

PAPPAGALLO



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The Scalisi Family on the terrace of their home in Sambuca. From left: Carlo Scalisi, Chad Sheridan (Carlo's brother-in-law), Merlene Scalise (Carlo's step-mother), Dan Scalise (Carlo's father), Yazmin Trevino (Carlo's fiancée), Danny Sheridan (Marta and Chad's son), Marta Sheridan (Carlo's sister).

Sambuca Success Story

Scalisi Family among Americans who find home away from home in Sicily

Five members of a Rockford Sicilian family made a day trip to their ancestral home in Sambuca, Sicily, in 2019 to meet with an old friend. When the Scalisis told the friend, Sambuca's vice mayor (*vice sindaco*) Giuseppe Cacioppo, of their interest in possibly purchasing a house for their family, the wheels were set in motion for a project that wasn't fully realized for months.

"We purchased the home in 2019, (then) we were not able to return as planned in 2020 due to the pandemic," said Carlo Scalisi, who returned with his father Dan and sister Marta in 2021. "The three of us spent a lot of time shopping and furnishing the home in preparation for our next visit."

Then, in June, 2022, he returned to Sambuca. "This time," Carlo said, "it was a group of seven: Dan, his wife Merlene; Marta, with her husband Chad and their five-year-old son Danny; my fiancée Yazmin and I. For the first time, the house felt like a home, made by three generations of Scalisis."

Little did they know that they were ahead of a trend. As told in the Spring 2021 issue of the *Pappagallo*, the Scalisi's transaction took place early in 2019 before world-wide media attention about small towns in Italy selling homes for one euro put Sambuca on the map. Needless to say, a lot has changed in this small town on a hill in southwestern Sicily.

Sales drives in 2019 and 2021 generated hundreds of requests and houses that were eventually auctioned to the highest bidder, at roughly between \$540 and \$7,560. Cacioppo said that "almost 80 percent of the people who wrote to us and took part in this second

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To Our Readers

In our quest to continue to publish the Greater Rockford Italian American Association's signature newsletter twice a year, we need your help. Printing and postage costs for a quality, 16-page issue with four pages of full color have increased significantly and, in order to adjust our bottom line, we need to be assured that we are reaching our faithful readers. So we are asking those who receive the *Pappagallo* by mail to notify us of your desire to continue to receive each issue. On Page 3 of this issue, in a story headlined, "*Pappagallo famiglia*," you will find complete information that will help us accomplish that. We don't want to lose a single reader who looks forward to receiving the *Pappagallo* in their mailbox.



Stunning Cinque Terre

Colorful homes cling to the cliffs in Manarola on the Mediterranean Sea. Read about Manarola, one of the five colorful mountainside towns known as Cinque Terra, and the rich history of Florence on Page 2.



Hall of Fame Celebration 2022

GRIAA co-chairs Karen Cantele (left) and Mike Maffioli (right) flank Special Recognition recipients Carl Armato, Nancy Hand and Joe Bove, accepting for Sam Oliveri at the Hall of Fame dinner October 8, 2022. More photos on Page 15.



Iconic sculpture of Michelangelo's *David* at the Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze. All photos by Mary Valentine

Dreaming of Florence, Cinque Terre

By Mary Valentine

Florence is a dream destination for those planning or aspiring to visit Italy, and a perfect way to continue the dream is to hop a train to Cinque Terre, two breath-taking sites worth checking out in northern Italy.

Florence is abundant with world famous architecture, art and breathtaking views. There are several must-sees in Florence, the first being the *Duomo*.

The *Duomo*, which is the Cathedral of Florence and one of the most architecturally significant cathedrals in Italy, cannot be missed with its classic green-and-white, dome-shaped cathedral in the center of the city. One of the best views of the city is at the peak of the *Duomo*, which can be reached if visitors are willing to climb 463 steps to the top!

One of Michelangelo's most famous sculptures, the sculpture of *David* housed at the *Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze* (Gallery of the Academy of Florence), is also a must-see in Florence. The gallery houses more of Michelangelo's famous sculptures and other famous sculptures and paintings, but it was clear that people traveled far and wide to see the sculpture of David. The most remarkable thing was that people don't just come to look at the sculpture; people come to marvel at it, and for long periods of time. I was at the gallery for over an hour, and, in that time, I noticed many people sketching *David*, journaling, crying, and just staring in wonder at the over 500-year-old statue. We were all in the presence of history, and it was truly captivating.

The most unique thing about Florence is the square right outside of the city, the *Piazzale Michelangelo*, which offers a breathtaking panoramic view of the entire city. My friends and I walked to the *Piazzale Michelangelo* to watch the sun set,

and we were awe-inspired from the moment we arrived. Many people, mostly couples, covered the stone steps of the *pizzale* and were drinking wine and eating *antipasto*, creating a beautiful environment, bursting with love and happiness while overlooking one of the most charming cities in Italy.

Whenever I hear that someone is traveling to Florence, I strongly suggest that they take at least a weekend trip to the colorful seaside destination that is about 125 miles from Florence – Cinque Terre. Less than a three-hour train ride from Florence, Cinque Terre translates to “five towns,” which is exactly what it is – five uniquely colorful mountainside towns along the Mediterranean Sea. We boarded the train in Florence to La Spezia, a port city outside of Cinque Terre. From there, the cities skirt the coast to the northwest in order – Riomaggiore, Manarola, Corniglia, Vernazza and Monterosso.



Taken at dusk from the *Piazzale Michelangelo*, this is considered the most famous view of Florence.

Each town can be reached by taking the scenic route by train or by hiking between the towns. Each hike varies in difficulty level as it is a mountainous region, but each has a breathtaking view of the Mediterranean. While we took the train to explore each of the towns, one of our most memorable experiences was hiking – accidentally but successfully – on a rigorous trek from Manarola to Riomaggiore at dusk. After enjoying Aperol spritzes and *antipasto* at Nessun Dorma, a restaurant with a famous view in Manarola, we decided to take a “short and moderate hike,” according to *alltrails.com*, on the Beccara Trail. For the next three hours, we panted as we climbed up and down narrow stairs imperfectly carved into an 800-foot mountain that led us all the way to the next town.

With confidence from our impromptu hike the night before, we hiked in the daylight from Monterosso to Vernazza. We took Cinque Terre's Blue Trail, which offers a stunning, scenic, seaside trail that passes through all five towns.

A great way to simultaneously fuel up from the hiking trails

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Pappagallo famiglia asked to respond to readership request

In the Fall 2022 *Pappagallo*, we ran an item asking our loyal readers, our *famiglia*, to verify their interest in receiving the *Pappagallo* by mail. We are asking once again.

We love our readers and want to keep sending you this high-quality publication twice a year at no cost. However, printing and postage costs have risen to the point where we have to take a serious look at our bottom line. We plan to keep sending the *Pappagallo* twice a year, but only if you request further issues. Please complete the following form and return it to the address listed. If we do not receive word from you that you want to continue to receive our publication, we will remove your name from our mailing list.

