

VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

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

WWW.GCICS

January 2023

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



President's Message

Welcome 2023! I just joined a gym last week. I was desperate. There was no amount of planning New Year resolutions that could possibly get me back into my previous wardrobe. So, on a recommendation, I ventured across the street and checked out the gym closest to my home. My need is to lose those extra pounds that have attached themselves to me. The mirror doesn't lie or so they say. How did this happen?

Some might say I'm having too much fun, too many occasions to eat. Is GCICS the culprit? GCICS has provided me with a sense of belonging, a commitment to a cause, camaraderie among friends, and yes, countless opportunities to enjoy good food. Culprit or not, we face a challenge every year - to fulfill our mission of awarding scholarships and grants within the framework of many social and cultural activities. It is how our organization works so well - one cannot function well without the other two. Think about your own reasons for becoming members of our Society. It is why I wish to wholeheartedly thank all of you for your generous contributions, your membership,

and believing as I do in the immense value this organization brings to all of us.

I am grateful to our Board of Directors for working together to have achieved the kinds of successes we have all experienced this past year. Our positive attitudes influence our ability to work in a cohesive manner. I look forward to moving forward together in positive ways, fostering participation, a forum to exchange ideas, working together as one unit to bring you even more exceptional cultural and social events. We will be launching interesting programs and lectures for you to enjoy while attaining our ultimate goals - to be good stewards for GCICS.

Trumpets sound and a huge round of applause for Patty and Mike DiMichele hosting another exceptional holiday party & scholarship fundraiser in their beautiful home. Look for Ellen's report and photos in the pages ahead. Thank you, Patty and Mike for sharing your home, your hospitality, and all the efforts made on behalf of our scholarship program. We are extremely grateful. Also, thank you to all members who

attended, bringing a variety of foods for all to enjoy, and donating to the program.

We are very saddened to learn of the passing of Mary Palmer, former GCICS President. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family. We will have a tribute in a future newsletter and Ellen will announce the date/time of a memorial service when she receives word from Mary's family.

GCICS is still in need of a bookkeeper to fill the Treasurer's position. If you have worked as a bookkeeper in the past or are now working in this field, we would truly

appreciate your service. This would be a great opportunity to give back to this organization, especially if you know yourself to be conscientious, detail-oriented, and you work well with others. We are here to offer our assistance so that you may be most successful in this role. Knowledge of PayPal and Quick Books is a plus but not critical. You can be trained if need be.

May you enjoy a healthy and prosperous New Year. All the best in 2023. Thank you.

Julie Bondarenko
President

La Cena Review

Article and Photos by George Arfield

A lively group of 40 GCICS members and guests gathered on the evening of December 1st for a "La Cena" dinner. This dress-up and eat-fine dinner event is periodically held at some of the finest restaurants in Sarasota and Manatee counties.

The sell-out event was held in the private dining room of Mediterraneo, the long-time popular restaurant on Sarasota's Main Street. Its entire regular menu was made available to us for this occasion. It was gratifying to have such a good turnout, following the hiatus imposed by Covid and sporadic restrictions.

The room was set up with separate tables for eight or more guests. This arrangement in a relatively quiet room facilitated conversation that could be easily heard. This grew more animated during the evening with the arrivals of guests' food and beverages. A measure of the success was that some guests left only minutes before Mediterraneo closed for the evening.



Patty DiMichele with Maria & Russell Heifner



Tom Hurban, Carole Warner, Michele & Hiro Takei



Paola & Bob Tate, Diana Flannery



Francie Hammond, Gianni Sessa, Tony DiBianca

HOLIDAY/CHRISTMAS DINNER & FUNDRAISER

Article & Photos by Ellen Roderick



We entered the “land of enchantment” once again at Patty & Mike DiMicele’s home on 12/11/22, losing ourselves in the spectacular decorations of the season. Whether you dined inside or on the lanai, you sampled delicious hors d’oeuvres and wines. Joe Cerrito provided accordion music. Special thanks to Pam Arfield for coordinating the menu contributions. It was truly a feast to behold. The entrees included Italian meatballs, sausage and peppers, pork tenderloin, and eggplant parm. The sides included Spinach pie, corn pudding, and vegetables. And if you indulged in Jerry’s Tres Leches cake made with panettone or Michele’s pineapple upside down cake, you were a satisfied diner! If I left out your dish, please forgive me. We thank the cooks and bakers. We were 55 members and 2 guests. We had cancellations, but I took care of everyone on the wait list. We raised \$2,395 for the Scholarship Fund. Thank you everyone. Mike and Patty were gracious hosts, on their feet the entire time. We are most grateful for their kind and generous hospitality. Sheryl Lazzarotti, immediate past GCICS President, provided a closing solo. We had some newer members attending: Donna Carrillo, Joe Colella, Michele Takei, Paula Dempsey, Linda Magazino, and Roberto and Denise Mei. And we welcomed two guests: Stuart Dempsey and Hiro Takei. Merry Christmas and Buon Natale to all.



