

# *VOCE DI GCICS*

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

1811 Englewood Rd., #317, Englewood, FL 34223 [WWW.GCICS.ORG](http://WWW.GCICS.ORG) May 2023

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



## President's Message

Many of you are aware that on March 10, 2023, as I was preparing to welcome our members and guests at New College, I suffered a fall which resulted in fractures to my right arm and injury to my hip. Unfortunately, I am limited as to how much I can type. It is because of this recent handicap, which I expect will be a thing of the past within the next six weeks, that I must choose my words carefully.

Every year since my first introduction to the GCICS Scholarship Festa, I have realized how this celebration has become more meaningful to me. I hope that the many who have celebrated with me feel the same way. Perhaps these 2023 scholarship recipients are smarter, but what I saw was fierce individuals setting out on careers that said: "I am not typical." These young adults are innovative and creative. The interaction between the celebrated awardees, their parents and families who accompanied them, and our GCICS members was uplifting. There was much conversation and no one could hear the laughter as everyone was in good spirits and interested in getting to know one another. It was an opportunity to mix and mingle. It was pointed out

to me, "listen to the noise in the room." This was a compliment as multi-generations elicited excitement that we all felt. For those of you who were unable to attend, it is my hope that you will attend this event next year and every year thereafter. It is the only way you can fully appreciate what your support has meant to our scholars and to all those who have put their heart and soul into making it successful.

A special thank you to our newly elected Board member and Scholarship Chair, Sandra Russell, and the Scholarship Committee. You were all responsible for a first-class event. Additionally, I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the entire board. Special thanks to Ellen Roderick and Gordon Bloom. Please read Sandra's report in this newsletter.

Thank you all for your heartfelt well wishes. They are very much appreciated and certainly are helping with my recovery.

Julie Bondarenko

President Julie Bondarenko's Introductory Remarks  
GCICS Scholarship Luncheon  
April 15, 2023



It might be said that this event is like so many other events that GCICS gathers to celebrate. But if truth be told, our Scholarship Festa is without a doubt our most auspicious occasion of the year. GCICS was incorporated more than 30 years ago, and it was in those early years that our Scholarship Program was put into action, giving meritorious scholarship to students of Italian heritage of Sarasota and Manatee County. I congratulate our members. It is because of your generosity that we can accomplish our goals.

Your generosity and the work put forth by our Scholarship Committee have made this all possible. You will meet our 2023 scholarship recipients and their families for the first time a little later in the program.

Most of our awardees will have the good fortune to receive other scholarships. For whatever they have earned is celebrated by you, their parents. Proud parents you are. I know that you have guided your children during their school years and are responsible for their success. It was not always easy but nonetheless joyful. Now you can realize the fruits of your labor and feel satisfied with the outcome. You deserve to be honored for a job well done.

Our scholarship recipients carry with them their own unique story. Each will set out in a direction believing that their hopes and dreams will take them down the right paths, working toward a profession they seek. Honored recipients, you have proven to be determined and bold. I have no doubt you will reach many pinnacles as you make your way setting your sights on new goals. Let us not forget that failure is sometimes necessary and should be looked upon as an opportunity to make a change. Or as said by the psychologist, Benee Brown, "failure allows you to be creative and innovative," and she added, "to be vulnerable," although difficult and scary allows you to be truly yourself.

Our 2023 GCICS Scholarship recipients possess values that we honor and admire. These soon to graduate seniors are our future and carry with them a responsibility to honor, value, and respect one another and most importantly to be good and worthy citizens. For no matter where you travel or where life takes you, we want you to know that GCICS has chosen you as our Scholarship recipients for 2023. GCICS has most definitely chosen well. Thank you.

# Review of the Wine Tasting Event

By George Arfield

## ITALIAN WINERIES WEATHERING CLIMATE CHANGE

Long-time GCICS member and qualified wine enthusiast George Muller led a sip-and-sample gathering on March 31 to share insights about how wineries in northern Italy are meeting the challenges caused by climate changes.

