

VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

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

WWW.GCIS.ORG

February 2023

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



President's Message

I recently came across some famous sayings by Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple. There were so many from which to choose. I must admit it was a little perplexing to find the right one to introduce the President's Message. Many of his quotes are so thought-provoking and I wish I had them to share when I was younger. Nonetheless, they can be applied to my actions today or in the future, even at this stage of my life.

I have chosen this one: *"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice."* And most important, *"Have the courage to follow your heart and intuition."*

My remarks delivered at our Annual Meeting focused on my role as GCICS President over the past two and a half years. I stated, "I

figured out some interesting facts about all of us." Before becoming members, we were "just" wonderful people, perhaps looking for something, someone, to further enhance our lives. We hate to admit that something was missing but, in any event, we became acquainted with GCICS. With this affiliation, we met many interesting people and found we enjoyed attending both social and cultural events that our Society offers. These have included happy hours, La Cena dinners, bocce, picnics, parties, and cultural lectures. The list goes on and on. (See George Arfield's report in this Newsletter about the creator of Tropicana.)

I need to highlight GCICS's most celebrated event, the Scholarship Festa honoring our scholarship recipients of Italian ancestry who are among the brightest in Sarasota and Manatee counties. Your participation is greatly appreciated and is crucial to the success of our Society. I hope you will

answer the call to attend the luncheon. Perhaps more importantly, you will come to realize what your donations and support have meant to these students and the important part you play in their accomplishments. The Festa is April 15th at Stoneybrook G&CC.

Aside from all the fun and cultural experiences, did you ever think of GCICS as a serious business? We have the distinction of being a 501(c)(3) which allows donations to be tax deductible. We are a charitable organization, awarding scholarships to worthy students as well as to the Youth Opera and Youth Ballet.

Did you ever think of yourself as an asset to the Society? When our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws were put in place, it was to protect our mission and our assets – YOU. You have entrusted GCICS with your monies for the sole purpose of accomplishing all that I have just mentioned. We believe in a Code of Ethics, and it is our board's responsibility to understand what this means. This is paramount to safeguarding your donations and dues to be used to the fullest in your interest and in a manner prescribed by our bylaws.

At present, we have survived the worst of the pandemic and are experiencing a world we now call 'the new normal.' We have adapted well through all the ups and downs. Yes, we have had to swim through some difficult tides, but we have managed to experience some fun and satisfying times since joining GCICS. My intention is to look for the positive in the future and continue to enjoy all the benefits that GCICS offers. I am truly grateful for your membership and your heartfelt interest in the Society.

In thinking about the Steve Jobs quote and why it can be applied to us: *"Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own*

inner voice. Have the courage to follow your heart and intuition." Yes, we have sometimes had to stand steadfast for what we believe especially when we had to consider what was in our best interest, even when at times we were pressured to think or do otherwise. The GCICS Board is noted for its good work and is very much appreciated. We would not have been able to accomplish all that we have as a Society, from social to cultural to altruistic, had it not started first with support from our board. Special thanks to Ellen Roderick for keeping us well informed through her communications and making certain event registrations are handled efficiently.

The Board is pleased to announce the election of Linda Ahern as the new GCICS Treasurer who will work with Kathy Antini, Balance Books, LLC, our new bookkeeper. Linda has been a Board member for several years and worked in many capacities including Scholarship Chair. She recently returned to the Board to work on fundraising. I am grateful to Linda for her willingness to accept the Treasurer position. She is highly qualified for the position and extremely conscientious. Congratulations, Linda!

Membership extends its thanks to Judy Herman for her three years of service on the Board as Assistant Secretary. Judy helped with fundraising functions and was a greeter when needed. We wish her well and hope to see her at future events. Thank you, Judy!

Membership extends its thanks to Mary Lou Ferrari for several years of service on the Board. Mary Lou is retiring from the Board to address health issues. She was a dedicated Membership Chair contacting new members and welcoming them at functions. In 2022, she served as Courtesy Chair. She worked with the Scholarship Committee for many years. Mary Lou was always willing to pitch in wherever and whenever to get the job

done. The Carnevale Party she hosted in 2018 was a grand success. At every opportunity, she opened her home for get togethers and for scholarship interviews. I hope we see her at future events. We wish her Godspeed to good health. Thank you, Mary Lou!

