

# VOCE DI GCICS

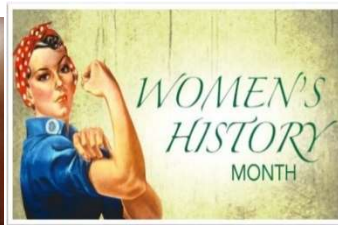
GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

1811 Englewood Rd., #317, Englewood, FL 34223

[WWW.GCICS.ORG](http://WWW.GCICS.ORG)

March 2023

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



## President's Message

I am a septuagenarian and if anyone ever told me I would be experiencing more happiness now than in my earlier years I would have been doubtful. The many facets of my life are more fulfilling and satisfying. Of course, there are ups and downs we all experience and mine are no different than anyone else's. I wish I were of this mindset 20 years ago when muscles, tendons, and bones were in better shape. It has been said we attain more happiness as we age. I tend to agree with this new revelation... but must add... the best of us is yet to be given. Take an accounting of your talents and seek to share them with fellow members. You might be surprised at the satisfaction it will bring you and the happiness you bring others.

Dr. Arthur Brooks, author, Harvard social science professor, and a devout Catholic, states that those who find a second career or a worthy cause are the happiest, coupled with love of family. Evidently, for those who

have had success in their professions, unless they identify a new purpose, they tend not to understand or appreciate their own value. I have heard it said, "there is no 401K Plan for withdrawing one's previous successes"; our egos will not allow us the benefit of looking back and being satisfied with our accomplishments. These are "strivers," competitive always but still having a tendency not to feel fully satisfied. Dr. Brooks' answer is to make "love" a decision...he does not mean "falling in love." Work on relationships with family and friends. Bring love back into your life and find a worthy cause for which you can devote time and energy. It may be a solution for getting off the competitive treadmill where fame and fortune are no longer the main goal. He writes "fill the void with love."

For those who attended Carnevale at Linda Ahern and Rich Potts's home, I am sure you agree that it was a fun party. A new member,

Dennis Ratajczak, set up karaoke. Some of us with rusty and flat notes (mine) sang to words appearing on the screen. Members added their voices to *Sweet Caroline* and *A Horse with No Name* and many others. It was fun to see Jack and Joan Ferrante singing along with Beth Rose. Linda and Rich's home is beautiful and accommodated our large group. We are grateful to Linda and Rich for their generosity and thoughtfulness while making sure this would be a fabulous experience for all. Rich, your jambalaya was delicious!

A round of applause goes to Pam Arfield for her work with attendees who brought dishes with emphasis on New Orleans flavors. This represented weeks of work making sure we had every category of food filled from appetizers to desserts. Pam's spreadsheet is amazing, but more importantly, Pam is someone who gets the job done. Thank you, Pam!

The Wine and Dine Raffle garnered \$740. Joan Faragasso and Alice Roberts, new members, assisted Linda Ahern and Linda Mercurio in wrapping the wine bottles & gift certificates that went for \$20 each. Fifty-three members contributed \$1,855, thus raising a grand total of \$2,595 for the scholarship fund. Special thanks to Ellen Roderick for communicating with all members seeking their participation, handling the registration process, and tracking all payments, she is

very efficient and works diligently to accomplish all to her satisfaction.

Thank you to Tom Hurban and Linda Ahern for the Bocce Tournament held at Cascades. I am wondering if Linda's friends who joined GCICS's team (all former team members of Cascades) were responsible for helping us lose at a respectable 5 to?. Please see Tom Hurban's report in this newsletter. Maybe next year we will take home the trophy.

I extend a warm welcome to our newest board member, Sandra Russell, who was elected for a 3-year term on the Board. Sandra is serving as our Scholarship Chair. She has been a GCICS member for several years. Her positive attitude and delightful personality did not go unnoticed. She had served on the Scholarship Committee prior to assuming the chair position this year. It was obvious that she is someone who takes her position seriously, works well with others, and will be a positive addition to our board. Sound the trumpets and shouts of hoorah!