The remarks were a distillation of experiences and tastings collected by George and Linda Muller during their most recent visit to ancient vineyards in the Trentino and Alto Adige provinces. To intensify the experience of tasting three lesser-known wines each participant sampled a selection of imported Italian salumi and cheeses.

The event was held in the clubhouse of Phillippi Landings, the association that is home to GCICS members George and Pam Arfield. In front of each guest seat were three stemmed wine glasses and individual plates, prepared by Beth Rose and Pam, holding a variety of premium cold meats and cheeses.

As George proceeded with his presentation attendees learned how temperatures that have been on a steady rise for several years have spawned increased interest in growing grapes that can match the changes in the weather. He focused—and guests sampled—three wines that were new to most.

The first wine sampled was a white, “Saladin Pilastris Falerio”, a refreshingly very dry multi-grape white blend that subtly changed mouth and finish if sipped after a bite of prosciutto or similar salty cured meat. It bore a faint resemblance to Pinot Grigio. Its delicate, fruity character is accomplished by a blend of three different grape varieties: Trebbiano, Passerina and Pecorino.

It was followed by two reds: a Kupelwieser Lagrein and a Sonoro Taraldeo Dark Red. The former a solid red that tasted somewhere between a Merlot and a Malbec and the latter a robust, hard-to-ignore red that rose in mouth and had a lingering finish, especially if accompanied with nibbles of the exquisite semisoft Taleggio cheese served to each guest.

Finally, George demonstrated the versatility of the reds by combining them into a blend that, depending on the characteristics of each grape, could be adjusted to changes imposed by the ongoing climate changes.

All wine and food were locally sourced: the wines from Total Wines and the cold meats and cheeses from La Violetta.



# GCICS 2023 Scholarship Recipients

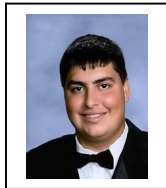
Article by Sandra Russell



This year's Scholarship Committee selected 6 graduates from the Sarasota area to be honored with a \$1,500.00 merit scholarship. These 6 are amazing students with outstanding high school achievements and biographies which deserve to be shared with our members.



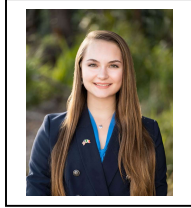
Marina Rose Berardi is a senior at Venice High School. Marina is an honor student who takes part in many activities, among which is the National Art Club. She has been accepted at the Ringling College of Art and Design, University of Central Florida, and University of South Florida. Marina has given time and leadership to the Salvation Army and the All Faiths Food Bank. And she still has time for the Marching Band and a job.



Robert Bowden is a senior at Riverview High School. He is an honor student, Eagle Scout, Tae-Kwan-Do champion, science fair awardee. The members who attended the Scholarship luncheon will remember that Robert read his essay "The Cultural Influence of Joe DiMaggio". Robert has been accepted at Florida State University, Albion University, and Kings College.



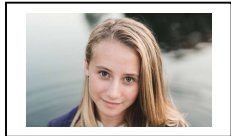
Brianna Connelly is a senior at Riverview High School. She is also an honor student who has participated in and had many leadership roles. She is a piano student who challenges herself with classical pieces. Some of us may have seen her perform with Rise Above Performing Arts. Additionally, she has self-published a poetry anthology. Brianna has been accepted at several schools including Liberty University, New College of Florida, and The University of South Florida. As of this publication she is also waiting to hear from several other schools.



Anna Davis-Lunardi is an honor student at Sarasota in the AICE program. This multi-talented student is a member of the leadership club, a member of the Science National Honor Society, and a state level participant in the Florida Science Fair. And she has time to work at Extra Image Productions. At her interview Anna shared that she is fluent in Italian. Next year she hopes to study Biology and minor in biomedical engineering. She has been accepted at Florida State University, and the University of South Florida among other schools.

