

LA VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 2591, SARASOTA, FL. 34230

WWW.GCICS.ORG

March 2021



President's Message

Another month has passed and with it we are one month closer to meeting our members in person at restaurants or at the Community Foundation. Let us not forget the many opportunities that have brought us together in the past: happy hours, bocce picnics, Holiday parties, La Cena dinners, cultural lectures, and our Scholarship Festas just to name a few. It was at these times that we enjoyed each other's company and with each affair, our bonding became stronger. This reuniting will mean that our members have been successful in acquiring the vaccine, our safeguard to good health and hopefully the end to COVID-19 as we have known it. We will want to continue to wear masks and, to some extent, keep our distance. However, we are ready for this adventure, seeking out one another with our confidence back, knowing it is safe to mingle once again.

It is hard to pinpoint an exact date when this will happen, but I have come to realize that

many more members have received their vaccines in the last couple of weeks. Vaccine production is on the fast track and although the vaccine has not found my arm yet, I know it will be sooner rather than later. I am staying positive. Meanwhile, we are still navigating the walls of COVID only happy to say the light is forever getting brighter.

I want to thank George Arfield for organizing our virtual meeting with Dr. Scott Perry, USF history professor, who shared his love and knowledge of *il cinema italiano*. I thoroughly enjoyed this event. Excellent! What a shame that more of our members did not participate. If they knew what they were missing they would be extremely sad to have missed this wonderful lecture-round table on Italian films. The subject went way beyond Italian films we have come to enjoy through the years, but more to understand the director and his/her objectives and many other facets of the

Italian film industry. I learned about a silent film, how the use of lights and darks and strong facial and body movements create emotions in the audience. It was especially nice to see several of our members who are staunch film enthusiasts add to the appreciation and understanding on this subject. I applaud Dr. Perry. George, thank you very much. Well done.

Gordon Bloom facilitated our Feb 25th (5-6) Social Hour titled “Travelling Tales from Italy”. It was an opportunity for members to share their personal stories and experiences while traveling in Italy. As always, I believe this was another successful social hour. We will continue to move forward with our new website design and will bring you up to date as progress is made. Our committee is meeting with Gary Mruz to formulate our needs and wishes into a visual and comprehensive design. We are excited about this initiative. Linda Ahern will be providing more information on our Scholarship Program. She is awaiting applications, in possession of one to date. The deadline is February 27, 2021. Linda continues to recover from knee surgery. She is on the mend.

A yearly tradition, beloved by all members, GCICS celebrated the Feast of St. Joseph in March. Unfortunately, because of COVID-19 pandemic we cannot gather together at this time. I want to extend my wishes of a happy St. Joseph Day to all who are named after this patron saint. Enjoy the article below written by Mary Rinaldi.

I wish to thank the entire board for its continued support and especially those who have contributed to the production and timeliness of our events. A special thank you to Ellen Roderick who is truly dedicated to GCICS; to George Arfield who manages to come up with interesting guests and topics; to Mary Rinaldi who has been patient while putting together the newsletter as she sells one home and builds a new abode; to Penny Thomas who keeps our books up to date; to Nancy Schubert for continuing her service from afar (Clermont); and to Jerry who keeps us Zooming.

Julie Bondarenko
President



ITALIAN CLASSICAL FILM NOSTALGIA ON A FEBRUARY AFTERNOON

By George Arfield



Reminiscing about classical Italian films, discovering captivating details overlooked at first sight and broadening one's appreciation for the Italian movie industry at its post-World War II height were some of the engrossing topics discussed at the first GCICS matinee-roundtable held via Zoom on the afternoon of February 4.

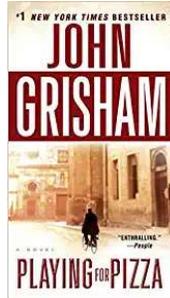
Professor Scott Perry, who during more normal times introduced us to projections at the Community Foundation of Italian film classics, again volunteered his time and talent to instruct and entertain participants for more than two hours.

Among the favorite films of the participants were: *Il Postino*, *Amarcord*, *Pane e Tulipano*, *Life is Beautiful*, *Cinema Paradiso*, *Two Women*, *La Strada*, *En Guerra per Amore*, *The Life Ahead*, *Under the Tuscan Sun*, and *La Dolce Vita*. *The Life Ahead*, picked by Ellen Roderick and several others among the 13 participants, is still playing on Netflix; the headliner of this film is Sofia Loren, who delivers an extraordinary performance.

Among items discussed were production details, locations, soundtracks, and little-known anecdotes drawn from Prof. Perry's inventory of broad data and significant nuggets in Italian film history.

We intend to hold another matinee-roundtable in the months ahead –there is no indication when the Community Foundation's facilities will reopen-- and we will keep you posted.

