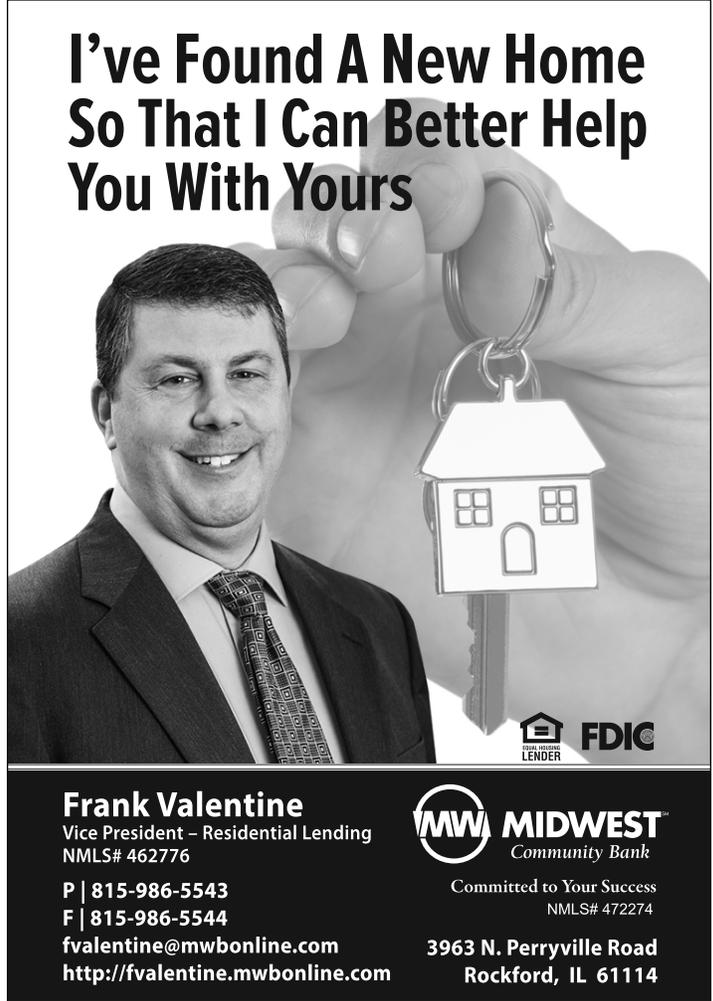
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What's in season in Italy?

In the Spring 2021 *Pappagallo*, we discovered what fruits and vegetables were in season in Italy in the spring and summer. We finish the series with a look at what's in season in the fall.

What's in season in the fall?

Fennel (*finocchio*), spinach (*spinaci*), mushrooms (*funghi*), truffles (*tartufi*), rabe (*broccoletti*), pumpkin (*zucca*), chestnuts (*castagne*), figs (*fichi*), prunes (*prugne*), grapes (*uva*), porcini mushrooms (*porcini*) and apples (*mele*).

Late spring to November – Like cabbage and cauliflower, broccoli is a cruciferous (*brassica*) and is sometimes known by its Italian name, *calabrese*. Its tight clusters of deep green buds and thick, edible stems are a great source of Vitamin C and calcium. Go for firm, bright green, undamaged heads (if it's yellow it has already past its peak) and firm stalks. In season between late spring to November.

May to December – Fennel's typical bulb is delightful eaten raw, with a texture that is crisp and the flavor assertive and *aniseedy*; while when cooked, fennel bulbs taste sweeter and the texture is softer, almost buttery. The fronds of the fennel bulb are also a welcome aromatic addition to Sicilian pasta dishes and other Mediterranean preparations.

June to October – Part of the lily, or "allium" family, of which onions are also a member, garlic (*aglio*) is one of the most indispensable ingredients around, and plays a pivotal role in Mediterranean cuisine. Bulbs are composed of many individual cloves enclosed in a thin papery white, mauve or purple skin. The flavor is fiery, pungent and crunchy when raw, as it cooks it becomes more mellow and creamy. Sauteéd in olive oil, garlic is used as a flavor punch in many recipes, sauces, stews and meat roasts.