Julie Bondarenko & Vin DeNicolas



Vince Amato & Josephine Fontana



Enza & Jim MacDonald with Rose Amato



Pam & George Arfield



Beth Rose & Jerry Hall



Ellen Roderick & Donna Carrillo



Sheryl Lazzarotti

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY

SAVE THE DATES

12/20/22



***1/21/23 (Sat) Annual Meeting/Luncheon/Town Hall/Program @ Peridia Golf & Country Club, Bradenton; N/C to members; 11:30-2:30 pm.; Speaker: Melissa Morgan's topic: "The Father of Chilled Juice in Florida: Anthony Rossi & Tropicana."** Announced on 12/16/22.

***2/4/23 (Sat): Bocce Invitational VII @ Cascades, Sarasota;** begins midday with practice, tournament, party, music, and dancing (fee). To be announced.

***2/21/23 (Shrove Tues): Carnevale & Scholarship Fundraiser @** Linda Ahern's home, Peridia G&CC, Bradenton, 5:30 pm. Potluck, Scholarship donation (\$35), BYOB, wine & gift certificate raffles. To be announced.

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

***4/15/23 (Sat): Scholarship Festa Luncheon @ Stoneybrook G&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.

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 a film or lecture. ***Your PRICE OF ADMISSION is a bottle of wine valued at \$15 or more (one per couple or single).*** These wines will be raffled off with restaurant gift cards during the Shrove Tuesday 2/21/23 GCICS Carnevale Dinner & Scholarship Fundraiser.

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

Date/Time: Saturday, January 21, 2023, 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; provide name/s of those attending, and their entrée selection (match name with entrée).



Entrée Choices:

1. Chicken Cordon Bleu: boneless chicken breast with smoked ham and Swiss cheese, drizzled with sauce supreme; OR
2. Grilled Salmon Filet: finished with a champagne dill sauce; OR
3. Pasta Primavera (vegetarian option).

Guests: GCICS members will be given priority. Any guest names will be on a wait list; guests will be charged \$30. (Note: As an alternative, a guest may take GCICS membership for \$35.) I will accept checks from guests the day of the luncheon if a guest is confirmed after all members have been confirmed.

Deadline: E-mail Ellen by Monday evening, **Jan. 9**; we need a count of entrée selections for the club.

No Shows: Please cancel in a timely manner (by Jan 9). If you are a no-show, we must pay for the luncheon, and this hurts our treasury.

Bring: Your name badge & thoughts on GCICS 2023-2024 programs or activities.



Agenda:

11:30-12:00 noon: Check-in & turning in your bottle of wine; seating & socializing (there will be a cash bar).

12:00 Noon: Welcome, Lunch served; Cake & coffee/tea.

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

1:15: Town Hall, Ellen Roderick, Secretary, presiding.

1:40: Lecture: George Arfield, Social & Cultural Chair, presiding.

***Presenter: Melissa Morgan, Curator, Manatee County Agricultural Museum, Palmetto, FL.

***Program: *The Father of Chilled Juice in Florida: Anthony Rossi & Tropicana* (see attachment for program description).

2:30 pm: Adjournment

Health: You are asked to attend ONLY if you have been fully vaccinated (booster not included) and remain symptom-free. Your cooperation is appreciated. We want everyone to remain healthy in these unusual times and beyond. Understand that neither GCICS nor its directors are liable for health-related events at GCICS events or functions.



BOCCE CORNER NEWS

LOOKING FOR A GOOD TIME? READ ON!



Attention: February 4th is the date for one of our most fun days on the GCICS calendar, the Bocce Invitational vs. the Cascades Italian American Organization (CIAO). We have a group of only a dozen “regulars” who enjoy playing bocce on the single court we maintain at the Conservation grounds in Osprey. CIAO, on the other hand, has a large contingent who regularly play on their three EXTREMELY fast courts. In other words, the deck is stacked against us, BUT we go there with our teams to enjoy a great day. PLEASE consider joining us. We welcome ALL, and if you cannot play, you can still come to root for us and join the party. Saturday, Feb. 4 timing is practice at the Cascades at 12, and matches from 1-4. The party follows in their lovely social hall. There will be pizza, wings, salad, beer, wine, and soft drinks along with singing and dancing. Traditionally, we have provided homemade desserts which are placed on a table to be shared by all. I suspect that we are invited back each year so that they can enjoy our

desserts! The cost at this writing is \$20.00 p/p. We will collect the money and make out one GCICS check to them. You will receive a follow-up detailed flyer with directions and payment options in January. So, COME JOIN US!

