

# VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 2591, SARASOTA, FL. 34230 [WWW.GCICS](http://WWW.GCICS)

December 2021

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



## President's Message:

I have happy thoughts as the Christmas season approaches. Last year there was no Christmas tree in my home. Yes, I know some of you decorated a tree despite 2020. So, no humbug at my house this year. My Christmas tree will be displayed with ornaments and lights, and happy thoughts will fill my head as we embrace the Christmas season with good cheer. I wish you all a happy holiday as you embrace this season with love for your fellow members.

Well, I said happy thoughts, and the happiest thought I can think of is our new GCICS website. This is a "hip hip hooray" moment, standing ovation for at least three rounds of applause, open the champagne and give a shout of thanks to our web designer, Gary Mruz, and our GCICS Website Committee: Gordon Bloom (Chair), Ellen Roderick, George Arfield, and myself. The greatest gratitude goes to Gordon who is Numero Uno in our book. His collaboration with Gary created a website we can all be immensely proud of. This took nine months of Gordon's unending dedication. As our website evolved, we realized we had all played a part in its completion. The committee wrote extensive new text, and we all had a hand in the design and layout. None of this would have been a success if it were not for Gordon and his expertise in this field to figure it all out. He made sense of our ideas, hopes, and wishes, working with Gary to produce our new website: [www.GCICS.org](http://www.GCICS.org)

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On 11/7/21, we enjoyed our annual Welcome Back Picnic held at North Jetty Park, Nokomis instead of at our usual site, the Foundation in Osprey. I want to thank Tom Hurban and Jerry Hall

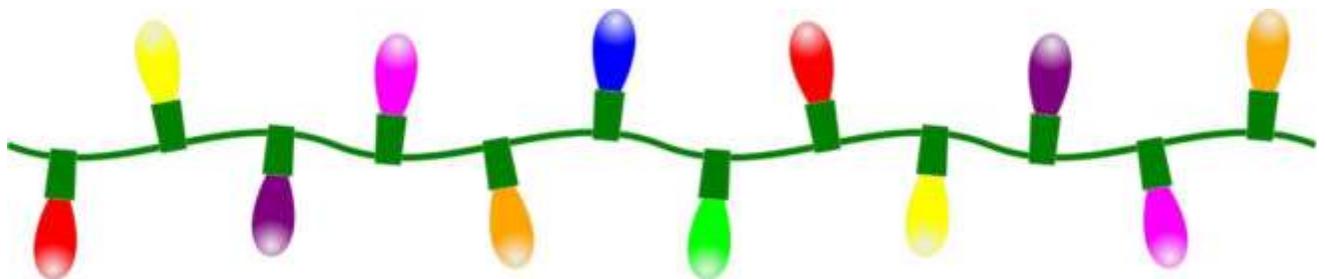
for all that they did to create an outing that incorporated all the fun and excitement that we have experienced in the past. They successfully put together a bocce court on the grass using pegs and builder's tape. As in the past, everyone brought delicious dishes to share. For new members who attended, they gained insight into one of the many social and fun outings we sponsor. The North Jetty location was more than I expected, and I hope that all who attended felt the same way. Again, thank you, Tom and Jerry!

It was with great reluctance that we accepted Nancy Schubert's resignation as a GCICS Board member. Nancy and her husband Carl have moved to Clermont, FL just outside of Orlando. Carl and Nancy are Disney enthusiasts and love to visit the parks often. They are both accomplished artists and now hopefully will enjoy their new abode and its surroundings. Nancy held the position of Courtesy Chair and was responsible for sending cards and other personal notes as a representative of our Society to our members. She also ordered our name tags which she delivered to each of us. As a valued Board member, Nancy voiced her opinion and viewpoint, and was often the voice of reason. Although Nancy is stepping off the Board, she will continue as our Courtesy Chair.

I want to thank all our Board members for their continued dedication and support. I wish all our members a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays and look forward to seeing you at future events. May God bless all of us.