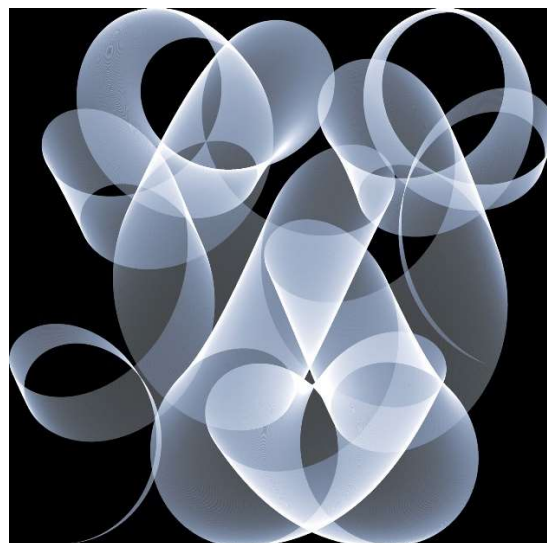


Riley Highfield is a student at Venice High School where she ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in her class of 591 students. She is a member of the National Honor Society, and placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the state Business Communications competition. She has been student body president, and a participant in Girls State. And if you dine at The Crow's Nest you may be seated by Riley who works part time as a hostess there. Next year Riley will study marketing and public relations. She has been accepted by University of Georgia, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Florida State University, and the University of Florida among others.



Lucia Kehoe is a student at Venice High School. Lucia is a member of the Future Business Leaders of America, Science National Honor Society, and President of the Technology Student Association. In addition to being an outstanding student, Lucia has her own company as a wedding sign designer. In explaining her Italian heritage, she rendered a map of her family origins from Sardinia, Positano, and Naples. She has committed to the University of Central Florida.

Photos and additional biographical information are available on our website. Congratulations, again, to the 2023 Awardees.





# GCICS 2023 SCHOLARSHIP FESTA

Article by Ellen Roderick

Photos by Ellen Roderick, Julie Bondarenko, and Gordon Bloom

The GCICS Scholarship Committee welcomed 82 members and guests to our 2023 Scholarship Festa at Stoneybrook Golf & Country Club in Sarasota on a beautiful Saturday morning (4/15/23) with temperatures in the low 80s. Sixty-one members and twenty-one guests (scholars and family members) enjoyed a delicious luncheon of salmon, chicken piccata, or mushroom ravioli with strawberry shortcake for dessert. We witnessed the awarding of \$1,500 scholarships to six multi-talented high school seniors with Italian ancestry:

Marina Rose Berardi, Venice High School  
Robert Garland Bowden, Riverview High School  
Brianna Grace Connelly, Riverview High School  
Anna Katherine Davis-Lunardi, Sarasota High School  
Riley Morgan Highfield, Venice High School  
Lucia Riis Kehoe, Venice High School



Julie Bondarenko, Lucia Kehoe, Brianna Connelly, Riley Highfield,  
Robert Bowden, Anna Davis-Lunardi, Marina Rose Berardi, Sandra Russell

We are grateful to our Scholarship Committee for the dedicated work they put into publicizing the scholarships, reading and rating the applications and essays, interviewing the finalists, selecting the recipients, arranging the luncheon, publicizing the event, managing the reservations, creating the written program, and conducting the event. The committee was composed of Sandra Russell, Chair; Gordon Bloom, Julie Bondarenko, Mike DiMichele, Mary Lou Ferrari, Carol Miranda, and Ellen Roderick.



Gordon Bloom, Mary Lou Ferrari, Julie Bondarenko,  
Sandra Russell, Carol Miranda, Mike DiMichele, Ellen Roderick

Our President, Julie Bondarenko, opened with a grand welcome. Carol Miranda led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mike DiMicele delivered the blessing. Following lunch, Scholarship Chair, Sandra Russell, led the introduction of the scholars and their families. Each student is required to compose an essay on a famous Italian American identified by the Scholarship Committee. Robert Bowden was asked to read his essay entitled *“The Cultural Influence of Joe DiMaggio.”* The essay is reproduced in this newsletter. Following the reading, Sandra and Julie awarded scholarships to each student who shared his or her plans for college and career paths. Those career paths include medicine, marketing & advertising, mechanical engineering, computer science & cyber security, and illustration. Julie provided closing remarks, thanking everyone for being a part of this Scholarship Awards Luncheon that truly reflects a core dimension of our Society’s mission.