Thank you to Gordon Bloom for his continued work keeping our website current and working with Gary Mruz, our website designer. I thank the entire board for their dedication and hard work.

Julie Bondarenko, President



# BOCCE CORNER NEWS

Article by Tom Hurban, Bocce Chair  
Photos by George Arfield, Cultural Chair & Ellen Roderick, Secretary

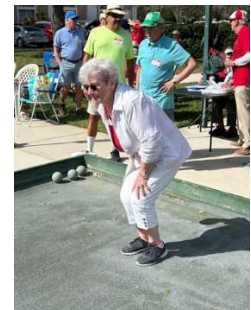
The long-anticipated bocce competition vs the Cascades Italian American Organization (CIAO) took place on Sat. Feb.4. We were 40 strong, ten teams. Although the final score was greatly in their favor, we won more games than last year and had many close matches. The weather was perfect for playing on their three slick courts from 1-4 and the festivities which followed in their ballroom were much fun! We all enjoyed music, antipasti, wings, pizza and a nice selection of beer, wine, and soft drinks. Our promise of a fun day held true. A highlight of the day is the table of homemade desserts which you provided. CIAO did a good job of hiding them until all could come to the table in a systematic fashion. In previous years many took desserts before dinner or rushed the table after the meal. I thank everyone for their efforts placed into the desserts and their enthusiastic participation in the day. Discussions are already underway concerning next year's challenge. Bocce play continues each Sunday from 2-4 at the Conservation Foundation grounds in Osprey. Questions? Call me at 908 507 3048.



Phyllis Shonk bowling



Skip Stuart, George DiConstanzo, & Tom Hurban



Sheryl Lazzarotti bowling



Linda & George Muller



Jack Ferrante, Dana Dalton, Joan Ferrante & Mary Dalton



Julie Bondarenko

# St. Joseph's Feast Day Celebration Luncheon



The Board is delighted to announce our annual St. Joseph's Feast Day Celebration Luncheon at a new location for us: Salute Restaurant in downtown Sarasota. Don't delay in registering. We are presently at 155 members, so it is imperative that you register early. Mark your calendar, pay online, or write a check, and specify your entree order(s). Then you can rest assured that you have a seat. The restaurant is opening just for us for lunch; we will have the main dining room. We hope our "Josephs" and "Josephines" will be with us; we love honoring them. Bring GUESTS.

\*Event: GCICS St. Joseph's Feast Day Celebration Luncheon

\*Date/Time: Sunday, March 19, 2023, 11:30-2:30 pm

\*Location: Salute Restaurant, 23 N. Lemon Ave., Sarasota, FL 34236

\*Parking: Across the street in the Whole Foods parking garage, 3rd floor, FREE.

\*Cost: \$42 (includes gratuity; no tax)

\*Payment: I encourage you to pay online using our website. Directions are below. It takes only a few moments.

If not, mail a check (payable to GCICS) to Ellen Roderick, 770 So. Palm Ave, #1003, Sarasota, FL 34236 and specify menu entrée next to each name. I need to know who is eating which entrée.

\*Deadline: Must register online or I must have your check in hand by Tuesday, March 14, 2023.

\*Guidelines: You are asked to attend ONLY if you have been fully vaccinated (booster not included) and remain symptom-free. Your cooperation is appreciated. We want everyone to remain healthy. Understand that neither GCICS nor its directors are liable for health-related events at GCICS events.

\*Wear: Red in honor of St. Joseph; and name tag.

# MENU

**\*1st Course:** Penne Vodka

**\*2nd Course:** Mix Field Green Salad with Balsamic Vinaigrette, with bread, oil, butter

**\*3rd Course:** Entrees (4 choices; accompanied by Chef's selection of potatoes & fresh vegetables.)

(1) Pollo ai Carciofi: Sautéed chicken breast topped with prosciutto, mozzarella, baby artichokes, lemon, capers, white wine sauce.