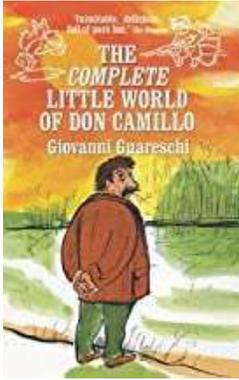
Julie Bondarenko  
President

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## ITALIAN BOOKSHELF

BY Leita Davis



**The Complete Little World of Don Camillo**  
By Giovanni Guareschi [various translators]

Review by Aida L. La Brutte

Sometimes it is good to revisit old books that made us laugh, or cry, or taught us something, or simply entertained. Many, like this gem, are relevant and applicable to our world today. This is a beloved old series that was reintroduced in the *The Complete Little World of Don Camillo*, put together in 2017. The stories are about the parish priest Don Camillo and his adversary Peppone, the Communist Mayor of their village.

The series was written in Italian by Giovanni Guareschi (1908-1968) following World War II. Not all the stories were translated into English, but there are still enough translations available.. There is even an audio edition of *The Complete World....* The birth of these stories, to quote the author, was due to the fact that “We [the Italians] came back from the starvation of the Nazi prison camps to find our country a heap of rubble. But through the ruins in which so many innocent victims had died a fresh breeze of hope was blowing.” For Guareschi, this breeze produced Don Camillo, an enchanting, wise, captivating, and very funny character.

Don Camillo is a parish priest in the village of La Bassa, along the fertile Po River valley. The town is dealing with extreme poverty after World War II. The Communist mayor of the town, Peppone is Don Camillo’s nemesis, and their encounters often lead to complications in the life of the village. Both are strong characters and deadly political enemies. Still, deep down they care about each other. The stories are short, but beautifully written. They tell of death, love, fear, and hate, but there is also, always, humor. What makes these stories different is also the fact that they treat the enemy with as much respect as the hero.

Among the many comments of readers of the series is this one:

“...But nothing can undo the effect of a wit the equal of Wodehouse, and an underlying humanity that treats the enemy with as much respect as the hero. This is the introduction to one of the greatest bodies of comic literature in history, and if you haven’t read it, you are deprived.”

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**A THOUGHT-PROVOKING POEM**  
**Author: Phyllis Shonk, GCICS Member**

**42 STEPS**

As you know, Father Fausto Stampiglia (b. 1935) was honored as GCICS 2021 Italian American of the Year during our “GCICS Italian Cultural Heritage Month Welcome Back Luncheon” on 10/23/21 at Mattison’s 41. Father provided a touching keynote, speaking about his childhood in Rome, Italy during WWII. He recounted how the nuns saved his young innocence and his classmates by gathering them and hurrying them down steps to find shelter below ground. Julie Bondarenko’s guest and now a new member, Phyllis Shonk, was very moved by Father’s words. She felt compelled to author the poem below. It is an expression of Father’s story as he and his classmates counted their way down forty-two steps to safety.

As the children learn to count

Concentrating 1, 2, 3, 4,

The Nuns wise to calm hysteria 5, 6, 7, 8, While

holding their candles aloft 9, 10, 11, 12,

Many children descend to the cellar 13, 14, 15,

16, Cautiously moving 17, 18, 19, 20, 21,

Afraid to look back dreading the Nun’s warning 22, 23, 24, 25,

Screaming in horror as bombs burst above 26, 27, 28, 29,

Terrorized in shock 30, 31, 32, 33,

When the light snuffed out 34, 35, 36, 37,

Suffocating fearing death is near 38, 39, 40, 41,

42 STEPS to sanctuary as they lay down in prayer. Amen

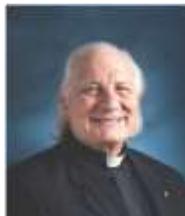
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Inspired by Father Fausto’s WWII experience as a child.

Rescued by the Americans in Rome, Italy, 1944.