ITALIAN BOOK SHELF BY LEITA DAVIS



Playing for Pizza by John Grisham
Bantam Books 2013, 258 pages

John Grisham, famed American mystery writer, steps out of that genre every now and then with unexpected stories, sometimes family oriented, sometimes sports centered and, to my surprise, often about Italy. *Playing for Pizza* seemed to be a light read at first, but the plot thickened with tension as taut as a crime novel, broken by occasional hilarious episodes. This book's protagonist is a football quarterback, Rick Dockery, who becomes an NFL reject when he throws more than one "beautiful pass" unfortunately caught by the opposing team, and suffers a concussion, not his first. Rick is washed up, ridiculed by sportswriters and fans. His agent, Arnie, cannot get him a contract with any other team in the country. But he does find an NFL team in Parma that offers to take him. Grisham explains that there actually is a team called the Parma Panthers (and the Bologna Warriors, Rome Gladiators, Naples Bandits, Milan Rhinos, etc.) and they even have an Italian Super Bowl. The deal offered to Rick includes a small salary and pizza and beer after games. Rick has no other options, so he reluctantly accepts the offer.

The Panthers' coach, Sam, shows Rick around Parma, settles him into a small apartment, and tells him about the other Italian members of the team. For several weeks Rick is in deep culture shock; the language, cars, narrow streets, designer fashions, but he does like the looks of Italian women. He learns that Italians really

prefer soccer or rugby to "fut" and thousands more fans turn up for those games. Then he discovers the food! In a trattoria with Sam, he gorges on antipasto as the chef explains that Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, Parma ham, wines, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, "... everything is right from here." Rick manages, however, to savor the next courses, each served with a particular local wine: *tortellini in brodo*, *braciola*, *veal cotelette alla parmigiana*, *torta nera* for dessert.

Rick meets Livvy, a pretty American student, who drags him all over Italy as a forceful tour guide obsessed with ancient cathedrals. As long as they end up in bed, Rick tolerates the culture lessons.

Rick meets fellow "footballers" on the field: two hefty quarterbacks, Paolo and Giorgio, a judge who is a fullback, Alex Olivetto, assistant coach whom the team thinks is *pazzo*, Fabrizio, "...a quick and graceful athlete" and various eccentric characters like the butcher and the baker, who are devoted to the Panthers, but would never make it in the American NFL. They play other local teams, win some and lose some, but tension runs high as they face the Super Bowl. I won't tell you what happens. I will tell you that watching Rick grow through his interactions with local people and his team is touching, especially as he realizes that sports is secondary to relationships.

Saint Joseph's Day Celebration

By Mary Rinaldi, Newsletter Editor

Originally, every March 19th, Sicilian families gathered to share amazing food, good times, and laughter in honor of St. Joseph (*San Giuseppe* in Italian), the Patron Saint of Sicily. The tradition is to wear something red on that day.

The legend follows that during a particularly bad drought, many farmers prayed to San Giuseppe for rain, promising to honor him with a feast if their prayers were answered. With luck, the rain came down and the feast began! Today, the tradition has spread across Italy and into the US as well. The celebration is accompanied by song, dance, and of course, amazing traditional dishes such as:

Maccu di San Giuseppe

Maccu is a traditional fava bean soup. It was thought that the fava bean was the crop that saved Sicily from starvation after St. Joseph ended the notorious drought.



SFINCI DI SAN GIUSEPPE

St. Joseph was not just any Patron Saint - he was the Patron Saint of pastry cooks. Sfinci, closely related to the Neapolitan Zeppole, are fried pastry puff sometimes filled with cannoli cream, or simply dredged in sweet powdered sugar.



Pasta Milanese

There is none more famous a dish than Pasta Milanese on San Giuseppe Day! A traditional Sicilian dish with a rich backstory, it's made up of Ortiz sardines, passata (a classic strained tomato), Cuoco "condimento" (a special seasoning made just for this dish) and fresh toasted breadcrumbs. Pasta Milanese is always accompanied lots of St. Joseph sawdust. San Giuseppe was a carpenter, so a big part of this dish is the toasted breadcrumb finish on this dish, signifying wood shavings, or "sawdust."



PHOTOS OF PAST GCICS SAINT JOSEPH DAY GATHERINGS
ENJOY THE HAPPY MEMORIES



Mary Palmer



Tony & Monika Cagliostro



Ellen Roderick & Gene McLoone



Mary Rinaldi & Joan Ferrante
with her daughter



Sheryl Lazzarotti, Vin DeNicolas, Tom Hurban,
Julie Bondarenko, Doris Hurban, & Mary Lou
Ferrari



Teresa & Joe Latona



Joan Del Giudice



Tony Cagliostro, Joe Raia, Joe Barresi,
and Gene Barratini

OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

President

Julie Bondarenko
juliebondy@yahoo.com

Vice President

Linda Mercurio
Lindascot5770@gmail.com

Secretary

Ellen Roderick, PhD
itrain@erols.com

Assistant Secretary

Judy Herman
taxmadam@msn.com

Treasurer

Penny Thomas
dafyddpen@AOL.com

Bocce

Tom Hurban, DDS
dorisntom@gmail.com

Courtesy

Nancy Schubert
Sunshine.gcics@gmail.com

Membership

Mary Lou Ferrari
MLFFLYME@yahoo.com

Fundraising /Scholarship

Linda Ahern
lindalahern@aol.com

Newsletter Editor

Mary Faith Rinaldi
maryfaithrinaldi@gmail.com

Social and Cultural

George Arfield
arfield@yahoo.com

Website Coordinator

Jerry Hall
CZHalls@verizon.net

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

William Korp
wrkorp@comcast.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



GCICS wishes to extend a speedy recovery to the following members who have been hospitalized.

1. Steve LaBrutte
2. Bob Tate
3. Ellen Roderick