(2) Veal Marsala: Medallions of veal with wild mushrooms, Marsala sauce, melted mozzarella

(3) Salmone: grilled Atlantic salmon, Florida orange Blossom honey and citrus glaze

(4) Eggplant Parm (vegetarian choice)

**\*4th Course:** Tiramisu

\*Served with coffee, tea, iced tea

\*Cash Bar: \$7.50 for glass of wine; other drinks available; cash or credit.

\*Questions: Call (Cell: 301-775-1344) or email me [itrain@erols.com](mailto:itrain@erols.com)

## STEPS FOR PAYING ONLINE

\*Go to our website using this address: [www.gcics.org/payment](http://www.gcics.org/payment)

\*On 1st page, check "Member", enter first & last name, email address, phone #, and click on the blue block.

\*On 2nd page, enter the total amount of your payment, then enter in the block directly below "3/19/23" and name(s) of the person(s) for whom you are paying & their entrée choice(s). Please make sure you do this step.

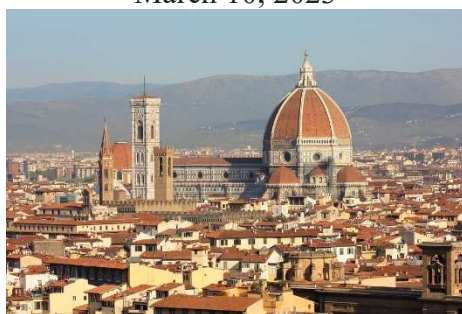
\*Click PayPal checkout and the next page will come up. Complete what is needed.

\*Note: You do not need a PayPal account to pay for GCICS events. PayPal will accept your credit card directly. You will receive a confirmation email within an hour once you have completed the transaction.



## Lecture Series

March 10, 2023



View of Florence

The Board is pleased to announce that Dr. Carrie Beneš, an expert in the Italian Renaissance, will speak at a **special “no cost” event** open to GCICS members and their guests. Her presentation, entitled ***“Keeping Up with the Florentines,”*** focuses on how competition in Renaissance Tuscany shaped much of the world we live in today. See description below. **An RSVP is required.** Mark your calendars now to avoid missing a unique presentation by a highly learned expert on so much that makes Italy.

---

**WHAT:** *“Keeping Up with the Florentines: Cities in Competition in Medieval & Renaissance Italy”*

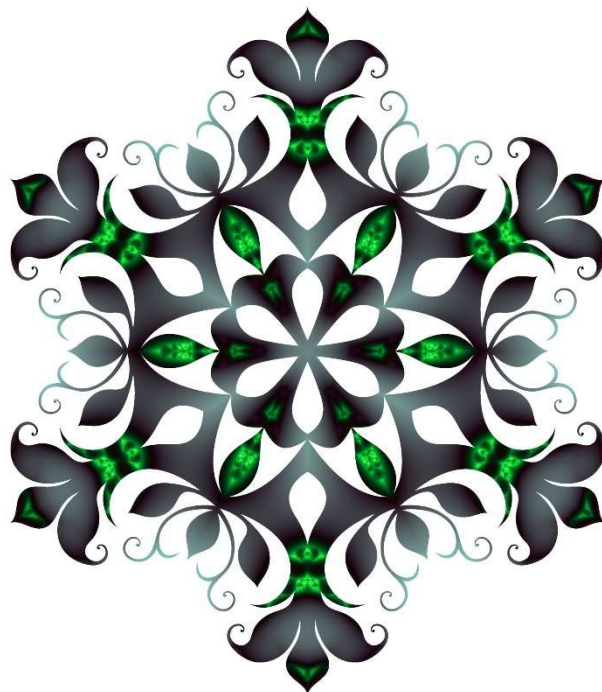
**WHEN:** Friday, **March 10, 2023, 2:00 pm EST.**

**RSVP:** Respond to this e-mail ([itrain@erols.com](mailto:itrain@erols.com)) and provide the names of all attendees.

**QUESTIONS:** Call George Arfield, GCICS Social & Cultural Chair, 917-658-9698

**WHERE:** Chae Auditorium, Heiser Complex, College Drive, **New College of FL**, Bayfront Campus: (1) Traveling south on US 41 from Bradenton, turn right onto College Drive (soon after passing a McDonald’s on right); (2) Traveling north on US 41 from Sarasota, turn left opposite the Shell Station. Heiser Complex/visitor parking: on south side of College Drive.