Also keep in mind that we make the *Pappagallo* available online and our online readership has increased significantly. If you would rather receive the issue online, please indicate that on the following form.

Finally, as we did in the past, if you are willing to make a donation to become a *Pappagallo* sponsor, we would be most grateful. The adjoining column lists the names of sponsors who responded to our request in the Fall 2022 issue. We will continue to print the names of all sponsors, if desired.

Grazie mille!

Mike Doyle, editor, and Frank Perrecone, assistant editor

YES! I would like to continue receiving the *Pappagallo* by mail. If we do not receive word from you that you want to continue to receive our publication, we will remove your name from our mailing list.

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Amount donated _____ Please make checks payable to GRIAA and return to the address below:

Pappagallo

c/o Frank Perrecone, 321 W. State St., Suite 202, Rockford IL 61101

GRIAA Scholarship opportunities

For the past 43 years, the Greater Rockford Italian American Association has provided more than \$755,000 in scholarships, which are presented annually to area Italian American families to defray the cost of a parochial education. For information, visit www.griaa.org, then go to the Scholarship Committee, chaired by Ben Todaro and Frank Valentine to view application information.

Pappagallo sponsor list

The Pappagallo editors would like to thank our readers who have made donations to our publication. We appreciate your support!

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GRIAA seeks Hall of Fame, Special Recognition nominations

The Greater Rockford Italian American Association is seeking men and women who have shown a tremendous amount of dedication and leadership for consideration for the Greater Rockford Italian American Hall of Fame and Special Recognition. Inductees are nominated by community members and selected by GRIAA's Hall of Fame and Special Recognition Committee. Nominees should be persons of Italian heritage who, through their exemplary lives, have made significant contributions to the community in and through the arts, sciences, government, business, industry, athletics, and volunteer, civic and philanthropic activities or any other appropriate category. Such contributions should reflect a notable community impact and the highest standards and ideals. The primary difference between Hall of Fame and Special Recognition consideration is described below:

Hall of Fame criteria – The nominee should have made a significant overall impact to the Italian-American community.

Special Recognition criteria – The impact of the nominee is specialized, such as in athletics, business or the arts.

Nomination forms are available at the GRIAA website, www.griaa.org.



Dual citizenship: *Playing the waiting game*

By Frank Perrecone

While my journey to obtain dual Italian citizenship continues, three people with Rockford ties, Carla Mueller and Dan and Carlo Scalisi, are in the final stages of theirs.

I have been informed by my representative at Italian Citizenship Assistance (ICA), the firm I retained to assist in securing citizenship, that my grandfather's Leoluca Saporito naturalization documents containing the *Apostille* (certification) from the U.S. Department of Citizenship and Immigration Services have not been received. It generally takes about a year from request to receive the documents.

Once the documents are received, they will be translated into Italian. It is then expected that my claim for Italian citizenship by descent will be prepared by ICA and sent to the Italian Consulate in Chicago, well in advance of my July 30, 2024, appointment for staff to review my submission.

The review by consulate staff is limited to documents to ensure they are in proper order and that I have established that I qualify for Italian citizenship by reason of descent. In my case, that means my mother was born in the U.S. before her father, Leoluca Saporito became a naturalized U.S. citizen. If the document review passes scrutiny, the consulate then has up to two years to release the final outcome. A second possible outcome of the document review is a notification of deficiency and what needs to be done to correct the problem. At that time, a second document review appointment will be scheduled.

Once the consulate releases notification of a favorable outcome, citizenship documents will be registered in the Italian municipality of the place of birth of the ancestor from which Italian citizenship derives. In my case that would be Corleone, Sicily. Once the records are registered, Italian citizenship is finalized. When citizenship is finalized an appointment can be made at the consulate to secure an Italian passport for travel to Italy and throughout countries in Europe. Italian citizens living abroad have the right to vote in Italian elections.

Carla Mueller is in the waiting period after being notified her documents and submission are in proper order, while Carlo and Dan Scalisi still need to interview at the consulate for their Italian passports.

Carla started her dual citizenship journey in the fall of 2020. She decided not to use a service and do it herself. Carla was notified last September by the Italian Consulate in Miami, Florida, that her citizenship documents appear to be in proper order. The government now has up to two years to recognize her claim for citizenship by descent stemming from her grandfather, Carl Giaccone.

In looking back on the process, Carla said "[I] collected documents spanning two countries, four states, two parishes, seven counties, three Catholic archdioceses and four federal agencies." She successfully petitioned the Illinois Department

of Public Health to correct an error on her birth certificate. Remarkably, she drafted and filed legal documents in Winnebago County Circuit Court and appeared in court without an attorney to correct errors on her Giaccone grandparents' vital records.

Carlo and Dan Scalisi, who both have strong ties to Rockford, applied for Italian citizenship in early 2020. They did not use a citizenship assistance firm but rather did it themselves as well. In 2022, they were approved for Italian citizenship and have an upcoming passport appointment at the Chicago consulate. Their newly acquired citizenship will be put to good use. Carlo and Dan bought a home in Sambuca, Sicily before the pandemic. Their next trip to Sambuca this spring will be as Italian citizens.

If you are interested in dual Italian citizenship, whether you use a service like me or do it yourself, I suggest when you first start the process, secure an appointment with the Italian consulate with jurisdiction where you live. Appointments can be two years or more from request. During this time period, there is time to collect the necessary documents to submit your claim of Italian citizenship by descent.

All'editore (Letter to Editor)

Thank you for sending me the *Pappagallo*. I enjoyed Frank Perrecone's article on Italian citizenship (in the Fall 2022 issue). It mirrored my experience. We had the same issues with name changes. My grandfather's original name was Locadi. We learned that a few years ago. We also had to go through the Illinois Department of Public Health for a name change on my father's birth certificate that had the name John Locallo, instead of Francesco Locadi, as his father. I applied during the COVID Pandemic and did not have an in-person appointment at the Italian Consulate in Chicago. I am hopeful to have approval so I can apply for a passport in the coming year. I love reading about the Italians in Rockford. Please keep me on the *Pappagallo* list.

Diana Locallo Vera, Chicago, Illinois

Florence ... *Continued from Page 2*

of Cinque Terre and immerse oneself in the region's culture is to take a pesto-making class. Cinque Terre is in the region of Liguria, which is where pesto was first originated. I recommend learning to make pesto from scratch at a wonderful restaurant called La Regina in Manarola, with its impeccable balcony views. Everyone from our pesto-making teacher to the pizza makers to the restaurant owner of the restaurant culminated a personable experience that gave us a true taste of the region.

The romantic city of Florence, filled with history and astounding architecture contrasts so greatly from the colorful picturesque mountainside towns of Cinque Terre. Experiencing both the city of Florence and the seaside villages of Cinque Terre is a versatile way to experience beloved Italy in one trip.

In 2018, Mary Valentine traveled to Ferentino, Italy, through the Rockford Italian Sister City Alliance, with Boylan High School classmates. In the spring of 2022, Mary and three friends from that trip returned to Italy, visiting Florence and Cinque Terre.



