

VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

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

WWW.GCICS.ORG

April 2023

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



President's Message

As you know, I had the misfortune of breaking my right arm just as our cultural lecture at New College was commencing. I was able to welcome everyone but then left with Vin for SMH's ER. I understand it was an outstanding presentation by Dr. Carrie Beneš, and I want to thank George Arfield for arranging such a fine afternoon for our members. Also, we had a grand celebration in honor of St. Joseph. I thank all who came to dine and socialize. Many thanks to Ellen Roderick and Vince Amato for planning the affair. I am unable to prepare my usual message because I cannot type. But I thought it would be helpful to share some firm dates for 2023-2024, so do mark your calendars. The Board has commenced its planning and will continue to do so over the next few months. In the meantime, I hope to see many of you at our Scholarship Festa on April 15, 2023 at Stoneybrook Country Club to celebrate our scholars and their families. And some good news. . .I have resumed driving. . .I feel human again!!

SAVE THE DATES



***Oct 2023: Italian Cultural Heritage Month Welcome Back Luncheon:** no details yet.

***11/5/23 (Sunday): Brunch & Sarasota Youth Opera Performance;** brunch at location TBD; followed by performance "The Little Sweep" @ 12:30 pm.

***11/12/23 (Sunday) Welcome Back Bocce Picnic @ North Jetty Park Pavillion,** Nokomis, 12:30-4:30 pm; bring your own main course and a dish to share.

***12/10/23 (Sunday) Holiday/Christmas Party/Scholarship Fundraiser @ Patty & Mike DiMichele's home, Misty Creek, Sarasota, 5:30 pm.** Potluck; Scholarship donation (\$40), BYOB.

***1/13/24 (Saturday) Annual Meeting/Luncheon/Town Hall/Program @ Peridia Golf & Country Club, Bradenton;** N/C to members; 11:30-2:30 pm.

***Feb 2024 (Saturday): Bocce Invitational VIII @ Cascades, Sarasota;** begins midday with practice, tournament, party, music, and dancing (fee).

***2/13/24 (Shrove Tuesday): Carnevale/Scholarship Fundraiser:** no details yet.

***3/10/24 (Sunday): St. Joseph's Feast Day Luncheon;** no details yet.

***4/13/24 (Saturday): Scholarship Festa Luncheon:** no details yet.

NOTE: Cultural events (lectures, tours), La Cena's, and some additional "fun" events are being planned. Happy Hours (Mon), Bocce (Sun), and Italian Language Instruction (Wed) are ongoing.

JULIE BONDARENKO
GCICS President

Scholarship Festa



You are invited to our annual Scholarship Festa (Luncheon) where high school seniors are awarded GCICS college scholarships. We will welcome the student scholars and their guests. You will meet and hear from these college bound local Italian American high school seniors. **If you wish to sponsor a student or parent for the luncheon, include that fee (\$40) in your payment and indicate that information online or in your note that accompanies your check.** The student you sponsor, along with his/her parents or family members, will be seated with you.

***Event:** GCICS SCHOLARSHIP FESTA (Luncheon) honoring our Scholarship recipients

***Date/Time:** Saturday, April 15, 2023, 11:30-2:00 pm

***Location:** Stoneybrook Gulf & Country Club, 8801 Stoneybrook Blvd, Sarasota, FL 34238

***Cost:** \$40 (all inclusive)

***Payment:** I encourage you to pay online using our website. Directions are below. 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 Saturday, April 8, 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 in these unusual times and beyond. Understand that neither GCICS nor its directors are liable for health-related events at GCICS events.



*One complimentary Mimosa, Bloody Mary, or House Wine

*Entree Choices (select one)

(1) Oven Roasted Salmon with fresh dill and citrus butter
(2) Chicken Piccata sauteed with capers, shallots, white wine, fresh lemon

(3) Vegetarian (Chef's choice)

*Dessert: Strawberry Shortcake

*Beverage: Coffee/Tea or Iced Tea

*Cash bar available

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

STEPS FOR PAYING ONLINE

*Go to our website using this address: 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 type in the block directly below: 4/15/23 and list the name(s) of the person(s) for whom you are paying & their entrée choice. 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 or so once you have completed the transaction.