Sound the trumpets! GCICS makes way for our newest Board member, Josephine Fontana, elected on January 28, 2023 for a three-year term. She comes with many aspirations and is willing to use her work experiences in guiding the Society. We know she will use her unique expertise and apply it to her new position. We look forward to working with her and feel she will be an excellent fit. Congratulations, Josephine!

Please sign up for the Carnevale Party Fundraiser on Feb.21 - \$35 scholarship donation and a dish to share. This will be a FUN party. Linda and Rich have already done a lot of organizing and now we need you. Please call Linda Ahern if you have questions. Please see the Carnevale information in this newsletter.

I wish you a happy Valentine's Day!

Julie Bondarenko



MARY AMABILE PALMER: A TRIBUTE



December 27, 1925 – December 3, 2022
Adapted by Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary



Mary Amabile Palmer, a long-standing member of GCICS as well as its 2008-2010 President, a cookbook author and food writer, and mother, grandmother, and great grandmother, died on 12/3/22 at age 96. She is survived by a son, John, 2 daughters-in-law, 3 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. Preceding her in death were her son, David, her granddaughter, Jennifer, and many wonderful cousins in Calabria, Italy.

Mary was born in Schenectady, NY and attended Siena College in Loudonville, NY. Her first love was always "La Famiglia". A

seasoned traveler, visiting other countries became her second love. In her long life, she had several careers - as an Interior Decorator, Financial Advisor, and Travel Agent.

Mary was a member of the International Association of Culinary Professionals and Program Chair for the Boston Italian-Americans in Communication. She authored articles for the Culinary Guild of New England, Culinary Historians of Boston, and occasionally for GCICS, Sarasota Herald Tribune, Italian American Press, and the Italian Americans in Communication.

Mary authored a well-received cookbook, *Cucina di Calabria: Treasured Recipes and Family Traditions from Southern Italy* (1997). She lived in Erie, PA, Lenox, MA, and Marblehead, MA before retiring to Sarasota, FL, residing at Sarasota Bay Club since 2014. In addition to her GCICS leadership, she served as President, VP, Secretary, and Newsletter Editor of Sarasota Sister Cities.

Frank Cerullo (GCICS Long-Standing Member) recalled how Mary Palmer, while GCICS President, honored Frank with a plaque for his dedication and service as Publicity and Public Relations Chair under the 2004-2006 GCICS President, Art Castraberti. As a leader, Mary strongly felt

that members should be publicly recognized for their contributions to GCICS.

Aida La Brutte (GCICS Long-Standing Member), learning of Mary's passing, wrote *"I was on the Board when Mary served as President, and she was a force, but always charming, elegant, and kind. Steve and I always enjoyed her company. She lived a long and fruitful life."*

Joan Ferrante (GCICS Long-Standing Member), learning of Mary's passing, wrote: *"Mary was an amazing woman. She gave so much of herself to GCICS. Jack and I truly do not know how many years we have been in GCICS – a delightful blur, but we were there when Mary was our president. Ah, the wonderful 'circle of life' and the blessings of meeting people like Mary."*



GCICS HAPPY HOURS: TRY THEM – YOU’LL LIKE THEM!

Article and Photos by Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary



Mondays in Sarasota, Bradenton, or Venice are “reserved” for GCICS Happy Hours. Our Society has been sponsoring happy hours for several years. How did they originate? Members taking Italian Language instruction under Pat Novak began gathering for happy hours after class. After Pat stepped down as language instructor, two “students,” Caroline Hall and Linda Mercurio, continued to schedule and run the HHs. Word got out as to how much fun they were having, and other members and guests joined them. In 2021, the Board decided that all members should be invited to attend HHs. President Julie appointed the GCICS Happy Hour Committee composed of Linda Mercurio, Jerry Hall, and Ellen Roderick. This team is a “well-oiled machine.” Linda makes arrangements with the restaurants. On Thursdays, Ellen announces the location and time for the following Monday’s HH. Jerry accepts the reservations via email, confirms each person’s attendance via email, provides the list to Linda on Sunday evenings, and we all “show up” ready to drink, dine, and socialize. Some folks order appetizers while others order