Argentine-Italians, Pope Francis, Lionel Messi, two of world's most famous people

By Mike Doyle

Outside of Italy, the country with the most people of Italian heritage is Brazil. It borders the country with the third-most people with Italian roots – Argentina. And two of the most famous people in the world are Argentine-Italians – Lionel Messi and Pope Francis. Not surprisingly, they share a love for soccer.

Messi was able to lift the World Cup for the first time in five tries. Considered one of the greatest players in history, his inspirational play is credited with lifting Argentina to its first World Cup title since 1986. Messi scored two goals in a thrilling final in December 2022 against France that ended in a dramatic penalty-kick shootout.

Messi has Italian ancestry on both side of his family. His paternal great-grandparents emigrated from Recanti, located in the Province of Macerata in the Marche region adjacent to the Adriatic Sea.



Pope Francis is presented with Lionel Messi's No. 10 following Argentina's World Cup championship in 2022.



Vintage steamship poster advertises "service to the Americas," leaving from ports, including Liguria, and destinations such as Buenos Aires. This poster is part of the immigration experience at Ellis Island, New York.

Pope Francis was born Jorge Mario Bergoglio to parents with deep Italian roots. His father was born in Turin and his mother in Argentina in a family with roots in Liguria and Piedmont. Like most Argentine boys, young Jorge loved to play soccer but realized he wasn't

a strong player. Instead, he became a fan of the San Lorenzo team, founded by a priest in Buenos Aires in 1908 to keep the children of his parish off the streets.

Other famous Argentines with Italian ancestry are Juan Peron, former Argentine president; Dimonto Liotta, inventor of the first successful artificial heart; Cesar Pelli, architect and designer of some of the world's tallest buildings, including the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur; and Diego Maradona, widely regarded as one of the greatest soccer players in history, he starred in Argentina's World Cup title run in 1986.

From 1879 to 1960, two million Italians immigrated to



Lionel Messi scores one of his three goals at the 2022 World Cup.

Argentina, drastically changing Argentina's demographics. Today, Argentina has more than two million people of Italian descent and more than 1.5 million speak Italian. The early immigrants were from northern Italy, then, after the turn of the century, people from Sicily, Calabria and Campania joined them. They were attracted to Argentina's opportunities as well as a climate and language that was similar to the old country.

Sources: Wikipedia, Google, quora.com

Nana said it best

Some of these proverbs, that represent the rich oral tradition of the Italian people, originally appeared in the *Pappagallo* 30 years ago when Patricia Maggio was the editor:

Lecca la sarda – "He is so tight that he licks sardines."

Senza Bacco e Cerere, Venere grema pel freddo – "Without Bacchus and Ceres, Venus shivers. (Without food and drink, love stays cool.)"

Che ti pare che ti prica? – "Are you hallucinating and seeing fireworks?"

Ti Isenti "carciofo." – You think you're an artichoke. (You think you're somebody.)

Voleo ma non potevo – "I was willing but unable."

Delle volte e piacevole fare il buffo -- "It's fun to play the fool at times."

Diamante taglia diamante – "Diamond cuts diamond. (Fight fire with fire.)"

Ci vuol pazienza – "You must have patience!"

Casa sporca, gente aspetta – "A messy house invites unexpected guests."

Gili sempre hanno torto – "The absent always lose or are in the wrong."

Chi fa faccia, cambria faccia – "He who can put on an act can also change it."

L'acqua in bocca, zitto chi lo sa – "If it's something good, keep it to yourself."





A 'true trailblazer'

Geraldine Ferraro was 1st Italian-American national candidate

By Isaac Guerrero

Geraldine Ferraro's conviction was on full display during a campaign stop at the Chrysler Belvidere Assembly Plant in October 1984.

Ferraro, then a little-known Democratic New York Congresswoman, had made history that year when presidential nominee Walter Mondale tapped her to be his running mate. Ferraro was the first Italian-American national candidate, and shattering a glass ceiling for women as the first female vice-presidential candidate on a major party ticket propelled her profile to the extent that she often overshadowed Mondale. But controversy dogged her on the campaign trail, and she faced a tough crowd of UAW workers when she visited the Belvidere auto plant.

The workers peppered Ferraro with questions about her stance on foreign policy and defense spending and her pro-choice position. Though Ferraro held fast to liberal positions, including her support for the Equal Rights Amendment for women and arms control, she also championed conservative causes, such as tax credits benefiting private and parochial school parents. However, the abortion issue hounded Ferraro, a Roman Catholic, throughout the campaign.

Despite visiting the Belvidere plant to garner their support, Ferraro's response to the auto workers' questions was unapologetic and somewhat confrontational. A *New York Times* reporter captured the unorthodox exchange.

"I can't change my views on abortion," Ferraro said, according to the *Times* article. "And the reason I can't is because I believe I'm right. I would never have an abortion, but if I were raped, I'm not sure I would be that self-righteous."

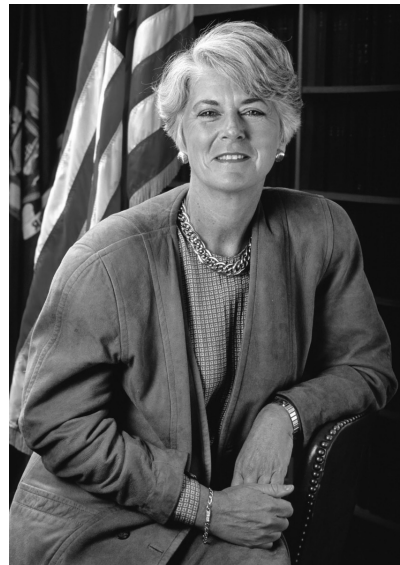
"And that decision would be mine, I wouldn't leave it to you to make," Ferraro said, "or you to make," pointing at a man who had praised the morality of Ronald Reagan, the popular incumbent president who went on to beat Mondale in a landslide a month later.

Ferraro worked as an attorney in private practice before taking on a job as an assistant district attorney in the New York City borough of Queens in 1974. She led the office's special victims' bureau, which prosecuted sex crimes and the abuse of children and the elderly. In 1978, she won the first of three terms in Congress. After the 1984 loss to Reagan and Bush, Ferraro joined the Institute of Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University as a fellow.

She made an unsuccessful bid for a U.S. Senate nomination in 1992. Ferraro then returned to practicing law, and was an advocate for women raped during ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia. In light of her advocacy work, President Bill Clinton tapped Ferraro for the position of ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, where she served in 1994 and 1995.

Editor's Note: In celebration of March as Women's History Month, the *Pappagallo* features on pages 6 and 7 two outstanding women of Italian heritage who have had historically significant and note-worthy accomplishments.

Ferraro remained in the public eye as a co-host on CNN's "Crossfire" in 1996 and 1997. She declared her political career finished after placing a distant second to Chuck Schumer in a 1998 Democratic Senate primary in New York. In 1999, Ferraro joined a Washington D.C. public relations firm to advise clients on women's issues. Two years later, she revealed that she had been diagnosed with blood cancer. Ferraro died in 2011.



