

VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

1811 Englewood Rd., #317, Englewood, FL 34223 WWW.GCICS.ORG January 2024

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



President's Message

I am starting my President's Message with a note of gratitude! Last night at our holiday party I had the pleasure of feeling a true sense of satisfaction. Many members as well as our Board have attested to the success of the party. For the last three years, Patty and Mike DiMichele opened their beautiful home decorated for the occasion so that GCICS members and guests could celebrate one of our most festive occasions of the year. In asking members as they left how they felt about the party, they all felt that this year's won hands down. Why? It's not possible! We always left this celebration very content, exuberant and even joyful. There are some reasons for which I would like to suggest how this was possible, especially since torrential rains started just as many were arriving.

Well, certainly we were able to use what we learned in the past to our advantage. Our food selection topped our previous year's. However, I do not understand how this was possible, but Pam Arfield our food

coordinator performed her magic and voila it was done. Gourmet and plentiful! Just to name a few delectables that caught my eye and made my mouth water -- many appetizers, too many to list, and the main courses including Salmon Wellington, Filet Mignon, Herb Roasted Grilled Chicken, and desserts galore. All were brought by our members. Their effort to bring their best was notable. A big round of applause to all, special thanks to Pam, and enormous gratitude to Mike and Patty who are always so generous with their hospitality.

A sing along with Jim Heald, one of our newer members, was delightful. He played his acoustic guitar as we sang along to several carols including Jim's rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." He also sang some of his favorite songs that he composed. He wowed us with his talent. We learned that Jim is not just a guitar player but a talented songwriter and vocalist. Jim performs locally and is currently competing in a prestigious

talent competition in Tampa. Jim's wife Laura is his biggest fan. She exudes admiration and respect when she hears him play. I hope we will enjoy Jim's talent in the future and join him at a local performance. We all wish Jim much success in his competitions. Our best wishes and gratitude!

I believe the most relevant reason for the success of this year's Holiday Party is because we celebrated this event with new members and guests. It truly does promote a feeling of well-being and shows that our Society is relevant! I have read that happiness is a state of being and the opportunity to expand our membership brings excitement to all of us and creates a feeling of harmony. So, bring your best selves and allow others to be heard and valued for these are the facets that sustain our society. From my own experience, I can say that no matter the event or occasion, it has afforded me the perfect opportunity to expand my GCICS horizons while fostering many lasting friendships.

We are on the threshold of some new and exciting events coming our way. Please be eager to participate. There are several committees you may be interested in helping with. Ellen will explain and solicit your help through emails. Please see Tom Hurban's announcement in this newsletter about our Bocce Invitational VIII in February. Ellen Roderick will have news about Carnevale and Save the Date information. I give a personal thanks to our Board for their cooperation and eagerness to see our Society succeed.

This has been an extraordinary year. Our well-being and mind sets have been tested. Let us all feel compassion and have empathy for the many struggles and the loss of loved ones that have plagued our world. I wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Julie Bondarenko
President



HOLIDAY/CHRISTMAS DINNER & FUNDRAISER

Article & Photos by Ellen Roderick



As we entered Patty & Mike DiMichele's Misty Creek home on Sunday, Dec. 10, 2023, we were once again greeted by creative decorations on the patio from enormous poinsettias, to sleds with ice skates attached to unending twinkling lights. Stepping inside, the beautiful decorations never stopped: two decorated trees, wreaths, classic Santa's dressed in white, mini trees, angels in all shapes and sizes, and you guessed it. . .more twinkling lights. It truly was a winter wonderland. Feasting soon commenced on delicious hors d'oeuvres and sampling different wines brought by members. We were scattered throughout the DiMichele's spacious home: family room, dining room, kitchen nook, and the lanai.

We were 49 members and 2 guests strong, with four cancellations. But I am pleased to report that we raised \$2,160 for our Scholarship Fund. Thank you everyone. What a feast we had before us. The entrees included beef tenderloin, ham, meatballs, lamb with orzo, sausage & peppers, and a puff pastry with salmon. Am I making you hungry yet? The desserts were delicious:

tiramisu, Italian cookies, a Hawaiian cake, cranberry pie, and Tres leches cake. If I left your dish out, please forgive me. We truly thank the cooks and bakers; and a special thanks to Pam Arfield who coordinated the menu sign-ups so that we would have the greatest variety possible.

What can be said about the entertainment. . .our own Jim Heald graciously volunteered to play his guitar and serenade us with Christmas music as well as his own compositions and songs by John Lennon and Simon & Garfunkel. Jim is a multi-talented musician who brought the holiday spirit into the gathering.

President Julie gave remarks with so many thanks to go around: to Mike and Patty our superb hosts; to Pam for coordinating the menu; to Ellen for managing the party arrangement; to our splendid entertainer, Jim Heald; and to everyone who came, brought dishes and wine, donated, and shared themselves with one another in the true spirit of the holidays. We all join in thanking Julie as well for her dedicated leadership of our Society. Buon Natale!



