

VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

1811 Englewood Rd., #317, Englewood, FL 34223 WWW.GCICS.ORG February 2025

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



President's Message

GCICS Annual Meeting: Remarks Delivered by President Julie Bondarenko

When we think about the new year "2025", we may be inclined to make New Year resolutions about specific goals we hope to attain. Whether it be improving our health, nurturing new and old relationships, traveling, or losing weight, we set a goal and choose the path that will bring us success. In the beginning we are full of vigor and commitment, we are energized by the new year, a new beginning, and by the perceived accomplishment we are yet to achieve.

We are enthusiastic! We want to improve; we want to do better not only for ourselves but for all those who are in our lives. New Year resolutions are not easy, certainly not a slam dunk without one essential element, and that is help and support from family and friends.

Well, GCICS also has a few New Year Resolutions with specific goals in mind. We too want to improve the health of our Society, nurture our relationships with new and long-time members, and create innovative programs that will enhance our ability to connect with one another. One of GCICS's most important 2025 resolutions is to acquire new members. Without new members we

would not prevail as we would have hoped to with any of our resolutions and goals.

To this end, we have a plan. That plan is the setting of goals for Member Recruitment and New Programs as two of our most important resolutions. As I said, "New Year Resolutions are not a slam dunk." Wishing does not allow for success. The key success factor is help and support from our fellow GCICS members. The groundwork took place last November with a Brainstorming Session on Recruitment and Programming. In December, the Board appointed Camille Kramer as Program Chair and Phil Miner as Membership Chair.

I am sure that each of you is aware of the true value of this organization and what it brings to each of us and additionally, what it means to our community. My request is that you become the support we need to further GCICS's goals for the benefit of all. Yes, we need your support. Please commit some time and become an important and integral part of our success story.

On January 24 from 1 to 3 pm there will be a gathering at my home in which the two committees will be formally established and convene to (1) review and prioritize the recommendations that came out of the Brainstorming Session; and (2) begin initial planning for implementing the recommendations in order of importance. If you would like to join one of these two committees, please contact Ellen and she will put you on the list to attend on Jan. 24. And do tell her on which committee you are interested. If you are not sure where you fit in, that is not a problem. Committees will be made up of members who can work on either committee. Just being helpful can make all the difference.

In closing, we need your help to further our goals. Please realize that this is not a “lifetime commitment” but instead an opportunity for you to get to know your fellow members in a more meaningful way by giving of your time, as much as you can or as little as you are able or want to. Volunteering will have an enormous impact on our success. No experience is necessary, only enthusiasm. If you are lacking enthusiasm, we will get you some. We are excited about what we want to accomplish on your behalf. I feel strongly that you will feel immensely proud knowing you were responsible for supporting our cause and the reason for our success.

Thank you so much for VOLUNTEERING.



WELCOME BACK PICNIC & BOCCE INVITATIONAL

Hi GCICS Members: We all know that our Welcome Back Picnic had to be cancelled due to damage to the North Jetty Park by Hurricane Milton. Our annual Bocce Invitational held at The Cascades has been an off-on situation this year and is now officially OFF. In an effort to save something from these cancellations, we have come up with this alternative. Members Phillip and Marianne Gordon live in the Hammock Preserve which has two bocce courts. We have set up a function there which includes the activities of both the Welcome Back Picnic and the Bocce Invitational. We will follow the same method for food as we did for the picnic and set up bocce play with teams made up of our GCICS members and guests. The Hammock Preserve does not have formal play, but Marianne has invited their players to participate. We currently do not know if they will join us! Therefore, the bocce details have not been worked out yet, but we hope that each team will play at least twice. GET BUSY LINING UP A TEAM. Each team will consist of four players, and I can help with completing yours. We can work on this at the upcoming Annual Meeting.

When: February 15th from 1-5 pm. We are scheduled for 4 hours but allowed to set up. So, begin to come after 12:30 pm (practice).

Location: The Hammock Preserve: use MAIN ENTRANCE off Honore, the second when coming north past Bay St. (On GPS: 5584 Eagle Creek Rd, Sarasota)

Seating: Covered eating area with tables. It would be wise to bring a chair to use while we are playing bocce. I plan to begin playing ASAP.

Drinks: Bring your beverages of choice. Alcohol is permitted. We will have coffee.

Utensils: We have plastic utensils, but you can bring metal if desired. Provided are paper plates, cups, and napkins.

Food: Each couple or single person is to bring their own main course, which will be for their use. Also, you are asked to provide an appetizer, salad, or dessert to share with everyone. A kitchen is available.