Geraldine Ferraro held firm to her convictions, as demonstrated in a local appearance during the 1984 presidential campaign.

Source: [gettyimages.com](https://www.gettyimages.com)

Ferraro's 1984 run was marred by questions about her campaign finances and tax returns, and then about the business dealings of her husband, John Zaccaro. Ferraro chalked up the controversy to bias against Italian-Americans.

"You don't deliberately submit people you love to something like that," she told an interviewer for *Ladies Home Journal*. "I don't think I'd run again for vice-president." She then paused, laughed and said, "Next time I'd run for president."

Jo Minor, a New York native of Italian heritage and a member of the League of Women Voters

Rockford Chapter, was living in Rockford in 1984 and vividly remembers Ferraro's historic run. Her opinion: Ferraro was "a true trailblazer."

"Her legacy will forever be enshrined in all young women who aspire to political office, and who aspire to make not only their lives better but the lives of all they come in contact with," Minor said. "As an Italian American, Geraldine Ferraro is an example to all Italian Americans in Rockford and throughout the country."

Men's and Women's Italian Open Golf events August 21

GRIAA's Men's and Women's Italian Open will be held August 21, 2023, at Forest Hills Country Club. For information, go to griaa.org.

The dates for three social club golf play days are June 3 and September 6 for Verdi, July 24 for St. Ambrogio and July 28 for Venetian.



Tireless advocate for women

As player, coach, administrator, Donna Lopiano recognized as one of most powerful women in sports

By Paul Arco

Growing up in an Italian-American household in Stamford, Conn., Donna Lopiano was a self-proclaimed tomboy. She played street baseball with the boys in her neighborhood, and her parents gave her a baseball glove for her first Holy Communion.

Lopiano dreamed of playing baseball for the New York Yankees. In fact, she tried out for a Little League baseball team at age 11 and made it. She was euphoric, until one of the other fathers pointed out that league rules prevented girls from participating. While the setback derailed the young girl, it helped springboard Lopiano into a career where she became one of the country's leading advocates for gender equity in sports.

At 16, Lopiano joined the Brakettes, a national championship women's softball team that toured Europe and Asia, playing against some of the best women athletes in the world. Between tournaments, Lopiano finished high school and earned a bachelor's degree in Physical Education from Southern Connecticut State University and a master's from the University of Southern California (USC). In 1972, she earned a doctorate from USC, the same year she helped the Brakettes bring home a national title.

As an athlete, Lopiano participated in 26 national championships (six in softball), in four sports and was a nine-time All-American at four different positions in softball.

Lopiano moved on to serve as assistant athletic director at Brooklyn College. In 1975, she became the director of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women at the University of Texas at Austin. Under Lopiano's leadership, women athletes at Texas won a staggering 18 national championships and produced 314 All-Americans. She has been a college coach of men's and women's volleyball, women's basketball and softball and coached the Italian national women's softball team.

In 1992, Lopiano became the chief executive officer for the Women's Sports Foundation and spent the next 15 years working to make sure school athletic programs across the country were compliant with Title IX.

Lopiano has been nationally and internationally recognized for her leadership advocating for gender equity in sports by the International Olympic Committee, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the National Association for Girls and Women in Sports, the National Association of Collegiate Women Athletic Administrators and the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics.

She has written for dozens of publications, holds five honorary doctorates, and was named one of "The 10 Most Powerful Women in Sports" by Fox Sports. She has received many accolades throughout her impressive career – she's a member of the USA Softball Hall of Fame, the Texas Women's Hall of Fame, and serves on the national honors committee for

the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Lopiano has testified about Title IX and gender equity before Congressional committees, and served as a consultant to the U.S. Office for Civil Rights Department of Health, Education and Welfare Title IX Task Force. She's also served as a consultant to school districts, institutions of higher education and state education agencies on Title IX compliance.



Donna Lopiano

And she hasn't slowed down. Today, Lopiano is the founder and president of Sports Management Resources, a business that aligns consultants with schools to help build solid athletic programs. She is also an adjunct faculty member in the Sports Management Program at Southern Connecticut State University.

Lopiano says she will always work to promote and seek opportunities for women in athletics.

"All of the women working to give women equal opportunities to play sports are really pleased at the number of participants playing today," she said on a podcast last year, "but we're not satisfied."

Sambuca ... *Continued from Page 1*

auction either came from the States or were American." He added that interest from Americans continues to occur, all of which has led to a transformation on the narrow streets of Sambuca.

Carlo Scalisi said that on their daily walks during last year's visit, they would see many homes restored or in the process. "We also encountered many tourists and visitors, some of whom were also American," he said. That included Rockford's Rose Mary Leggio, who was leading one of her tours. "It was quite the surprise to be taking out the trash in Sambuca and hear someone speaking English, and even more to turn around to find it was someone that I knew."

Sambuca is located in the Province of Agrigento, about 12 miles from the seaside town of Sciacca. Founded by Arabs about 830 A.D., architectural traces of Islamic culture can still be seen today. Change had come slowly to Sambuca until recently. The influx of newcomers is beginning to have an impact on this town of 5,800, one of many in Italy seeking ways of breathing life after years of decline.

Along with the renovations, the homeowners are bringing new ideas, one of which is offering a crowd-funding campaign to improve Sambuca's park, roads and infrastructure. Among others drawn are restaurant owners and artists.

Carlo is optimistic about what is happening in his ancestral home. "Sambuca is a small town, but at times can feel very vibrant and busy," he said. "The people are very friendly and very welcoming of the visitors and the changes. It seems as if there's always something going on there, an event, a festival, a celebration.

"Yet, the residents remember to take things slow and embrace life, as manifest by its symbol, the snail, which can be found climbing buildings and perched on benches throughout the city."

Sources: cnn.com/travel, Airbnb.com



Connections:

Julie Knutson has many ties to learning, history and her Italian culture

By Mike Doyle

Author and educator Julie Knutson dove so deeply into her 2022 book about the history of World War I that she had difficulty moving on from the project. The book, *World War I: The Great War to End All Wars*, was, she said, “A massive project. I was so invested in it, that, when I finished it, it was almost like the way you feel the day after Christmas. It was so hard to let this project go.”

Such passion is also evident in how the Rockford native talks about other books she has written, most of which are intended for middle and high school students. The subjects include global citizenship, human rights, and unnatural disasters; notable persons such as Harriet Tubman, Anne Frank, and Marie Curie; and gardening and food diversity.

A 1998 graduate of Boylan High School, Knutson earned a bachelor's degree in culture studies from New York University, a masters from the London School of Economics in addition to post-graduate degrees in education and history from Rice University. She is an active member of the National Council for the Social Studies, having served as the Chair of its Middle School Teacher of the Year Award in 2018 and is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators.