September to November – Prickly pears (*fichi d'India*) – also known as cactus fruit – typically grow on the flat pads of a the nopal, a Central American native cactus that populates many southern Italian regions. A sweet, creamy pulp is concealed by a thorn-studded skin. To get past the prickly exterior and into their sweet, succulent soul you'll need kitchen tongs, a sharp knife, tweezers and a pair of hefty gardening gloves.

September to January – Pears boast sweet, granular flesh which is delicate and that bruises easily when ripe, so always buy slightly underripe (they should be firm but not hard). Pears ripen from the inside out! Great paired with aged cheese.

September to January – Open fire-roasted chestnuts *Caldarroste* are sold on the street in Italy, releasing their unique comforting and wintery aroma. The sweet, crumbly nut also provides Italians (and Tuscans, in particular) with chestnut flour which is employed in interesting desserts like *castagnaccio* (a gluten-free brownie of sorts, added with raisins, pine nuts and rosemary needles) and *necci*, which are delightful chestnut flour pancakes. In contrast to other nuts, chestnuts have a low oil and a high water content (hence their unique, soft texture) and should never be eaten raw. An old Italian wives tale says eating raw

chestnuts will give you head lice!

October to December – Local varieties of Italian pumpkins include the sweet *Mantovana*, which goes in the filling of typical Modena *tortelli*, *Turbante turco* (turban); *Marina di Chioggia*, knobby skin, and sweet orange pulp; *Grigia di Bologna*, grey skin and orange pulp, often used in jams; and the giant *Quintale*, Italy's largest variety.

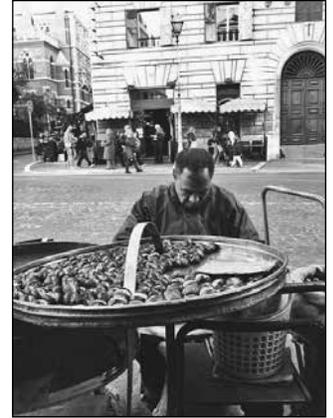
October to January – Dates are sweet, with a rich, deep flavor and a lush, slightly chewy texture.

The mahogany brown Medjool variety is the sweetest, and tastes a little like toffee. Dates are one of the oldest cultivated fruits: it's thought that they were a staple part of the Babylonian diet 8,000 years ago. At Christmas time Italians indulge in dried fruits and nuts, and dates – either stuffed with almonds, plain, or smeared with salted butter – are a big part of that sweet meal ending. Dried dates are available the whole year round, but the fresh type are at their best between October and January.

October to March – Although persimmons are originally from the Orient, you'll see plenty of persimmon trees in the Italian countryside. The actual fruits – locally called '*Loti*' or '*Kaki*' – are quite firm until they ripen, at which point they become voluptuously soft, with a silky mouthfeel and the weight and texture of a water balloon. Ripe persimmons are very delicate, and you'll see them in Italian markets carefully packed in padded styrofoam trays or mesh.

Brussel sprouts are related to cabbage – they even look like a miniature, compact version – but they boast a sweeter, more delicate, nutty flavor. A true autumn and winter staple, the sprouts can be mixed with fried *guanciale* (cured pig's jowl – somewhat similar to *pancetta*), maple syrup and black pepper as a nice seasonal power mix that keeps the cold season at bay.

Source: casamiatours.com



A street vendor sells warm chestnuts on a chilly day in Italy.