By Phyllis Shonk: October 23, 2021 [Return](#)

**Father Fausto**



## BOCCE CORNER NEWS



On Sunday, Nov. 7, we held our welcome back picnic at the Sarasota County North Jetty Park. We used the many tables under the pavilion when eating but spent other time sitting in the sun trying to keep warm because of the strong winds. This picnic traditionally is held at the Conservation Foundation grounds which host our bocce court. There were 50 happy participants! LOTS of GREAT food! It was wonderful to have MANY new members join us. Sheryl helped celebrate George Arfield's birthday with her great voice! Jerry Hall set up a makeshift bocce court on the grass and provided us with music. A 50/50 raffle was held, profits going to the scholarship fund. Our share was two hundred dollars. Two were fifty dollar winners and Beth Rose held the one hundred dollar ticket. Beth generously gave her winnings to the DiMiceles to help pay for the accordion player hired for the Christmas party which will be held at their home. I thank all who participated in this fun event! Penny Thomas has graciously volunteered to relieve my garage space jammed with storage of our Club's supply of plastic and paper disposables. We do have supplies available for those who sponsor a GCICS event. Requests can be made to Penny Thomas.

A reminder that we play bocce each Sunday from 2-4 at the Bay Preserve grounds, 400 Palmetto Ave. Osprey. Come join us!

Tom Hurban, Bocce Chair  
[dorisntom@gmail.com](mailto:dorisntom@gmail.com)  
908 507 3048



New member Elizabeth Lepore  
Eileen & Gary Ware  
And guest David Lepore



LoBianco & Marianne  
Salvatore



New Members Paul New Members

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## GCICS ANNUAL MEETING/TOWN HALL/LUNCH/LECTURE



Each year GCICS holds an Annual Meeting that includes a "town hall style" feedback session, a no-cost luncheon, and either a film or lecture. This year, our very own Gordon Bloom will deliver a lecture on Enrico Fermi, Italian physicist, naturalized American, Nobel Prize in Physics recipient, and creator of the world's first nuclear reactor.

**Event:** GCICS Annual Meeting/Town Hall/Lunch/Lecture

**Date/Time:** Saturday, January 15, 2022, 11:30-2:30 pm

**Location:** Peridia Golf & Country Club, 4950 Peridia Blvd. E., Bradenton, FL 34203

**Program:** Plated lunch (no cost to members), Annual Meeting, Town Hall, Lecture

**RSVP:** E-mail Ellen Roderick: [itrain@erols.com](mailto:itrain@erols.com) and provide name/s of those attending, and their entrée selection (match name with entrée please).

### **Entrée Choices:**

- 1. Chicken Cordon Bleu: boneless chicken breast with smoked ham and Swiss cheese, drizzled with sauce supreme OR**
- 2. Asian Grilled Mahi Mahi: grilled filet of mahi mahi, finished with a zesty Asian Mandarin orange sauce OR**
- 3. Vegetarian (chef's choice)**

**Guests:** Guests are welcome at a cost of \$26. As an alternative, they may take GCICS membership (\$35 single; \$60 couple). Either way, make check payable to GCICS, include name, entrée selection & mail to Ellen Roderick, 770 So. Palm Ave, #1003, Sarasota, FL 34236.

**Deadline:** For members, e-mail Ellen by Friday evening, Jan. 7; we need a count of entrée selections for the club. For guests, mail check for arrival in my mailbox by Jan 7.

**No Shows:** Please cancel in a timely manner (by Jan 7). If you are a no-show, we must pay for the luncheon, and this hurts our treasury.