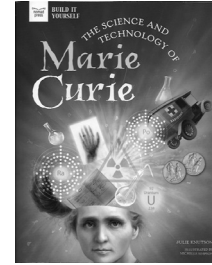
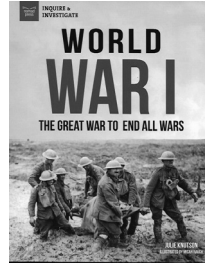
She and her husband Tyler and nine-year-old son Theo live in Philadelphia, Tyler's hometown, having moved there last summer after living the previous nine years in Rockford. Knutson, the daughter of Frances Castrogiovanni Knutson and granddaughter of Anthony and Fran Castrogiovanni, maintains a strong connection with her hometown and with her Italian heritage.

That connection showed up as part of the research she is doing for her newest book on the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway. “I am very interested in food and food culture, and how gardening allows people to maintain a connection to their heritage,” Knutson said. “One of the interesting things about me is the connection to my Italian culture.”

One example she cited is *carduna*, a vegetable side dish that appears on many Sicilian tables during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Otherwise known as burdock, *carduna* is related to artichokes and thistle. With the leaves removed, it resembles celery. “My mom and I used to go down to Piemonte Bakery, where they grew alongside the brick structure and where we could pick them,” she said about the former bakery that was owned and operated by her mother's grandparents, then an aunt, then a cousin. “I like to think, perhaps wishfully, that these same

plants were cultivated by my great-grandparents ... that we were enjoying a vegetable with a shared root!”

Knutson also told how she and Tyler were excited when they found a packet of *carduna* seeds at Thomas Jefferson's home in Monticello, Virginia. “I love *carduna*,” she said. “It's one of my absolute favorite things to eat. But when you talk to people, they



Two of Julie Knutson's books published by Nomad Press.

have no idea what I am talking about.” Recognizing such learning opportunities and acting on them are what Knutson strives for through informing and educating. Her professional journey began as a high school teacher in Houston with

a focus on global citizenship, world history and human rights. That led to a position as an academic consultant for social studies with Follett Publishing, a major supplier of educational materials for children from K-12.

“I would consult them on meeting standards and alignments for the selection of books and text books,” she said. “In meetings with publishers, I would hear about their needs and gaps and would try to bridge the gap with publication products that schools needed.”

After writing short books on various topics, she moved into lengthier books for children from 12-15. “I've done five series of books, with topics like the United Nations, fulfilling goals and the history of your favorite foods,” she said. “I definitely had fun with the Italian-American connection on that!”

In 2020, she published her first book for Nomad Press, a leading publisher of non-fiction books for children 5-15. “Global Citizenship” examines what it means to be a good citizen and to learn about the rights and responsibilities we all have. That includes the right to grow and thrive in a safe environment; the right to a name and an identity; the right to free expression of ideas; and the right to an education.

“After that book, (Nomad Press) asked me to write a book on Marie Curie,” Knutson said. “It felt like it was a bit out of my wheelhouse, but, again, if you like writing biographies, you become very attached. It was very neat to see her come alive to me, a very particular figure in a very particular time.”

Knutson's current work is a book on the Global Seed Vault, a secure facility to ensure the world's crop diversity. Located in far northern Norway, it provides long-term storage of seed duplicates, proving security of the world's food supply against loss of seeds due to natural or man-made disasters. The safeguarding of crop diversity allows for the adaptation to these crises, while providing adequate nourishment and allowing experts to develop new, more resilient and welcome varieties.

“This project is devoted to plants and the connection people have to seeds,” she said. “Seeking food diversity is so critical. It really matters and I am introducing that to young people.”



Julie Knutson was the recipient of a 2021 Skipping Stone Honor Award for her book, “Global Citizenship: Engage in the Politics of a Changing World.”



Sammy Mandell was world boxing champ

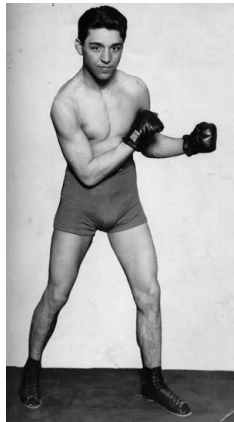
'The Rockford Sheik' had it all: good looks and a devastating left hand

By Mike Doyle

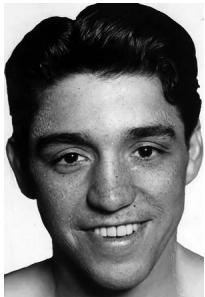
Some say Sammy Mandell was called "the Rockford Sheik" because he bore a resemblance to contemporary matinee idol Rudolph Valentino. Billy Celebron, the late local boxing legend, said it was "because he was so hard to catch."

Either way, Mandell used his quickness and a devastating left hand to become the lightweight boxing champion of the world from 1926 to 1930.

Saverio Mandala was born February 5, 1904, but sources differ on where Mandell was born. *Boxrec.com*, a website dedicated to listing complete records of professional and amateur boxers, lists his birthplace as Piana del Greci, Sicily. Other sources place his birth in Rockford or Chicago. But he did grow up in Rockford and hung around Camp Grant, where he learned some of his boxing skills.



Sammy Mandell was 15-years-old when he fought his first bout at Camp Grant.



Too young and underweight at 105 pounds to join the army, he gained permission to wrestle and box with older and heavier soldiers. His first recorded bout came at Camp Grant on July 23, 1919, when the 15-year-old beat Clifford Lobdell. Camp boxing instructor Fred Dyer said in a 1926 interview that Mandell beat every soldier in the bantamweight class as well as men 10 pounds heavier than him. Dyer also said he advised Mandell to turn professional, which he did when he was 16.

After five years of fighting across the U.S. and Canada, Mandell got his world lightweight title bout when he was 22. On a rainy July 3, 1926, night against Rocky Kansas in Comiskey Park in Chicago, Mandell won in a 10-round decision.

Although he won the title, he lost money on the bout. He and manager Eddie Kane had to put up \$50,000 for Kansas to defend his title. Only 15,000 people watched the match because of the rain, and Mandell lost nearly \$18,000. But he was the lightweight champion of the world.

At 5-foot-6 and 135 pounds, Mandell was not overpowering, but he was elusive. Boxing experts also said he had "the greatest educated left hand in the history of the boxing game."

Those tools helped him in two memorable bouts. On New Years Day, 1928, Mandell's quickness helped him eke out a decision in Minneapolis against Billy Petrolle, who nearly won with a knockout. According to the Helena, Montana, *Independent*, Petrolle laid a "terrific right to the jaw early in the eighth round, knocking Mandell to the ropes, and a smashing left to the head had him groggy. Sensing a knockout, Petrolle put both hands to

the face and body, but Mandell's footwork saved him."

Then on April 30, 1930, in what was called an "unpopular" outcome, Mandell beat Pee Wee Jarrell in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in a decision based on "the strength of his tireless left jabbing."

Mandell defended his title twice, beating future world welterweight champion Jimmy McLarnin in 15 rounds on May 21, 1928, in New York City; and future lightweight and junior welterweight champion Tony Canzoneri on Aug. 2, 1929, at Chicago Stadium.