Brussel Sprouts with *Guanciale*

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed
 ¼ pound *Guanciale*, cut into ¼-inch thick chunks (or ½ pound pancetta or thickly sliced bacon)
 2 pounds brussel sprouts, trimmed and halved
 ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt, plus more for sprinkling
 Freshly ground pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. In an oven proof skillet over medium heat, warm the oil until it starts to shimmer. Add the *Guanciale* and cook, stirring occasionally, until the edges start to brown, 5 to 8 minutes. There will probably be 2 to 3 tablespoons

Continued on Page 13



of oil and *guanciale* fat in the skillet. If you have more, drain any excess fat. If you have less, add some more oil. Stir in the brussels sprouts and toss to coat. Season with the salt and pepper. Transfer the skillet to the oven and roast, stirring once, until the sprouts are tender, 20 to 25 minutes, depending on the size and how tender you like your sprouts. Sprinkle with additional salt to taste and serve immediately. *Source: leitesculinaria.com*

Italian Cheese and Tomato Pie

1 pre-made pie crust or puff pastry
 1 tablespoon melted butter
 7 ounces firm *mozzarella* thinly sliced
 5-1/4 ounces fontal cheese (Gouda, Gruyere or any soft cheese of choice)
 2 ripe, firm tomatoes, thinly sliced
 1-1/2 teaspoons oregano
 1 teaspoon basil
 1/4 -1/2 teaspoon salt
 1-1/4 tablespoons olive oil for drizzling leaves fresh basil

Pre-heat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly grease a 12-inch, round pizza pan. Place the puff pastry or pie crust on the prepared pan. Brush the pastry with the melted butter, top with first the thinly sliced *mozzarella*, then the thinly sliced fontal cheese, and finally top with the thin slices of tomato. (If they are really seedy, remove the seeds and pulp). Sprinkle with salt, oregano and basil, drizzle with olive oil. Bake for approximately 35 minutes or until golden. Remove and top with chopped fresh basil. Serve immediately. *Source: anitalianinmykitchen.com*

Holiday recipes

The first two recipes were suggested by Joan Schmelzle, a long-time friend who is a retired teacher and cheerleading coach from Rockford East High School. Joan, a frequent *Pappagallo* contributor, has traveled to Italy dozens of times and last spent Christmas in Rome in 2019. The original recipes came from Giuliano Bugialli, who was celebrated for his support of traditional Italian cuisine with authoritative cookbooks and culinary schools. Bugialli, who published a newsletter called *The Italian Cuisine*, died in May 2019 at the age of 88.



Giuliano Bugialli, who was celebrated for his support of traditional Italian cuisine.

These are dishes that were typically served in different regions on Christmas Day. *Zuppe di Stufate Lenticchie* is from the Umbrian region. *Pane del Vescovo*, or Bishop's Fruit-Nut Cake, is from the Viterbo area, where it was customary to bring the dessert to the bishop during the Christmas holidays.

Zuppa di Lenticchie di Castelluccio

1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
 2 small carrots, peeled and finely diced
 1 celery stick, finely diced
 4 tbsp of extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
 1 pound lentils, preferably from Umbria, picked over
 1/2 cup dry white wine
 6 1/2 cups vegetable stock, warm
 1 tbsp of tomato paste
 fine sea salt

Place a large pan over a medium-low heat. Add the oil and, when hot but not smoking, add the onion, carrot and celery. Fry gently for 15 minutes, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are very soft. Add the lentils and stir to coat in the cooking juices. Pour in the wine and allow it to evaporate. Add roughly half of the warm stock, cover and let the lentils simmer for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. When the lentils have absorbed all the available liquid, add half of the remaining stock and the tomato concentrate. Stir to dissolve. Taste and decide how much longer they should go: at this point, it should be about 10 minutes. Keep adding more stock as needed (how much really depends on how liquid you like your vegetable soup) and stir and taste more frequently now. Adjust the seasoning to your taste. Once the lentils are tender and the soup is dense, remove it from the heat and allow it to rest, covered, for 10 minutes. Serve with a swirl of olive oil and toasted bread.