entrees. Regardless of what we order, we have a grand time, sharing stories and experiences. The HHs usually last two hours. Most are on Mondays, with some starting at 4:30 pm and others at 5:00 pm. If the restaurant is not open on Mondays, then we schedule it for Tuesday. But that is the exception. MONDAY is our official HH day. In scheduling the restaurants, Linda acquires suggestions from members. She makes every effort to rotate the location from Bradenton to the UTC/Lakewood Ranch area, to Sarasota (midtown and down the trail), to Osprey/Nokomis, to Venice. What are some of our popular locations: Flavio’s on Sarasota’s Main St., Pop’s Sunset Grill at Nokomis Beach, Cassariano’s in Lakewood Ranch, and Scarpino’s in Bradenton. The HH is a wonderful way to introduce potential members to our Society. So do look for the announcements each Thursday and consider joining the HHs when you have a free Monday evening. You will be “mighty glad you did.” Check out the photos of members enjoying their drinks, appetizers/entrees, and one another.



Joan & Jack Ferrante



Linda & George Muller



Doris & Tom Hurban with
George Di Costanzo



Pam & George Arfield



Jess Scialabba



Ellen Roderick



Jerry Hall with Patty & Mike DeMichele



Linda Mercurio & Ellen Roderick

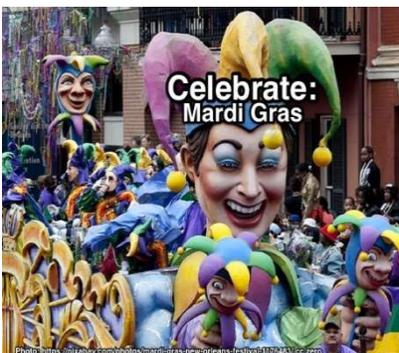


Josephine Fontana, Diane Quincy, Julie Bondarenko



Bob & Joanne Reeder

GCICS Carnevale & Scholarship Fundraiser



Event: GCICS Carnevale & Scholarship Fundraiser

Date/Time: Shrove Tuesday, February 21, 2023, 5:30-9:00 pm

Location: Linda Ahern's & Rich Potts's home, 4240 Presidential Ave Circle, E., Bradenton, FL 34203 [Off SR70 in Peridia Golf & Country Club (no code needed)]

Donation: \$35 from each attendee.

Bring: Your dish, wine to share, badge, and some spare cash to bid on wine/restaurant gift cards that will be attached.

Dress: Carnevale masks, beads, and perhaps costumes (all are optional)

Register Online: Please use GCICS website to register/pay (steps appear at end of email)

OR Mail Check: To Ellen Roderick, 770 So. Palm Ave., #1003, Sarasota, FL 34236; payable to GCICS; include each person's name.

Deadline for Registering & Paying: Online by **Feb 15**; or in Ellen's mailbox by **Feb 15**.

Deadline for Signing Up for a Dish: E-mail Pam Arfield ASAP after deciding you will attend.

COVID Precaution: To safeguard our members, we ask you to honor this request: Attend ONLY if you have been fully vaccinated (2 shots: Moderna or Pfizer; or 1 shot: J&J) and remain symptom-free.

Point of Contact: Ellen Roderick, 301-775-1344 (itrain@erols.com)

VERY IMPORTANT:

If you decide to attend, please take 2 steps:

1. Register/pay on GCICS Website or send check to Ellen Roderick (see address above).
2. E-mail Pam Arfield (pamarfield3@gmail.com) with your 1st & 2nd choice of what FOOD you wish to bring and include your phone number in the email. **Pam will contact you to discuss and confirm.** This system leads to a greater variety of dishes.

STEPS FOR PAYING ONLINE

*Go to this GCICS 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 enter in the block directly below “2/21/23” and list the name(s) of the person(s) for whom you are paying. 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 once you have completed the transaction.

Linda and Rich look forward to welcoming you.



REVIEW OF THE GCICS ANNUAL MEETING: 1/21/23

Peridia Golf & Country Club, Bradenton, FL

Articles and Photos by: Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary &
George Arfield, Social & Cultural Chair



Guest Speaker Melissa Morgan

LUNCHEON: Julie Bondarenko, GCICS President, welcomed 67 members, thanking them for attending this important event. Lunch was served.