Cost: NONE; just the food and drink you are bringing. Please come and join in the fun. It is time to learn the game of bocce and we will help beginners. Those just coming to picnic can cheer for their GCICS friends!

RSVP: Please email me (dorisntom@gmail.com) to let me know (1) you are coming; (2) your team members; and (3) your planned shared dish (to avoid duplication) by February 10, 2025.

Tom Hurban, GCICS Bocce Chair

My phone number is: 908-507-3048.

Arrival: Call Marianne on 303-875-6415 to get entry. The front gate is not manned.

Scholars Discuss Cartography During The Renaissance

Article and Photos By: George Arfield, Cultural Chair

The early development of modern cartography was at the core of “Imagining the World of the Italian Renaissance,” an engrossing roundtable discussion held Dec. 5 at the New College Florida’s Sainer Pavilion.



Organized by Dr. Carrie Beneš, professor of medieval and Renaissance history at the New College, the presentation centered on the development and contents included in the La Sfera Project, an open-access multimedia edition of Goro Dati’s 15th-century poem *La Sfera* (The Globe). Beneš, a leading member of a research team spanning over 10 institutions, spent significant time in Europe last year photographing manuscripts of Dati’s work in Rome, Turin, Vienna, and other locations.

Joining Dr. Beneš on stage were her fellow researchers Chet Van Duzer, a leading authority on medieval and Renaissance maps working out of Brown University; Jessica Maier, art historian and Renaissance art and architecture expert, author of *The Eternal City, A History of Rome in Maps* and *Rome Measured and Imagined: Early Modern Maps of the Eternal City*; and Laura Morreale, a cultural historian and one of Dr. Beneš’s co-directors of the La Sfera Project.

Opening remarks were delivered by Dr. David Rohrbacher, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs for New College of Florida. Following the discussion Dr. Beneš and her colleagues hosted a wine and hors d’oeuvres reception in the lobby of the auditorium where they mingled with the attendees.



HOLIDAY/CHRISTMAS DINNER & FUNDRAISER

Article & Photos by Ellen Roderick



As we arrived at Patty & Mike DiMichele's Misty Creek home on Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024, we were amazed with the new holiday decorations in their yard. And the enormous poinsettias were beautiful as we stepped inside. We celebrated and dined either on the lanai (poolside) or in the spacious dining room or kitchen nook. Everywhere you turned there were cherished reminders of this special time of the year and twinkling lights throughout the home. It truly was a winter wonderland.

This year, we decided to have "heavy" appetizers and desserts rather than main courses with numerous sides. The photos attest to the fantastic food we enjoyed. And there was a sampling of different wines brought by members. Larry Samartin entertained us with holiday music on his sax with members singing along. Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer was great fun.

Attending were forty-nine members and 1 guest (Gail O'Connor, George DiCostanzo's sister), with one cancellation, Kurt Johnson who was delayed coming in from the northwest. I am pleased to report that we raised \$2,050 for our Scholarship Fund. Thank you everyone. What a feast we had before us. The appetizers included beef tenderloin, meatballs, shrimp, crabcakes, two Charcuterie boards, chicken skewers, and sausage stromboli. Am I making you hungry yet? The desserts were delicious: tiramisu, Italian pastries, flan, and apple crisp. 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. Our two servers were outstanding.

President Julie gave remarks with 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, Larry Samartin; 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 for her dedicated leadership of our Society.



Phil Miner, Phillip & Marianne Gordon,
Beth Rose



Joe & Sue Stanley, Ellen Roderick,
Jolene & Joe Ruffo



Larry Samartin entertaining us



Patricia Bulut & Maria Heifner



Patty Miner & Sandra Russell



Kate Korp

Sample of the Food



Julie Bondarenko with
her Charcuterie Board



Caprese Salad & Devil Eggs



Mini Crab Cakes



Beef Tenderloin

GCICS ANNUAL MEETING Review

Peridia Golf & Country Club, Bradenton, FL, January 11, 2025

Article by: Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary

Photos by: Gordon Bloom, Technology Chair

LUNCHEON: Julie Bondarenko, GCICS President, welcomed sixty-seven members, thanking them for attending this important event. Then, lunch service began.

ANNUAL MEETING: Julie provided remarks that focused on New Year's resolutions, and asking members to think about a resolution related to "serving" GCICS in some capacity whether it be serving on the Board, on a committee, or even assisting when jobs need to be done. This month's "President's Message" contains Julie's remarks.

Tom Hurban, Bocce Chair, spoke about the Welcome Back Picnic & Bocce Invitational scheduled for Feb 15, 2025. He will be assisting with setting up teams. He asked for RSVPs.