Italian Bookshelf

Review By Leita Davis



The Florios of Sicily: A Novel

by Stefania Auci | Apr 21, 2020
Harper Via Publisher, 464 pages

Un capo lavoro! *The Florios of Sicily* is the only book in English among a series by Stefania Auci. It is not only a compelling novel, but a detailed history of Sicily from 1723–1868, as it evolved around one of Sicily’s most famous families, the Florios. Each of seven parts of the story is prefaced by an actual history of Sicily and Italy. The Florios were entrepreneurs, starting with Ignazio, who moved to Sicily from Calabria and his eternally homesick wife, Giuseppina. Ignazio and his brother, Paolo, developed an import-export commerce that eventually encompassed Europe and even in the United States and South America. What did they deal with? Spices, silk, bark that contained quinine, sand, sulfur, lace and, perhaps most dramatic, tuna.

The portrayal of women in this novel is unforgiving. Ignazio feels only angry irritation at Giuseppina’s cold depression. His son, Vincenzo, seduces Giulia, who becomes his mistress, housed in luxury but viewed as a *putana*. She has

two daughters, but Vincenzo agrees to marry her only after she produces a son named Ignazio. Giulia remains embittered through long years of conjugal passion and animosity. Ignazio grows up in the shadow of his father’s relentless ambition, and values that focus on money and power. He eventually marries an aristocratic woman, not for love, but a path into that society.

Vincenzo’s driving force derives from a sense of generational inferiority, his family never having lost the taint of poor immigrants from Bagnara. Even as he becomes the wealthiest man in Sicily, and dines with the Lampedusas and Bourbon royalty, he and Giuseppina are subjected to societal snobbery. Vincenzo collaborates with Garibaldi’s “red shirts” as if he were an aristocrat himself, i.e., with generosity and condescension, self-interest in his empire’s survival being paramount. This is an epic tale of a family and an all-encompassing history of Sicily.

Lecture Review

Keeping Up with the Florentines

Given By Dr. Carrie Beneš



Dr. Carrie Beneš, Photo by George Arfield

THE RENAISSANCE AND CIVIC ONE-UPMANSHIP

The cultural splendor that sprouted in Italy and which we know as "the Renaissance" was in large part a result of a "keeping up appearances" unwritten competition among "individuals, families, social groups and regimes," each seeking to prove they "were bigger, better and more ... in charge than anyone around them," Dr. Carrie Beneš, Professor of Medieval and Renaissance History at The New College of Florida told a rapt audience of GCICS members and guests on March 10th at the College's auditorium.

The event did not disappoint the near-capacity audience. One attendee, Sandra Russell, summed up the general impression saying that it was "a wonderful, interesting program. Someone behind me suggested [it] could have gone for another two hours. She was right."

Prof Beneš's long-anticipated presentation, "Keeping Up With The Florentines," brought to the fore details in architecture, literature, painting and business that frequently remain little noticed during the usual hurried visits to Italy's vast inventory of historically significant milestones. Just as Dante Alighieri's "The Divine Comedy" defined

modern Italian language and Giotto's depictions of natural scenes moved painting away from purely sacred themes, the wealth that flowed into Italian cities as a result of its trading with the Orient provided the funds to engage master architects (think Michelangelo) to outdo neighbors with larger sacred and profane experiences, structures and decorate the latter with masterful art, all aimed to outshine the efforts of other communities. The incoming riches also laid the foundation of modern banking.

Prof. Beneš summarized her lecture thus: "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 of ideas about 'keeping up appearances' and 'reputation management'—what modern political analysts would call optics or even propaganda—are not modern but centuries old."