ANNUAL MEETING: Julie offered remarks stressing that the Society's most important asset is its membership. She thanked members for remaining steadfast. Julie spoke about the importance of GCICS being a charitable organization, a 501 (c)(3), which supports scholarships for high school seniors and the Sarasota Opera and Ballet youth programs. Board members introduced themselves. Julie introduced Sheryl Lazzarotti, the Immediate Past President.

TOWN HALL: Ellen paid tribute to two members who passed away since our 3/4/22 Annual Meeting. Both Marie Corsentino and Mary Amabile Palmer served as GCICS Presidents, with Marie having been a charter member. A moment of silence and reflection was held in their memory. Ellen then introduced the 4 new members in attendance: Donna Carrillo, Joe Colella, Linda Magazino, and Jess Scialabba. Due to the time, Ellen will email the Town Hall questions to the attendees for feedback. Tom Hurban spoke about the upcoming Bocce Invitational at the Cascades on 2/4/23.

CULTURAL LECTURE: George Arfield, Social & Cultural Chair, introduced the speaker, Melissa Morgan. George has shared his reflections with us.

The Father of Chilled Juice in Florida – Anthony Rossi & Tropicana



Anthony Rossi with Christine Keston Pool the inspiration for Miss Tropic-Ana

Melissa Morgan, the Curator of the Manatee County Agricultural Museum, was the featured speaker, delivering an illustrated and fascinating story of Anthony Rossi, an immigrant from Sicily who made orange juice a year-round staple of breakfasts across the country.

Rossi, founder of Tropicana Products, was born in 1900 in Sicily. Like so many others, he dreamed of coming to the United States to make his fortune. He boarded a boat in Italy and arrived in New York City with two suitcases and about \$30 in his pocket.

From these humble beginnings, he became a successful and innovative businessman. In 1947, after holding a series of jobs in the New York City area, he launched Tropicana Products, based in Bradenton. He eventually succeeded in growing Tropicana into a leading player in the food industry. His formula: squeezing less than perfect-looking oranges into perfectly good juice that was chilled to sustain long shipment times and delivered across the country by ship (now discontinued) and rail (still used).

Eventually, Tropicana became an international company that Rossi sold to PepsiCo in 1978 for \$500 million which today would be about \$2.2 Billion.

CLOSING: Julie extended thanks to Melissa for her outstanding and informative presentation. She encouraged members to support our upcoming events including the Bocce Invitational, Carnevale, and the April Scholarship Festa. The Annual Meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm



Julie Bondarenko, Melissa Morgan, Miss Tropic-Ana



Joan Del Giudice, Dr. Joe Polizzi, Joe Colella



Natalie Amedeo, Mary Rinaldi, Joan Ferrante



Eileen Lisook, Frank Cerullo, Rose Perante



Barbara Barattini, Lucille Raia, Edna Di Bianca



Jim & Enza McDonald, Rose & Vince Amato,
Josephine Fontana



Melissa Morgan, George Arfield, Julie Bondarenko

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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

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY SAVE THE DATES

01/21/23

*2/21/23 (Shrove Tues): Carnevale and Scholarship Fundraiser @ Linda Ahern's home, Peridia Golf and CC, Bradenton, 5:30 pm. Potluck, Scholarship donation (\$35), BYOB, wine and gift certificate raffles. Announced on 1/14/23.

*3/10/23 (Fri): Cultural Lecture: "Keeping Up with the Florentines: Cities in Competition in Medieval and Renaissance Italy; by Dr. Carrie Beneš, Professor of Medieval and Renaissance History, New College of Florida; 2:00 – 4:00 pm at New College; Free and open to members and guests. To be announced.

*3/19/23 (Sun): St. Joseph's Celebration Luncheon @ Salute! (Downtown Sarasota); 11:30-2:30 pm. Guests welcome (\$42 inclusive). To be announced.

*3/24/23 (Fri): Wine-Aperitivo Event @ Phillippi Landings Clubhouse; 4:00-6:00 pm. Presenter: George Muller; Cost to be determined. To be announced.

*4/15/23 (Sat): Scholarship Festa Luncheon @ Stoneybrook Golf and CC, 11:30-2:30 pm. To be announced.

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.