Our Hosts: Mike & Patty
DiMichele



Julie Bondarenko with
her Charcuterie Board



Phyllis Shonk with her
Caprese Salad



Member & Entertainer Jim Heald



Newest Members: Joe & Susan Selvidio-Stanley
and Jolene & Joe Ruffo with Ellen Roderick



Newer Members: Laura &
Jim Heald



Newer Members: Vin &
Nancy Dilella



Longstanding Member:
Kate Korp



George DiConstanzo with
guest/sister Gail O'Connor



Scholarship Chair: Sandra Russell

BOCCE CORNER NEWS



Hopefully you have set aside Saturday, Feb. 3, for our annual bocce INVITATIONAL vs the Cascades Italian Club, CIAO. This event was originally organized by Linda Ahern, who was on our GCICS Board and lived at the Cascades. Linda has since moved, and recently CIAO has disbanded. Pat Alpino, a resident there and former CIAO member, picked up the ball and we have been working to continue this event. Practice 12-12:45 play 1-4, dining & dance party 4-7. ANYONE residing at The Cascades will be eligible to participate. GCICS is limited to 60 members, or guests, either playing on a team or coming to cheer us on! We will form 9 teams comprising of 4 persons each. Experience is not required. Form a team or I can help you. We are hoping that this year our participants will stay longer after eating to sing, dance and party!

The pizza party food will be the same. A new regulation is in place in their hall, they cannot SERVE alcohol. Don't panic, it is allowed! People can bring their beverage of choice! The cost is \$18pp all inclusive. Since CIAO no longer exists, Pat will not know each resident coming and does not have a forum to ask them to take over providing desserts like we have done. I therefore volunteered to continue to provide our homemade goodies as we have done in past years. This has always worked well. Store purchased desserts are not as good, and expensive.

Please strongly consider joining us for this day! More details will follow in January concerning payment options, directions, etc. I am available for questions. Don't forget we play most Sundays at the Conservation Foundation grounds from 2-4 PM.

Tom Hurban
Bocce chair
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FYQ:

Article submitted by Doris Hurban
From The Italian Tribune, September 16, 2021

The History of Mozzarella



All cheeses begin the same way, starting life as milk from cow, goat, sheep or a buffalo. Once the water is removed, different processes are used to create all of the cheeses we have come to know and love.

We would venture a guess that every reader of The Italian Tribune is very familiar with mozzarella cheese, but did not know that it is included in a broader group known as *pasta filata*? These cheeses also include Provolone and Caciocavallo. Pasta filata translates as spun paste, referring to the method used to create the cheese and mozzarella is named after its specific production process. In Italian, the verb *mozzare* means to separate. Mozzarella is formed by kneading and stretching, very much like bread dough. The fresh milk cheese has a shiny, lustrous appearance and usually comes in a ball of various sizes. It can also be in the shape of a

bread or a knot and can weigh up to five pounds or more.

Mozzarella originated in southern Italy. Early records show that the Romans were already producing a similar type of cheese from sheep's milk by the middle of the first century AD. In the Province of Caserta, the monks at San Lorenzo Monastery in Capua used to offer a bread and a cheese called *mozza* to worshippers during their annual pilgrimage. It is difficult to establish the decade or even the century when this began, but the practice was already well-established by the advent of the Middle Ages.

Cheese made from buffalo milk dates to the 12th century, but sheep's milk was still the predominant milk used for cheese in southern Italy. By the 14th century fresh *mozza* made with sheep's milk from the farms in the hills

of Campania were being transported to Naples and Salerno.

It was not until the 16th century that water buffalo farming expanded and a switch from sheep's milk to authentic *mozzarella di bufala* began. The word mozzarella first appeared in a 1570 cookbook by Bartolomeo Scappi, chef to the Papal Court. He was very specific and referred to mozzarella as a type of cheese only made from buffalo milk.

The Bourbons of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies are credited with greatly expanding the breeding of buffalos in the Campania region during the 18th century. The royal family had a strong influence over the cheese

that would win a special place in the hearts, minds, and stomachs of southern Italians.

It was during the 20th century, when refrigeration allowed the cheese to be transported, that mozzarella became widely available throughout Europe and America. It saw an enormous surge in popularity worldwide following WWII. Mozzarella is now the most popular cheese in America and the second most popular cheese in the world. Due to the enormous demand, the vast majority of mozzarella is now produced from cow's milk, which is milder in taste than mozzarella made from buffalo milk.



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National Spaghetti Day



Get ready to celebrate National Spaghetti Day on January 4 with some delicious noodles! This special day has been around since the 1950s, when it was created as an homage to one of Italy's most beloved foods. Whether you like your spaghetti al dente or cooked a little longer, these long strands of wheat-based pasta have become a staple in many households all over the world.

Nothing says National Spaghetti Day like making your very own homemade spaghetti. All you need is a pot of boiling water, your favorite type of noodles, and your favorite sauce. Don't forget to add some parmesan cheese for a delicious finish!

Or, what better way to celebrate National Spaghetti Day than to go out for Italian food. Get dressed up and take your friends or family out for a nice dinner at an Italian restaurant. Enjoy the classic flavors of marinara, meatballs, and garlic bread.

Article taken from the website:
holidaycalender.io/holiday/national-spaghetti-day