**Bring: Your appetite & thoughts on GCICS 2022-2023 programs/activities**  
**Badge: Please wear your name badge.**

**Order of Program:**

**11:30-12:00 noon: Arrival, seating, socializing (there will be a cash bar)**

**12:00 Noon: Welcome, Lunch served.**



**1:00: Business Meeting, Julie Bondarenko, President, presiding**

**1:20: Town Hall, Ellen Roderick, Secretary, presiding**

**1:50: Lecture: Gordon Bloom, Board Member, with introduction by George Arfield, Social & Cultural Chair**



**Gordon Bloom**

**2:30 pm: Adjournment**

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## GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

### SAVE THE DATES

11/22/21

**\*12/12/21 (Sun) "GCICS Holiday/Christmas Dinner Party & Scholarship Fundraiser" @ Patty & Mike Di Micele's home, Misty Creek, Sarasota; 5:30-9:00 pm; potluck along with fundraiser (\$35 pp for the Scholarship Fund); reservations required.**

**\*1/15/22 (Sat) "GCICS Annual Meeting/Luncheon/Town Hall/Cultural Lecture" @ Peridia Golf & CC Club Restaurant, Bradenton; 11:30-2:30 pm; members-no cost; guests-\$26; lecture by member Gordon Bloom on Italian American Enrico Fermi (1901-1954); reservations required.**

**\*1/22/22 (Sat) "19 Crimes Wine Tasting" @ Penny Thomas's home, Bradenton; 4:30-7:30 pm; \$35 covers cost of wine & appetizers; fundraising activities will take place to raise money for our scholarships & grants program; reservations required.**

**\*2/19/22 (Sat) "GCICS Bocce Invitational VI" @ The Cascades, Sarasota; \$20 covers food cost; also, GCICS members are asked to bring a dessert to share; practice time: 12-12:45 pm; tournament: 1:00-4:00pm; party: 4:00-8:30 pm; reservations required.**

**\*2/24/22 (Thurs) "GCICS Cultural Lecture" by Dr. Davide Tanasi, with topic to be announced; @ Selby Library, Sarasota (1<sup>st</sup> floor meeting room), 2:00-4:00 pm; no cost; reservations required.**

**\*3/1/22 (Shrove Tues) "GCICS Mardi Gras & Scholarship Fundraiser" @ Linda Ahern & Rich Potts' home, Perida Golf & CC, Bradenton; 5:30-9:00 pm; potluck along with fundraiser; (\$35 pp for the Scholarship Fund); reservations required.**

**\*3/20/22 (Sun) "St. Joseph's Feast Day Celebration Luncheon" @ Café Baci; 11:30-2:00 pm; cost to be announced; reservations required.**

**\*4/9/22 (Sat) "Scholarship Festa Luncheon" @ Stoneybrook Golf & CC; 11:30-2:30 pm; \$36 per person all inclusive; choice of two entrees or vegetarian; reservations required. [Return](#)**

## OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

PresidenStoneybrook Country Club

Julie Bondarenko

[juliebondy@yahoo.com](mailto:juliebondy@yahoo.com)

**Vice President**

Linda Mercurio

[Lindascot5770@gmail.com](mailto:Lindascot5770@gmail.com)

**Secretary**

Ellen Roderick, PhD

[itrain@erols.com](mailto:itrain@erols.com)

**Assistant Secretary**

Judy Herman

[taxmadam@msn.com](mailto:taxmadam@msn.com)

**Treasurer**

Penny Thomas

[dafyddpen@AOL.com](mailto:dafyddpen@AOL.com)

**Bocce**

Tom Hurban, DDS

[dorisntom@gmail.com](mailto:dorisntom@gmail.com)

**Membership**

Mary Lou Ferrari

[MLFFLYME@yahoo.com](mailto:MLFFLYME@yahoo.com)

**Fundraising /Scholarship**

Vacant

**Newsletter Editor**

Mary Faith Rinaldi

[maryfaithrinaldi@gmail.com](mailto:maryfaithrinaldi@gmail.com)

**Social and Cultural**

George Arfield

[arfield@yahoo.com](mailto:arfield@yahoo.com)

**Website Coordinator**

Jerry Hall

[CZHalls@verizon.net](mailto:CZHalls@verizon.net)

**Director At Large**

Gordon Bloom

[Gordon.bloom@att.net](mailto:Gordon.bloom@att.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

Happy  
Holidays