**DESCRIPTION:** Dr. Beneš's research focuses on landscape, urban identity, and classical tradition. Along with more general survey classes, she teaches courses on urban history, the ancient Mediterranean, medieval manuscripts and book history, the Black Death and the history of disease, medieval travel, and spatial history/GIS. She has provided us with the following summary of her illustrated talk. *"In many ways, life in late medieval Italy was a chaotic mass of contradictions. Italy had been the most urbanized area of Europe since the days of the Roman Empire, and during the eleventh and twelfth centuries it became increasingly wealthy due to the growth of commercial activity and trade—but political instability and factional conflict accompanied the economic prosperity and cultural flourishing that produced Saint Francis of Assisi, Dante's Divine Comedy, and the art of Giotto. 'Keeping Up with the Florentines' will argue that it was precisely this combination of factors that fostered a competitive cultural environment. Individuals, families, social groups, and regimes all sought to prove that they were bigger, better, and more legitimately in charge than anyone around them. Accordingly, cultural patronage took a myriad of forms, not least among them public works, art, architecture, literature, and civic ritual. The survival of these cultural masterpieces today reminds us that ideas about 'keeping up appearances' and 'reputation management'—what modern political analysts would call optics or even propaganda—are not modern but centuries old."*



## New Faces



Dennis Ratajczak & Alice Roberts



Joan & Tony Faragasso



Connie Mitchell & Tom Thaxter

## New Board Members



Josephine Fontana, Director at Large



Sandra Russell, Scholarship Chair

## GCICS Financial Team



Linda Ahern, GCICS, Treasurer



Kathy Antini, Bookkeeper



# SCHOLARSHIP CORNER

Article by Sandra Russell, Scholarship Chair

As a society dedicated to the advancement of Italian culture, the annual scholarship effort is one of our most significant projects. This year we are proud to be offering 6 scholarships of \$1500.00 each to students of Italian ancestry from the high schools in Sarasota and Manatee counties. As in other years, the applicants are outstanding seniors. The committee is often in the difficult position of deciding among many worthy students.

On March 25, the committee will be interviewing our finalists and the recipients will be presented to the organization at our award luncheon on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at Stoneybrook Golf and Country Club. It is the hope of the whole committee that the membership will support these students by attending the luncheon.

Many thanks to Julie Bondarenko, Linda Ahern, Lucille Samartin, MaryLouFerrari, Mike DiMicele, and Carol Miranda DiConstanzo, for their continuing efforts to remain in contact with the high school advisors, and all that is entailed in this project. And to Ellen Roderick for making all the necessary arrangements for the event.

## GIFT CERTIFICATES



The following restaurants have recently donated gift certificates. Thank you, Linda Mercurio, for all your hard work in obtaining all these gift cards this past month. Remember, the monies obtained by raffling off these gift cards at our events help to fund our scholarships.

Apizza...941-203-8467  
Beckhams...941-706-1654  
Bohemios Wine & Beer Tapas Bar...941-260-9784  
British Open Pub...941-492-9227  
Cafe Amici...941-951-9896  
Cassariano in Venice...941-786-1000  
Dolce Italia...941-921-7007  
Flavios on Main Street...941-960-2305  
Francesco's...941-929-7600  
Italian Grill...941-966-8565  
Jalisco Mexican Grill...941-217-4536

Mattisons 41...941-921-3400  
Mean Dean's...941-251-5435  
Mellow Mushroom...941-388-7504  
Opus...941-925-2313  
Paisano's...941-926-8422  
Peridia...941-758-2582  
Public House...941-822-0795  
Remy's...941-355-9391  
Rusty Bucket...941-355-8666  
Scarpino's...941-756-8100  
Snitzel Kitchen...941-822-9299  
Sophia's at Lakewood Ranch...942-500-1166  
Shakespeare craft Beer & Gastro Pub...941-364-5938