Please volunteer to play. I will need 7 teams, which is 28 people, many more than our current players. I can help to set up teams. Of course, no one likes to lose, but we enter this in extreme disadvantage with the intention of doing our best and having a fun day! Come join us to familiarize yourself with the game and have fun with us on Sunday afternoons. We play from 2-4 at the Conservation Foundation grounds located at 400 Palmetto Ave, Osprey, which runs behind the Spanish Point Welcome Center.

Tom Hurban
Bocce Chair
908 507 3048
doristom@gmail.com

FYI

Almost Lost to History, Italian American Past Unearthed in Colorado

Pueblo, Colorado — at one time a pillar of industry and immigration — was home to the "Ellis Island of the West."



Early 1900s, Italian immigrants living in the “Bottoms,” one of Pueblo, Colorado’s first Little Italies.

Pueblo is known for its ethnic diversity, including many descendants of immigrants from around the globe who came to work in the steel mill. That includes a large Italian community, which gifted the Columbus monument to the city in 1905. Since then, they have come together there annually to celebrate their history, according to Puebloan Jerry Carleo.

Protesters of non-Italian background want the monument taken down or moved elsewhere. For them, Columbus symbolizes colonialism, exploitation and racism. The Italian community wants the monument to remain where it is.



Pueblo, Colorado’s Christopher Columbus monument, as it stands today.

The city brought in a professional mediator, lawyer Fred Galves, who grew up in the area and now handles community engagement at CSU-Pueblo. Both groups were entrenched in their positions, Galves said. Yet both groups still sent a handful of representatives to the mediation. They worked through the process. It took several weeks, but they

produced a compromise. Everyone involved in the process agreed to turn the area around the monument into an outdoor museum. Along with the Columbus statue, he said, there would have been new monuments honoring Indigenous and Black people. Flores, a Pueblo City Council member, said “It would be beautiful, and it was (the

participants') idea, putting Columbus in a museum setting along with a description of the truth and what had happened 500 years ago.”

Gatto, a historian and frequent guest speaker on Italian American history was asked to present an event that would promote historical literacy among students and the larger Pueblo community. Gatto turned to the Koncilja family, owners of [Pueblo’s historic Union Depot](#), a former train station-turned event venue that was once known as the “Ellis Island of the West” because millions of immigrants and migrants passed through its doors. The Koncilja family, longtime supporters of the Italian American community and historic preservation in the region, graciously obliged to host a seminar. Over 250 community members attended the free, two-night event. While many who attended the seminar were of Italian descent, many diverse groups that have long called Pueblo home were also well represented.

“Learning about one’s history and identity is empowering and connects one to the larger American immigration story. Ms. Gatto’s lecture on the Italians who immigrated to the United States allowed many in the audience to fill in the gaps of their own life stories. For others, it generated curiosity that will serve as a source of motivation to learn more about one’s rich heritage,” said [Dr. Timothy Mottet](#), President, Colorado State University Pueblo.

Conversations are currently underway to present similar seminars highlighting the other groups that have long called Pueblo home. “Pueblo has a very rich and interesting history,” said Galves, “and the university believes it is important to reach out and support all the many diverse communities that make up our city.”

The above article was taken from the following two internet sources.

- 1) Lewia, Shanna, “Why mediation didn’t resolve what to do with Pueblo’s Columbus monument,” [cpr.org](#), Colorado Public Radio News, [cpr.org](#), August 2, 2022.
- 2) ISDA Staff, “Almost Lost to History, Italian American Past unearthed in Colorado,” [orderisda.org](#), Italian Sons and Daughters of America, December 4, 2022



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Anthony Esposito	2015-2016
Sheryl Lazzarotti	2016-2020

SAVE THE DATE



The GCICS Board is pleased to announce that the St. Joseph's Celebration will take place on the saint's feast day: **Sunday, March 19, 2023, from 11:30-2:30 pm at Salute**, 23 N. Lemon Ave. in downtown Sarasota. Salute is not open to patrons for Sunday lunch, but the restaurant is opening JUST FOR US. We will have the charming main dining room which can seat 75. So do consider inviting friends. I know Josephine Fontana is again bringing her son Joseph, his wife, and their daughter as her guests. Josephine and Joe will celebrate their feast day together.