TOWN HALL: Ellen asked Board members to introduce themselves: Julie Bondarenko, President; Ellen Roderick, Secretary; Josephine Fontana, Treasurer; Gordon Bloom, Technology; Jerry Hall, Language Instruction; Sandra Russell, Scholarship; George Arfield, Social & Cultural; Tom Hurban, Bocce; and Phil Miner, Membership/Happy Hours.

Ellen paid tribute to five members who passed away since the 2024 Annual Meeting: Frank Figari, early member & GCICS shaper; Ellie Stoll, DoD teacher & world traveler; Gabriella Thurston, GCICS President, 1993-2001; Russ Heifner, US Navy & religious scholar; and Bob Tate, US Army & HR leader. A moment of silence and reflection was held in their memory.

Since our January 2024 meeting, GCICS has acquired eight new members, 7 of whom were in attendance. Ellen introduced: Rosemarie (Bunnie) Eccleston, Roseann Gaglio, Carolanne Garafola, Kurt Johnson, Camille & Alan Kramer, and Susan Tucker.

Ellen explained that because of the Brainstorming session in November, we now have a number of program suggestions which the newly established Program Committee will be considering. Thus, we will not seek program ideas today. Ellen asked if members know of free or inexpensive facilities for holding events (not restaurants), so that they contact Camille Kramer.

PROGRAM: Ellen introduced our guest speaker, **Camille Kramer:** NY native, full Sicilian ancestry, husband of Al, mother of two, a University adjunct professor, a student of five languages, and a GCICS member. Her presentation: "*Italian Influence & Inspiration in Sarasota*" was well received. She took questions and comments from the audience. At the conclusion, Julie and Ellen presented Camille with a small token of appreciation for her outstanding presentation.

CLOSING: Julie made closing remarks, thanking those who helped make the meeting a success: Ellen, Gordon, Phil, and Camille. Ellen asked Joe Raia to come forward. It was his birthday and so the audience sang *Happy Birthday*. Julie and Ellen presented him with a bottle of Prosecco. The Annual Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.



Camille discussing Sarasota Opera House



Camille discussing GCICS Mission Statement



Members listening intently



Camille with the Audience



Ellen Roderick, Camille Kramer, Julie Bondarenko: Presenting Thank You Gift to Camille



Ellen Roderik, Joe Raia, Julie Bondarenko: Presenting Birthday gift to Joe.

NATIONAL PIZZA DAY



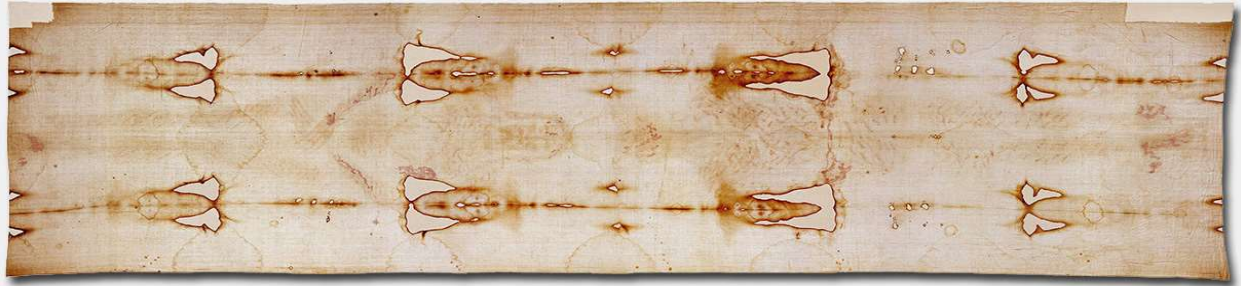
National Pizza Day on February 9th celebrates one of America's all-time favorite foods. Whether it is thin crust, Chicago-style, deep dish, or anything in between, pizza is an American favorite.

We love our pizzas, and they come in so many varieties, too. As we nosh on our favorite, explore a few pizza facts:

- Pepperoni is the most popular pizza at 36% of all pies ordered.
- Over 3 billion pizzas are sold in the USA each year. Add another 1 billion on frozen pizzas!
- In the United States, 17% of all restaurants are pizzerias.
- Antica Pizzeria, the first Pizzeria, opened in Naples, Italy, in 1738.
- Gennaro Lombardi, the first Pizzeria in the United States, opened in 1895 in New York City.
- Americans consume on average 23 pounds of pizza per person each year.