# REVIEW OF CARNEVALE & Scholarship Fundraiser

Article & Photos by Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary



Hosts Linda Ahern & Richard Potts

Such a perfect setting, the home of Linda Ahern & Rich Potts, for Carnevale on Shrove Tuesday, 2/21/23. Members were dressed to the 9's in festive Carnevale colors - lime greens, yellows, and purples. As the photos illustrate, there were plenty of beads, feathers, and spectacular masks with many purchased in Venice (Italy that is!). The hors d'oeuvres were very popular, ranging from fruit and cheese trays to stuffed mushrooms to luscious shrimp. The entrees included beef tenderloin, sausage & peppers, pulled pork, and chicken parm. And if you indulged in Danielle's cranberry pie or Sandra's assorted brownies, you were a happy reveler. If I left out your dish, please forgive me. We thank the cooks and bakers. Karaoke was a special treat.

We had 52 members attending, raising \$1,855 for the Scholarship Fund. Our wine bottle/restaurant gift card "raffle" raised \$740. We appreciate all who donated wine bottles at the Annual Meeting. Thank you, "Team Carnevale" - Linda & Rich, Linda Mercurio, Pam Arfield, two new members, Joan Faragasso & Alice Roberts, and yours truly. Linda and Rich were fabulous hosts, on their feet the entire time. We are most grateful for their kind and generous hospitality.



Joan Del Giudice & Mary Rinaldi



Linda Ahern, Alice Roberts, & Linda Mercurio



Jack Ferrante



Joseph & Blanche Barresi



Jim & Mimi Lerario



George & Carol Di Constanzo

## OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

### President

Julie Bondarenko  
[juliebondy@yahoo.com](mailto:juliebondy@yahoo.com)

### Vice President for Membership

Linda Mercurio  
[Lindascot5770@gmail.com](mailto:Lindascot5770@gmail.com)

### Secretary

Ellen Roderick, PhD  
[itrain@erols.com](mailto:itrain@erols.com)

### Treasurer

Linda Ahern  
[lindalahern@aol.com](mailto:lindalahern@aol.com)

### Bocce Chair

Tom Hurban, DDS  
[dorisntom@gmail.com](mailto:dorisntom@gmail.com)

### Scholarship Chair

Sandra Russell  
[russellsandra062@gmail.com](mailto:russellsandra062@gmail.com)

### Director At Large

Penny Thomas  
[dafyddpen@AOL.com](mailto:dafyddpen@AOL.com)

### Director At Large

Josephine Fontana  
[Fontana.Josephine@gmail.com](mailto:Fontana.Josephine@gmail.com)

### Newsletter Editor

Mary Faith Rinaldi  
[maryfaithrinaldi@gmail.com](mailto:maryfaithrinaldi@gmail.com)

### Social and Cultural Chair

George Arfield  
[arfield@yahoo.com](mailto:arfield@yahoo.com)

### Language Instruction Chair

Jerry Hall  
[CZHalls@verizon.net](mailto:CZHalls@verizon.net)

### Technology Chair

Gordon Bloom  
[Gordon.bloom@att.net](mailto:Gordon.bloom@att.net)

### Past Presidents

Joseph Raffaele, PhD	1988-1992
Gabriella Thurston	1993-2001
Patrick Corsentino	2001-2004
Arthur Castraberti	2004-2006
Marie Corsentino	2007
Mary Amabile Palmer	2008-2010
William Korp	2010-2014
Anthony Esposito	2015-2016
Sheryl Lazzarotti	2016-2020



March 1 – March 31



This year's poster

The National Women's History Alliance, which spearheaded the movement for March being declared National Women's History Month, has announced the women's history theme for 2023, **"Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories."**

Instead of selecting national honorees, the NWA encourages groups throughout the country to use the theme to recognize and honor women in their own communities, organizations, or agencies.