Source: greatitalianchefs.com

Pane del Vescovo

1 pound hazelnuts, toasted and chopped
 1/2 pound dark chocolate, cut into small pieces
 1 pound sugar
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1/2 pound raisins, soaked in white wine
 4 eggs, beaten
 1 pound white flour

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Using a mixer, blend the eggs and sugar, then add the flour and baking powder. Mix until it is fairly consistent, then add the hazelnuts, dark chocolate and raisins. Mix well and spread the dough on a round plate greased with oil or lard. Bake until surface is crisp.

Source: cookidoo.thermomix.com

buon appetito !



Want to research your family history? GRIAA can help

By Frank Perrecone

Greater Rockford Italian American Association director and community service committee member, Steve Salvato, is available to conduct family history research for Rockford area Italian-Americans. In addition to individual contacts, he will be conducting family research workshops at the Ethnic Heritage Museum on October 24 and November 17 from 1-4 p.m. each day.

His research began in 1999, and he updates his more than 150,000 name database on a daily basis. A large percentage of the Italian surnames in his database are from western Sicily, the geographical region from where most Rockford Sicilian families emigrated. In addition to his database, he uses many domestic and international platforms. From these databases he often times is able to find original source documents, such as ship manifests, census information, obituaries and more.

The ultimate product of his research is a generational print-out which usually starts with the earliest ancestor or ancestors arriving in the United States followed by their descendants. For each person listed, some information is provided such as place and date of birth/death, marriage, church, and organization memberships, employment and military service. Often, Steve's research will include information about the earliest U.S. immigrant's parents and siblings in Italy.

In 2016 GRIAA inducted Steve into its Hall of Fame for his Rockford Italian family research and is offering his services free of charge upon request and at numerous community events such as *Festa Italiana*, Rockford Public Library, St. Ambrogio Society and the Ethnic Heritage Museum, 1129 South Main Street.

To request research, contact Steve at roccamena77@gmail.com

Amici Italiani returns to stage

The *Amici Italiani* Dance Troupe returned to the stage in the summer of 2021 with performances at the *Festa Italiana* and the *Pasqua Mercato* at Lino's Restaurant. Established in 1985 by Shirley Martignoni Fedli, the troupe's mission is to preserve and share the Italian culture by educating and entertaining audiences with the color and warmth of the rich Italian heritage of its members.

Detail to authenticity is maintained by Director Bea Giammarese Ricotta and her co-instructors, Stephanie Ricotta and Johnny Fandel. Dances performed are researched through the Italian Folk Art Federation of America, Inc., in which *Amici Italiani* has active membership.

The troupe dances at festivals, community events, parties, weddings and more. A highlight of *Amici Italiani* was representing Italy in the 1994 Soccer World Cup Opening Ceremony at Soldier Field in Chicago. Their dances they present include various *Quadriglias*, *Saltarellos*, *Mazurcas*, *Tarantellas* and *Codigliones*.

The 2021 *Amici Italiani* dancers are Stephanie Ricotta, Johnny Fandel, Terry Polizzi Cravens, Josey Donofrio, Gia Maria Fandel, Patrick LaSalle, Gabriel Mirabile, Luciano Mirabile, and Pauline Urso.

Youth dancers learn music, movement

The *Amici Italiani* Youth Troupe dancers began rehearsals in June and performed on Saturday and Sunday at the 2021 *Festa Italiana*. The troupe has eight dancers and two mascots, who are directed by Pauline Urso and Anna Mirabile. They introduce the dancers to the music and the movement of their ancestors through traditional ethnic dances. The dancers are Scarlette Campbell, Luna Vavra, Emma Cassioppi, Liana Cassioppi, Giuseppe Mirabile, Bella Provenzano, Cora Provenzano and Sophia Mirabile. The mascots are Josephine Urso and Alysandra Lenz.



Amici Italiani Youth dancers perform at the 2021 *Festa Italiana*

Over the years, the youth dancers have performed Cherry Valley Days, the Burpee Museum of Natural History's New Year's Eve celebration as well as the *Festa Italiani*. The troupe was established in 1989 by Lisa Fedeli Hughes and Carla Cacciatore Mullin and sponsored by the Greater Rockford Columbus Day Committee. GRIAA has continued that mission.