He lost the lightweight title on July 17, 1930, in a first-round knockout by the powerful-punching Al Singer, one of only six knockouts in his career. Mandell competed for the next three years. His last recorded fight was June 27, 1934, when he was knocked out by Joe Bernal in Oakland, Calif.

Mandell had a successful 14-year career, posting an 87-22-1 record, with 32 winning knockouts, according to *boxrec.com*. Some in the boxing world believe he was underrated. He was inducted into the Illinois Sports Hall of Fame, National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame, the International Boxing Hall of Fame and World Boxing Hall of Fame.

After he retired, Mandell returned to Rockford, which he called "the greatest city in the country." He owned the Pioneer Athletic Club on South Madison Street and raised his family on Hightcrest Road. He died on Nov. 7, 1967.

Sources: *boxrec.com*, *Wikipedia.com*

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9 things you shouldn't do in Italy



Even in the off-peak month of September, the Spanish Steps in Rome is clearly a tourist draw, but beware of friendly folks offering "free" flowers.

Traveling is back, and here are 9 things to consider if you are planning a trip to Italy, don't:

- Travel with large, heavy luggage. Packing light is the way to go as many of the places you will walk to while pulling your luggage has uneven, cobblestone bumpy streets, steep hills, crowds and Vespas buzzing by like pesky flies. Consider how much of your trip is by rail, which means lifting your luggage. And some hotels have elevators that don't always stop at your floor.
- Skip the free walking tours. One of the best ways to experience Italy and all of Europe is to make your own discoveries on foot. Free walking tours at the start of your trip will allow you to see many major tourist sites. In Rome, one such example is to walk from the Pantheon to Piazza Navona and then to Trevi Fountain.
- Forget to validate your train ticket.
- Expect a huge breakfast. Breakfast is not a huge meal in Italy as most Italians just sip an espresso and maybe nibble on a sweet cookie to start their day. Hotels that offer free breakfast may have a sparse continental spread. Hotels that cater to tourists may offer a more elaborate spread.
- Plan a big Sunday outing. Most businesses are closed on Sundays, and, if you plan a visit to a popular museum, expect large crowds as Sundays are popular days for visiting.
- Over-tip at restaurants and bars. A definite culture shift, tipping is more casual in Italy. Servers at some high volume touristy spots may expect more. If you feel you must leave a tip, one to three euros or 10 percent, and also check that service was not

added to the bill as *servizio incluso*.

- Fail to schedule time to experience *La Dolce Vita*. It's OK to have a full schedule some days on your trip, but if you don't take time for "the sweet life," you will be missing the simple pleasures Italians enjoy. That includes eating, drinking and being with friends.
- Order tap water. Your restaurant server is likely going to ask if you want sparkling or still water, which you are going to have to pay for. A simple glass of water, especially with ice, is not generally available.
- Be duped by freebies. When that friendly person hands you a flower at the Spanish Steps, it is not a gift but a sneaky way of engaging customers. Those toga-clad Roman soldiers at the Coliseum who want a picture taken with you expect to be paid.

2023 Festivals in Italy

April (Aprile)

21-24 – Artichoke Festival, Chiusure, Tuscany

May (Maggio)

13-22 – *Madonna della Udienna*, Sambuca, Sicily

June (Giugno)

1-30 – Napoli Pizza Village Festival

July (Luglio)

5-7 – *L'Ardiadi san Constantino*, horse race, Sedilo, Sardinia

7-16 – Umbria Jazz Festival, Perugia

August (Agosto)


11-15 – *Castrum Sarnani*, medieval festival, Sarnano, Marche region

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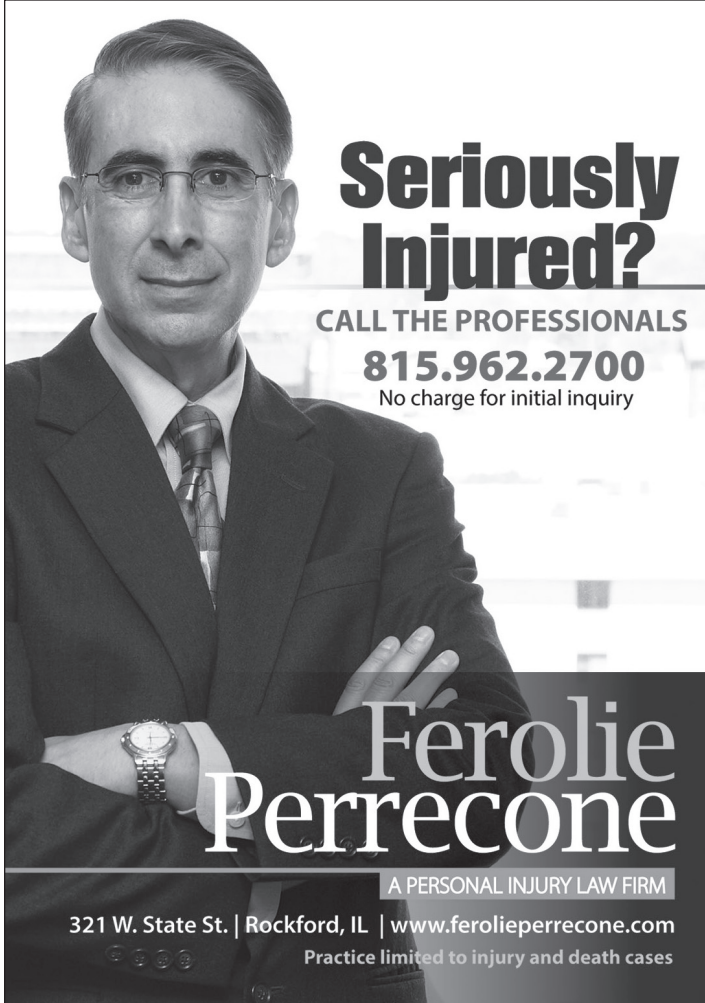


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Four churches, one home to display St. Joseph Altars

St. Joseph Altars will be on display and traditional *pasta con sarde* will be available at five places. Here are the times and dates:

- St. Anthony of Padua Church, 1010 Ferguson Street, Rockford. Altar blessing, Saturday, March 18, following 4:30 p.m. Mass. Altar open for traditional meal, Sunday, March 19, noon-3 p.m.
- St. Bridget Church, 604 Clifford Avenue, Loves Park, in the Parish Center across from the church. Public viewing of altar, Saturday, March 18, 4-6:30 p.m., Sunday, March 19, 6:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Traditional meal carry-out only.
- St. Bernadette Church, 2400 Bell Avenue, Rockford. Altar viewing, Saturday, March 18, 5:30-7 p.m.; Sunday, March 19. Altar open for traditional meal and carry-outs, noon to 3 p.m.
- St. Mary Roman Catholic Oratory's altar will be held at the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Academy, 3445 Elmwood Road, Rockford, Sunday, March 19. Following the 10:30 a.m. Mass, at which 13 children will receive First Communion, the altar will be blessed and the traditional dinner will begin.
- Rosie Scalise Sheridan and Families home altar, 7020 Clikeman Road. Altar viewing, Saturday, March 18, 5-7 p.m., blessing at 5 p.m. Altar open for traditional meal, Sunday, March 19, noon to 6 p.m.