### Family Photos



# Robert Garland Bowden Essay

## The Cultural Influence of Joe DiMaggio



Joe DiMaggio is a very important and influential person to the development of the United States

as a nation. On the surface, Joe DiMaggio was just a baseball player that was very good at his

craft, but if you look deeper, he was much more important to the U.S. than he looks. Joe DiMaggio was a Hall of Fame centerfielder for the New York Yankees. He is regarded as one of the best to ever playing. He would compete in 1,736 games before retiring. He was enshrined into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1955 (DiMaggio, Joe). While Joe DiMaggio was starring on the field for the Yankees and winning games, he was just as influential off the field for Italian American immigrants. DiMaggio was one of the first major Italian Americans to be considered a cultural icon. When DiMaggio was playing baseball, Italian Americans were seen as different from other the white Americans in their “religion, dark complexion and inability to speak English, they were regarded as unwanted foreigners and were treated harshly” (Russo). Due to these reasons, most Italian immigrants lived in poverty and in really rough neighborhoods. During this time, lynchings were not uncommon for Italian immigrants. One of the biggest lynchings in American history came “in 1891 when 11 Italian immigrants were beaten, shot and hanged in New Orleans” (Russo). During WWII, Italians were treated even worse due to their home country fighting on the opposite

side of the war than the U.S. The turning point came when Italian Americans started to become very good at baseball and went to go play professionally. This allowed for some Italian Americans to gain status as a celebrity. Their celebrity helped break down the cultural barrier that let to Italian Americans being ostracized in the U.S. Of these players, Joe DiMaggio was the most famous due to his incredible achievements on the diamond. He played for the Yankees, the most popular team in baseball at that time and is still today. He won 9 World Series Championships, 13 All-Star selections, and 3 MVP awards (Russo). It was safe to say that the best player on the best team in

the most popular sport was very well known across the U.S. DiMaggio, and other ItalianAmerican celebrities, not only changed the way that Italian Americans were perceived by others, but also how Italian Americans perceived themselves. DiMaggio gave Italian Americans hope they could possibly reach that level of stardom (Russo). This would allow them to escape the situation that Italian-Americans had been in since they started to immigrate to the U.S. Joe DiMaggio allowed a children’s hospital in Hollywood, Florida, to use his name and likeness in order to increase their fundraising efforts. His only stipulation was that “No child will ever be turned away because of inability to pay.” (Joe DiMaggio Children’s). This, as much as anything, shows the power and influence of Joe DiMaggio.



## Works Cited

DiMaggio, Joe | Baseball Hall of Fame. [baseballhall.org/hall-of-famers/dimaggio-joe](http://baseballhall.org/hall-of-famers/dimaggio-joe). (Russo, Basil M.). “How DiMaggio Turned the Tide, and Brought Italians Into the ...Mainstream.”

Italian Sons and Daughters of America, 21 Apr. ...2020, [orderisda.org/culture/sports/how-joltin-joe-dimaggio-reshaped-italians-stature-in-...america](http://orderisda.org/culture/sports/how-joltin-joe-dimaggio-reshaped-italians-stature-in-...america).

Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital Foundation — the Official Site of Joe ...DiMaggio. [www.joedimaggio.com/childrens-hospital-foundation](http://www.joedimaggio.com/childrens-hospital-foundation).