Photos BY George Arfield



Photos by Ellen Roderick



St. Joseph's Feast Day Celebration Luncheon Review

March 19, 2023

Article and Photos by Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary

Salute Restaurant welcomed 59 members and 11 guests for our annual celebration honoring St. Joseph, Patron Saint of Italy. Almost all had checked in by 11:30 am so there was plenty of time to socialize and take advantage of the cash bar. President Julie presided, inviting members to introduce our 11 guests. Phyllis Shonk paid tribute to St. Joseph and then invoked his blessings upon the Ukrainians and all of us gathered to celebrate his life. We dined on a 4-course meal including a selection of four delicious entrees. After lunch, we honored ten attendees celebrating their feast day: Joe Barresi, Joe Colella, Jack Joseph Ferrante, Joe Latona, Joseph Polizzi, Joe Raia, Joseph Tomaselli, Josephine Fontana and her son, Joseph Moran, and guest Paul Joseph Devine. Joe Polizzi gave a gift to all – a lithograph entitled “The Flight into Egypt” depicting Mary and Jesus on a donkey being led by Joseph. Vince Amato, who partnered with yours truly in planning the celebration, shared beautiful photos of St. Joseph altars and tables overflowing with traditional foods including the special breads. Vince spoke about why St. Joseph is so revered in Sicily and how Sicilians celebrate his feast day. The final segment of the program was titled “Sharing Artifacts from One’s Italian Ancestry.” Members brought family heirlooms, describing their history and significance. A great big thank you to Penny Thomas, Joan Ferrante, George Muller, Julie Bondarenko, Gordon Bloom, and Patty DiMicele for opening a window into their lives through the sharing of a special artifact. By 2:30 pm, we were saying good-bye to one another; we will next reunite in large numbers at the Scholarship Festa Luncheon at Stoneybrook Country Club, April 15, 2023, at 11:30 am to honor our student scholars.

Josephs and Josephines Celebrating their Name Day



Lucille Raia, Joe & Blanche Barresi, Sally Rogind



Jack Joseph & Joan Ferrante, Teresa & Joe Latona, Connie Mitchell, and Joe Tomaselli



Gene & Barbara Barattini, Tina Zabinski, Joseph Raia



Josephine Fontana with granddaughter and son Joesph

Members Sharing Artifacts from their Italian Ancestry



Penny Thomas



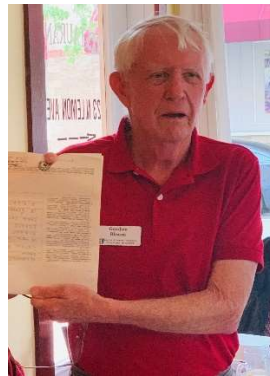
Vince Amato



George Muller



Patty DiMichele



Gordan Bloom



Joan Ferrante



Julie Bondarenko

OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

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Julie Bondarenko
juliebondy@yahoo.com

Vice President for Membership

Linda Mercurio
Lindascot5770@gmail.com

Secretary

Ellen Roderick, PhD
itrain@erols.com

Treasurer

Linda Ahern
lindalahern@aol.com

Bocce Chair

Tom Hurban, DDS
dorিসntom@gmail.com

Scholarship Chair

Sandra Russell
russellsandra062@gmail.com

Courtesy Chair

Penny Thomas
dafyddpen@AOL.com

Director At Large

Josephine Fontana
Fontana.Josephine@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Mary Faith Rinaldi
maryfaithrinaldi@gmail.com

Social and Cultural Chair

George Arfield
arfield@yahoo.com

Language Instruction Chair

Jerry Hall
CZHalls@verizon.net

Technology Chair

Gordon Bloom
Gordon.bloom@att.net

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William Korp	2010-2014
Anthony Esposito	2015-2016
Sheryl Lazzarotti	2016-2020



The Board is pleased to announce that members may now order GCICS Name Badges on our website.

*Go to our GCICS website STORE page at <https://www.gcics.org/store>

*Complete the request form, (1) deciding whether you want a pin or magnet to attach the badge to your clothing; (2) the name on the badge; and (3) then pay with a credit card.

*When we receive your request, our Courtesy Chair, Penny Thomas, will place the order with our vendor.

*Jerry Hall will pick up the new badge(s) and arrange to get them to you.

Thank you, Mary Rinaldi, for suggesting we do this on the website; and thank you, Gordon Bloom, for making it happen working with our contract web designer.