THE SHROUD OF TURIN: A MYSTERY EXPLAINED

By: George Arfield, Cultural Chair



More than 40 GCICS members and guests attended a January 22nd live video recording of Father Andrew Dalton, son of GCICS members Dana and Mary Dalton, addressing the mystery of "Who Is The Man Of The Shroud."

Delivered at Princeton University, the one-hour presentation, given in March of last year, calls in its introductory literature The Shroud Of Turin "the most studied archaeological object in human history."

Fr. Dalton, a Catholic priest of the Legionnaires of Christ and professor of theology at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum in Rome, eloquently described current research results on "how was this enigmatic image, which acts as a photonegative and encodes three-dimensional information, formed in the first place?" His studies have led him to conclude that it is the genuine burial cloth.

The Shroud of Turin is a length of linen 14.6 ft. long and 3.5 ft. wide. A faint yellow image on it matches the wounds suffered by Jesus, as described in the Gospels. Since 1578 it is preserved in the Cathedral of San Giovanni Battista in Turin, Italy where it remains under study.

Fr. Dalton's complete talk can be seen and heard here: [The Shroud of Turin: More than Myth? w/ Father Andrew Dalton](#)

CAMILLE KRAMER ELECTED TO GCICS BOARD

Article by: Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary



On January 14, 2025, the GCICS Board of Directors unanimously elected Camille Kramer to a 3-year term on the Board during its regularly scheduled monthly Board meeting. Julie Bondarenko, GCICS President, has appointed Camille as GCICS Program Chair. Camille was the keynote speaker during our Annual Meeting at Peridia CC on January 11, 2025. Her presentation was entitled *“Italian Influence & Inspiration in Sarasota.”*

Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary, introduced Camille at the luncheon.

*Brooklyn, NY, Stamford, CT, Sarasota, FL – all fine cities that our speaker has called home.

*Brooklyn College and Fairfield University – fine institutions where our speaker sought knowledge and skills.

*Al, Michael, and Paul - the leading men in her life; she and Al have been married for 53 years; her son Michael in San Francisco has two children as does her son Paul in Boston.

*Sicily – the birthplace of both sets of grandparents.

*Italian, French, German, Latin, and Greek – all languages she has studied.

*Reading, writing, attending the opera and theater, and speaking & writing Italian – all the fun activities she enjoys.

*Camille and Al Kramer moved to Sarasota 3 years ago and have not looked back. To quote Camille: *“The ‘clincher’ for me was finding out that Sarasota has an opera house. A city with an opera house has a population interested in culture!”*

*4 months ago, Camille found GCICS on the Internet, she made an inquiry on our website, Gordon forwarded it to me; Jerry spoke with her; Camille & I spoke on 8/31/24, and she joined our beloved Society at that time.

SAVE THE DATE
(As of: 1/30/25)



***2/15/25 (Saturday) Welcome Back Picnic & Bocce Invitational IX** at Hammock Preserve, Sarasota; 12:30 practice; 1-5 picnic; bring your own entrée & an appetizer, salad, or dessert to share; RSVP Tom Hurban; announced 1/8/25.

***3/4/25 (Shrove Tuesday): Carnevale/Scholarship Fundraiser:** DiMicele Home; Appetizers/Desserts; BYOB; Scholarship donation (\$40 pp); announced 1/25/25.

***3/16/25 (Sunday): St. Joseph's Feast Day Celebration - Early Dinner** at Chianti Ristorante Italiano (Clark Rd), 4:00-7:00 pm; \$50 all inclusive; to be announced.

***3/28/25 (Friday): Cultural Lecture** at Selby Library Auditorium, 2:00 pm (approx. 90 minutes); Prof. Davide Tanasi (USF Tampa); Title: *The Sicilian D-Day*; N/C; guests welcome; to be announced.

***4/12/25 (Saturday): Scholarship Festa Luncheon** at Stoneybrook Golf & Country Club, 11:30-2:30 pm; cost and menu TBA.

NOTE: Cultural events (lectures, tours), La Cena's, Happy Hours (Mon) & Bocce (Sun) are ongoing.

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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



Many people celebrate their love for their partner by sending cards or letters, giving gifts or flowers and arranging meals in restaurants or romantic nights in hotels. People who would like to have a romantic relationship with somebody may use the occasion to make this known, often anonymously. Valentine's cards are often decorated with images of hearts, red roses or Cupid. Common Valentine's Day gifts are flowers chocolates, candy, lingerie and champagne or sparkling wine. However, some people use the occasion to present lavish gifts, such as jewelry. Many restaurants and hotels have special offers at this time. These can include romantic meals or weekend breaks.