Joe DiMaggio at Bat

## Tempo Italiano

Doris and I thought that many of our members might also find the radio program we listen to on our internet each Sunday 8 AM -12 to their liking. Many years ago, our ex-president Sheryl Lazzarotti and husband Sal had their motor home repaired by a relative here of a disc jockey from Easton, PA. They were told to look his nephew up upon their return to NJ and they did! His Tempo Italiano show was great; he became a friend of ours and was recently honored by our Italian American Club in New Jersey as their Man of the Year. His name is John Richetta and he broadcasts all types of songs done by Italian or Italian American recording artists. We just love it! Our New Jersey Club published an article in their monthly newsletter to make newer members aware of this program. Try it, you'll like it!

Enjoy

Tom Hurban, Bocce Chair



The logo for Tempo Italiano's 26th anniversary. It features the text "CELEBRATING OUR 26<sup>th</sup> YEAR!" at the top. Below that, "Tempo Italiano" is written in a large, stylized font, with "Tempo" in green and "Italiano" in red. Underneath, it says "with John Richetta" and "Every Sunday at 8am on REAL OLDIES 1470 and iHeartRADIO".

Tempo Italiano is something unique and special to begin your Sunday mornings. For the past 26 years Tempo Italiano has been providing an enjoyable mix of traditional and popular Italian music, plus Oldies in Italian as well as music by Italian American artists every Sunday from 8AM to Noon!

If you have ALEXA, you only need to say, **"ALEXA, play AM1470 on iHeart Radio"** every Sunday morning at 8AM and you will get to hear the music so many people are enjoying across the country.

And, if you would like to be a part of our Tempo Italiano family of sponsors, we'd be happy to have your business join us. Just give John Richetta a call at 610 360-0699 or drop him an email at [tempo10@rcn.com](mailto:tempo10@rcn.com).

## BOCCE CORNER NEWS

We welcome all members to join us for bocce and fun at the court we maintain on the grounds at the Conservation Foundation at 400 Palmetto Ave., Osprey. Play is from approximately 2-4 each Sunday afternoon unless we are told of a conflict when they are having a function there. Since WE maintain the court, they have recently posted a sign stating that we have the reserved use at that time. It has truly been a very symbiotic relationship we share with them!

Jerry Hall, Vince DeNicolas and I recently replaced the very decrepit wood on one end of the court with new 2x10's. A very decent job done by us amateurs!

Each year the Conservation Foundation runs a daylong festival for kids titled WILD ABOUT NATURE. We participate by teaching the game of bocce to anyone interested. On April 1, Vince and I volunteered an early shift while Jerry Hall and Beth Rose did the latter shift. The photo shows Vince with a few of the young people we had taught.



Vin DeNicolas teaching bocce.

Discussion is underway for next year's bocce invitational held at the Cascades. We are fairly certain it will be held on Sat., Feb. 3, with a rain date on Sunday.

Questions?

Tom Hurban, Bocce Chair

908 507 3048 [dorisntom@gmail.com](mailto:dorisntom@gmail.com)

## SAVE THE DATES



\*10/14/23 (Saturday): Italian Cultural Heritage Month Welcome Back Luncheon: Mattison's 41, 11:30-2:15 pm; honoring a 2023 GCICS Italian American of the Year.

\*11/5/23 (Sunday): Brunch and 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 Pavilion, 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 and 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 and Country Club, Bradenton; N/C to members; 11:30-2:30 pm.

\*2/3/24 (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 Instructions (Wed) are ongoing.



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Marie Corsentino	2007
Mary Amabile Palmer	2008-2010
William Korp	2010-2014
Anthony Esposito	2015-2016
Sheryl Lazzarotti	2016-2020

## FYI: Some Holidays in May



May 1: Great Lakes Awareness Day

May 2: International Harry Potter Day

May 3: Bike to School Day

May 4: Firefighters Day  
Star Wars Day  
Orange Juice Day

May 5: Cinco de Mayo

May 12: Mother's Day

May 13: Apple Pie Day

May 18: Ascension Day

May 20: Armed Forces Day

May 25-  
27: Shavout

May 28: Amnesty International Day

May 29: Memorial Day  
National Alligator Day