While altars are laden with beautifully designed cakes and cookies, pastries, fruit and vegetable baskets, platters of fish and other delicacies, one of the smallest and simplest items normally found on these festive tables that honor St. Joseph is the fava bean.

The oft-told legend of the altars began in a time of drought and famine in Sicily. In desperation, the people prayed to St. Joseph to intercede on their behalf. When the hard times ended, the grateful people promised to create an altar in thanksgiving as an answer to their prayers. It was to be celebrated on his feast day and the altars would include a bounty of food.



In that sense, the legend of the fava bean fits perfectly into story of St. Joseph. Although fava beans (*vicia fava*) can be served many ways, when dried, roasted and blessed, it becomes a "lucky bean," with a tale of another calamity. Fava beans, grown to feed

cattle, fend well in the poor, rocky soil of Sicily. However, in times of famine, they were prepared for the table, and the farmers considered themselves fortunate to have them.

Seen as a symbol of fertility in those days, Sicilians carried a bean from a good crop to ensure good crop the following year. The modern take on that is that one will never be broke as long as you carry one. And others believe that if you keep one in your pantry, there will always be food in the kitchen.

Native to southwestern Asia, the cultivation of fava beans spread along Africa's Mediterranean coast, then to Sicily. Fresh, chopped fava beans, a part of many Asian and African cuisines,

are one of the main ingredients of falafel. The following recipe features fava beans.

Legume Soup with Fava Beans from Abruzzo

- 2 smoked ham hocks
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup peeled, shredded carrot
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup canned whole Marzano tomatoes, crushed by hand
- 1 pound dried fava beans, soaked overnight, drained, outer skin peeled
- 8 ounces chickpeas, soaked overnight and drained
- 3 cups coarsely chopped peeled chestnuts
- 3 fresh bay leaves
- 2 bunches Swiss chard, rough stems removed, leaves and tender stems and ribs shredded
- 8 ounces dried brown lentils
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt

In a medium saucepan, cover the ham hocks with cold water, bring to a simmer for 10 minutes to remove some of the salt, then drain. In a large soup pot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion, carrot and celery and cook until softened, about five minutes. Add the tomatoes, favas, chickpeas, chestnuts, bay leaves and 8 quarts of water. Bring to a simmer. Once the beans are simmering, add the drained ham hocks. Simmer the soup until all the beans are almost tender, about 1-1/2 hours. Add the chard, cover and simmer until the chard wilts into the soup, about 15 minutes. Add the lentils and cook until all the beans are very tender and the chestnuts have melted to make a cream soup, about 30 minutes. Season with salt. Serve hot. Serves eight or more.

Source: Lidia Bastianich's *Commonsense Italian Cooking*

Carm's Asparagus with Potatoes

- 1 bunch fresh asparagus
- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into small chunks
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Olive oil
- 1 packet G. Washington Golden Seasoning
- Salt and pepper

Remove woody end of each asparagus, about 2 inches, then cut remaining spears in two. Peel potatoes and cut into small chunks. In a medium pot, sauté garlic in 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil until softened, then add potatoes. Set the top parts of the asparagus aside and sauté the middle parts for 2-3 minutes, then add the tops and sauté potatoes and asparagus for 2-3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add olive oil as needed, cover and steam for 5 minutes. Mix one package of Golden Seasoning into one cup of water and add to pot. Bring to a boil and allow to simmer until all vegetables have softened.

This recipe came from Carm Cipolla's kitchen.





Ta'ano (Traditional dish at Easter)

2 pounds ground meat made into meatballs
 1 pound pasta – with opening about the size of a quarter
 2 pounds Tuma cheese, sliced
 ½ pound grated Romano cheese
 3 dozen eggs
 ½ to 1 cup chicken broth with a pinch of saffron
 ½ cup parsley, finely chopped
 Salt and pepper to taste
 4-6 slices of day-old bread

Cook meatballs in preferred style – oven baked, lightly browned, fried in skillet or cooked in sugo. Keep in mind each of these methods will give you a different flavor. If cooking in sugo, they must be drained thoroughly. Beat eggs with parsley, salt and pepper, then add grated cheese. Parboil pasta using a tablespoon of oil in water to prevent pasta from sticking together when drained. Stuff pasta shells with meatball pieces.



To assemble: grease Pyrex bowl or large deep dish casserole and line with greased aluminum foil. Dip slices of bread into egg mixture to form bottom layer. Then add a layer of Tuma cheese, a layer of stuffed pasta with cooked meatball meat, then pour a little of the beaten egg mixture. Repeat process: layer of Tuma, layer of stuffed pasta, beaten egg mixture. Top layer should be covered with slices of Tuma. Pour chicken soup over the top. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 ½ hours. Do not overcook or undercook. Baking time depends on your oven.

Source: Teresa Tarara Spoto, Susie Tarara Mangiarcino, Joanne Tarara, Sarah Tarara

Fried Carduna

1 stalk carduna (burdock)	1 teaspoon fresh parsley,
1 large egg	chopped
1 cup flour	Salt and pepper
1 cup bread crumbs	Olive oil
½ cup grated cheese	

Boil salted water in a large sauce pan. Cut off ends of carduna, trim it of strings and cut into 3- 4-inch lengths. Place washed pieces in boiling water and cook until tender. As they start to cook, flatten the pieces. (You may have to add more water.) Drain and allow to cool, removing any remaining strings. Prepare three pans: In the first, add flour, seasoned with salt and pepper; in the second, whisk egg and a half-egg shell of water; in the third; mix bread crumbs, grated cheese and parsley. Coat each piece, first in flour, then egg wash and bread crumb mixture. Heat oil and fry pieces until golden brown.

Pasta Bolognese with Ground Turkey

1 pound angel hair pasta
 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
 1 large onion, chopped
 1 large carrot, peeled and chopped
 1 celery stalk, chopped
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1 pound ground turkey
 Kosher salt
 Freshly ground black pepper
 1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
 ½ cup dry white or red wine
 ¼ cup freshly chopped parsley, plus more for garnish
 2 teaspoons dried oregano
 Freshly grated Parmesan, for serving

In large pot of salted boiling water, cook angel hair according to package directions until al dente. Drain and return to pot. In a large skillet or pot over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion, carrot, celery, and garlic and cook until tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Add ground turkey and cook until no longer pink, five minutes more. Season with salt and pepper. Add crushed tomatoes, wine, parsley, and dried oregano. Let simmer until thickened, 10 to 15 minutes. Toss with cooked angel hair pasta. Garnish with Parmesan and parsley.