Interested families of Italian descent with sons and daughters between 6- and 13-years old who are interested in dancing can contact Pauline Urso 815-218-0063.

Ethnic Heritage Museum to celebrate Italian American Heritage Month

The Italian Gallery of the Ethnic Heritage Museum will be a focal point for the celebration of the first Italian American Heritage Month with two presentations – a tribute to former state legislator Edolo "Zeke" Giorgi and a showing of the Pixel animated film, "Luca."

An open house for the Zeke Giorgi exhibit will take place on Sunday, October 10, from 2 to 4 p.m. The event will be highlighted with a presentation by Giorgi's daughter Barb Vella at 2:15 p.m. The museum will be open from 2 to 4 p.m.

Zeke Giorgi, who was selected to GRIAA's Italian American Hall of Fame in 1985, was a respected and accomplished state representative for 25 years during which he sponsored legislation that authorized the a state lottery. He also was instrumental in the creation of several of our area's successful projects including the MetroCentre (known today as the BMO Harris Bank Center), the Rockford campus of the University of Illinois College of Medicine, the Riverfront Museum Park, the Chrysler Assembly Plant, the College of Law at Northern Illinois University, and the State of Illinois Office Building, which bears his name. In 2003, Interstate 39 was dedicated as the E.J. "Zeke" Giorgi Highway.

"Luca" will be shown at 2 p.m., Saturday, October 16. Doors will open at 1:30 p.m. In addition, local Italian genealogist Steve Salvato will conduct two family research workshops at the Ethnic Heritage Museum on October 24 and November 17 from 1-4 p.m. each day. The Ethnic Heritage Museum is located at 1129 S. Main Street, Rockford, Illinois, 61101, and it is open Sunday from 2 to 4 p.m. For information, call 815-962-7402.



Che bello! Festa Italiana returns



On Monday, August 2, many volunteers spent the day making cookies for the Festa Italiana in the kitchen of Boylan High School. Above left, three Boylan students show their skills in making chocolate cookies, while at upper right, Lisa Valentine, Sarah Tarara and Angie Goral are icing the finished products.



At left photo, State Representative Maurice West entertains a future voter before the Festa's Opening Ceremonies.

At upper right, Amelia Barks (center) and her cousins Molly and Micah Cork take a break from the festival's rides.

Photo to the right, volunteers work the grills at the sausage and pork chop tent.



At right, The first-place doubles team of Sambuca at the Helping Kids and Families Fund bocce tournament on July 17, were (from left) Tom and Cara Creamer, VJ and Stacy LaRosa. The annual event at St. Ambrogio funds local charities.



First Responders are recognized at the Festa's Opening Ceremonies.

Pasqua Mercato returned to Lino's over the summer. The top photo shows the shaded dining area alongside the festival grounds at Lino's. At right, a sale is made at the LaRosa Biscotti tent, while at lower right, two salespersons man the focaccia wagon.



Greater Rockford Italian American Association – GRIAA

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Right now, Josephine Urso and Alysandra Lenz are mascots, but, someday they may be dancing with the Amici Italiani Youth Dance Troupe. Photo and story about the dancers on Page 14.



2021-2022 Calendar Items

All dates are tentative and subject to change

October - November

October 9 – GRIAA Hall of Fame Banquet, 6:30 p.m., Venetian Club

October 10 – Columbus Day Mass, 10:30 a.m. and celebration following in the Memory Garden, St. Anthony of Padua Church; Open house for Zeke Giorgi exhibit, 2-4 p.m., Ethnic Heritage Museum

October 16 – Showing of film “Luca,” 2 p.m., Ethnic Heritage Museum

October 24, November 17 – Family genealogy workshop, conducted by Steve Salvato, 1-4 p.m. each day, Ethnic Heritage Museum.

We want to hear from you. Contact us

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