Source: Delish.com

Italian Sponge Cake

5 large eggs, room temperature
 ¾ cup granulated sugar
 1 cup all-purpose flour, sifted
 Powdered sugar for serving (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray 9-inch springform pan with nonstick cooking spray and line bottom with parchment paper; set aside. Add the room temperature eggs and sugar into a stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment. Turn the



mixer on medium high and beat eggs and sugar until they have tripled in volume. (You will know the mixture is ready when you can pull ribbons of batter that will sit atop the mixture). Remove the bowl from the stand mixer and use a rubber spatula to fold in the flour in two batches, half of the flour at a time. Be gentle when mixing in the flour so as not to deflate the eggs. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for about 25-30 minutes until a toothpick inserted in the cake comes out clean. (Don't open the door during the first 25 minutes or you risk deflating the cake.) Remove the cake from the oven and let cool on baking rack for 10 minutes. Use a knife to loosen the cake from the sides of the pan and remove the collar. Let cake cool completely before serving, dust with powdered sugar and cut into slices.

Source: myitaliankitchen.com



Amici Italiani Adult Troupe members clearly are having fun while dancing at a recent Festa Italiana.

Looking for fun? Like to dance?

Amici Italiani is looking for you

Dance! Dance! Dance!

Do you like to dance? Then you should consider joining your Italian friends in *Amici Italiani*, the Italian dance troupe sponsored by the Greater Rockford Italian American Association.

This lively group spins, kicks and hops and laughs to their hearts' delight. And they are waiting for YOU! *Amici Italiani* (Italian friends) was established in 1985. There are two divisions – Adults, for those 14 and over, and Youth, for those 13 years and younger. Both troupes are looking for additional dancers.

Don't worry if you don't know how to dance any Italian folk steps? No problem. We will teach you. We practice once a week on Tuesdays until the *Festa Italiana* in August. While you don't have to be Italian, you should like to have fun. We laugh – A LOT! All dancers are volunteers and come from varied backgrounds. The dancers educate and entertain audiences with the color and warmth of the rich Italian culture.

The troupes dance at festivals, community events, parties, weddings and more. The dances they present include various *Quadrighias*, *Saltarellos*, *Mazurcas*, *Tarantellas* and *Codigliones*.

If interested, call Bea Giammarese Ricotta at 815-520-1010.

Genealogy workshop set for Ethnic Heritage Museum

You don't have to be Italian to attend Steve Salvato's Interactive Genealogy Workshop, Saturday, June 24, from 1-3 p.m. at the Ethnic Heritage Museum. While Salvato's database of Rockford's Italians includes hundreds of thousands of names, this workshop will teach attendees of any nationality how to search for their ancestory.

The fee is \$10 per laptop and the maximum seating is 10 people with laptops. Registrations will be taken until May 28. For information, contact Steve at roccamena77@gmail.com or Carol at 815-243-6757. The Ethnic Heritage Museum is located at 1129 South Main Street, Rockford, Illinois, 61101.

Salvato is a GRIAA Hall of Fame member for his work with finding ancestries of Rockford Italian families. His research has included walking graveyards in Sicily.

Sister City extends thanks for the Taste of Italy

The Rockford Italian Sister Cities Alliance (RISCA) held its annual signature fund-raiser, the Taste of Italy, on Sunday, November 6, 2022. This marked the seventh year for our event. RISCA wishes to thank our hosts, the Venetian Club, our Sister City Club, St. Ambrogio, and the Lombardi Club for supporting our Sister City organization and Rockford students.

In addition to our clubs, the event could not have been possible without the generosity of our local Italian restaurants, including Bravo, Cucina Di Rosa, Franchescos, Napolis, as well as Nothing Bundt Cakes for their wonderful cakes and Valli Produce for their Italian bread donation. We also want to recognize Jo Ginestra for her wonderful homemade Italian cookies that sold out in a matter of minutes.

Thank you as well to Mayor Tom McNamara, State Representative Dave Vella, Frank Gelafo, Fozzy's Bar and Grill, and Tom Wise Ayden Printing for their sponsorships/donations and applause to the great music provided by the Groove Hotel.

RISCA will hold its eighth annual Taste of Italy event on Sunday, November 5, 2023, once again at the Venetian Club. Please visit our website at ourrisca.org for information about Sister Cities and feel free to send an email to risca2006@gmail.com with any questions or comments about our organization or information for the next fund-raising event.

Photos from the 2022 event can be found on Page 15.

Make plans for 2023 Festa Italiana

When you start to plan your summer schedule, keep these Greater Rockford Italian American Association events in mind.

The 44th annual *Festa Italiana*, the premier event of GRIAA, will be held August 4-6 at 400 St. Francis Drive in Rockford. The *Festa* is the longest running festival in Rockford, as well as the second-longest of its kind in the U.S., and features great Italian food and pastries, continuous entertainment, an Italian Cultural Tent, bocce tournaments, children's crafts, souvenirs and more.

The theme of the *Festa* is "Where Friends Become Family" because family is at the heart of the gathering. Second and sometimes third generations of families have been in charge of many of the food and drink tents. You will also see families dancing, playing bocce and enjoying carnival rides and other pastimes together.

Festa Italiana is a non-profit organization staffed solely by volunteers and serves as a conservatory of Italian culture and traditions. One of its primary purposes is to raise funds for annual scholarships for area Italian families to defray the cost of a Catholic school education.

Guests can attend the *Festa* Friday night from 5-11 p.m.; Saturday from 12-11 p.m.; and Sunday from 12-8 p.m. One of the annual traditions is the Sunday Mass, celebrated on the grounds at 10 a.m. More information is available at www.festaitalianarockford.com.



Photo highlights from Fall 2022 events



(Clockwise from upper left) Jasper St. Angel, GRIA award recipient Carl Armato and Jeff Giamalva at GRIA Hall of Fame dinner, October 8, 2022, at the Verdi Club; Carl Armato and his family at the dinner; Bruce Hand displays Christopher Columbus banner after the Columbus Day Mass at St. Anthony Church on October 9; GRIA award recipient Nancy Hand and granddaughter Ella Hand; Nancy Hand and her family at the GRIA dinner.



Photos from RISCA's Taste of Italy, November 6, 2022, at the Venetian Club. (clockwise from upper left) Dinner guest gets a sausage sandwich from Venetian Club; Cucina di Rosa's table; State Representative Dave Vella talks with RISCA chair Dina Getty; a table full of guests enjoyed the dinner.



Greater Rockford Italian American Association – GRIAA

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Children represent the saints at St. Bernadette's St. Joseph Altar in 2022. See story on Page 12 for information about 2023 Altars.

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2023 Calendar

March

19 – St. Joseph Altars at St. Anthony of Padua Church, St. Bernadette, St. Mary Church, Rockford; St. Bridget, Loves Park. Also, Rosie Scalise Sheridan and Families Home Altar, 7020 Cliekeman Road, Rockford

June

24 – Interactive Genealogy Workshop, Ethnic Heritage Museum, 1-3 p.m.

August

4-6 – 44th Festa Italiana, 400 St. Francis Drive, Rockford

21 – GRIAA Italian Open Golf Outing, Forest Hills Country Club

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