

VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

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

April 2022

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



President's Message

Julie Bondarenko

Sound the trumpets, ring the bells! I am excited in anticipation of our Scholarship Festa Luncheon on April 9. We will celebrate our 2022 Scholarship recipients. Our outstanding committee has read every word of the applications. We have interviewed the finalists and selected six recipients. I am anxious for all to meet them and their families. This is without a doubt the highlight and culmination of all our events during the year. This is the other facet of our Society -- giving back to our community. I thank you for attending our fundraisers and your generous donations this year. You are what makes this possible. I would be disappointed not to see you at this gala event. The 2022 Scholarship Festa will be in the dining room of Stoneybrook G&CC. Now we need your support once more to help make this event memorable for our 2022 high school graduates as they receive their scholarships. Remember this will not be a grand affair without you. Please look for Ellen's emails with the details.

Three events have taken place since our last newsletter - our Annual Meeting, a La Cena,

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and St. Joseph's Celebration. I wish to express my gratitude to Ellen Roderick for all she did to make the Annual Meeting and the St. Joseph's event memorable and successful. She is diligent and dedicated, and is hands-on, leaving nothing to chance. Thank you, Ellen, for always getting the job done right!

A special thank you goes to Gordon Bloom for his par excellence performance at our Annual Meeting. He delivered a superb lecture on Enrico Fermi which was nothing short of enlightening. I thoroughly enjoyed learning about this famous physicist's life and his contributions to the world. The feedback was

all positive. Gordon, thank you so very much for doing an outstanding job. I do not think anyone would or could have done more to make this lecture so enjoyable.

My gratitude to Josephine Fontana and Vince Amato for sharing their wonderful and heartfelt immigration stories at our St. Joseph's celebration. Many thanks to Phyllis Shonk for her beautiful tribute and heartfelt story and prayer to St. Joseph. It was truly a beautiful blessing and a unique way to honor

St. Joseph. True acts of kindness were demonstrated by Penny Thomas for the delicious St. Joseph's bread she gave to us and by Joseph Polizzi for the charming lithograph, "The Carpenter's Shop." We extend our gratitude to both of you. George Arfield was responsible for another successful La Cena dinner held at The Rosemary. Everyone left the restaurant thoroughly satisfied with their meal and happy to share the evening with fellow members. Thank you, George.

And finally, I have written a special message entitled "COURAGE" that follows. It was written from deep down in my soul.

COURAGE

I am without adequate words to describe the COURAGE that I have witnessed by citizens of Ukraine. Our humanity has been tested. Can we do enough? Is there nothing more to do than to say "I understand, and I feel your pain" as we watch what is taking place.

Now it is in real time for people and family I am connected to, and it is because of this, in memory of my late husband, Alan, that I wish to say I am so deeply saddened for what has befallen the people of Ukraine. We are witnessing a love of country and what people and patriots do to preserve it. I do not know the ultimate outcome as it is difficult to see a good ending when loss of life is so profound. I pray that Ukraine will receive all that is needed to preserve its democracy. With hope that they will be victorious in the end and not to end with the words, "they put up a good fight."

I pray for the millions of refugees who are forced to start new lives in other countries, countries that are lending a huge hand in welcoming their new and weary guests. I am also profoundly grateful to the journalists who have risked their lives and some who have given their lives to bring the truth to us. Is this not courageous and brave?

In these unusual times, we pray for our government to make the right decisions that will help keep our Ukrainian family safe. We hope free nations around the world will alleviate the pain and suffering for all those who are in our thoughts who are putting up a good fight. And when it is not possible to do more than to say I am sorry, then perhaps it is in times like this that we can make an extra effort to be kind to one another, be supportive and have the courage to do the right thing. Let our deeds be witness to who we really are as we come to understand and witness their COURAGE.

Julie Bondarenko

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Scholarship Festa



You are invited to our annual Scholarship Festa (Luncheon) where high school seniors are awarded GCICS college scholarships. We will welcome the student scholars and their guests. You will meet and hear from these college bound local Italian American high school seniors. If you wish to sponsor a student or parent for the luncheon, include that fee (\$36) in your payment and indicate that information online or in your note that accompanies your check. The student you sponsor, along with his/her parents or guests, will be seated with you.

***Event:** GCICS SCHOLARSHIP FESTA (Luncheon) honoring our Scholarship recipients

***Date/Time:** Saturday, April 9, 2022, 11:30-2:00 pm

***Location:** Stoneybrook Gulf & Country Club, 8801 Stoneybrook Blvd, Sarasota, FL 34238

***Cost:** \$36 (all inclusive)

***Payment:** I encourage you to pay online using our website. Directions are below. It takes only a few moments. If not, mail a check (payable to GCICS) to Ellen Roderick, 770 So. Palm Ave, #1003, Sarasota, FL 34236 and specify menu entrée next to each name. I need to know who is eating which entrée.

***Deadline:** Must register online or I must have your check in hand by Saturday, April 2, 2022.

***Guidelines:** 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.

***Menu:**

***One complimentary Mimosa, Bloody Mary, or House Wine (Merlot or Pinot Grigio) *House Salad**

***Entree Choices (select one)**

--Oven Roasted Salmon with fresh dill and citrus butter

--Chicken Piccata sautéed with capers, shallots, white wine, fresh lemon --Vegetarian (Chef's choice)

***Dessert: NY Style Cheesecake with strawberries**

***Beverage: Coffee/Tea**

***Cash bar available**

***Questions: Call (Cell: 301-775-1344) or email me itrain@erols.com**

STEPS FOR PAYING ONLINE

***Go to our website using this address: www.qcics.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 "Scholarship Festa" and list the name(s) of the person(s) for whom you are paying & their entrée choice. 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 within an hour or so once you have completed the transaction. [RETURN](#)**



Italian Bookshelf



**The Conquest of Rome by Matilda
Serao Routledge Press, 245 pages
Review by Leita Kaldi Davis**

I was so impressed by Michel Pacitti's presentation, speaking to us from London in collaboration with the Consulate of Italy in Detroit, of Matilde Serao that I immediately looked for her books. *The Conquest of Rome* seems to be the only publication in English.

Serao was the first woman to edit and publish a newspaper in Italy in the late nineteenth century, and was a prolific novelist. Pacitti has translated several of her works, and after reading *The Conquest of Rome*, I could understand his fascination with this amazing social commentator and romantic novelist. I hope to find more of her books in Pacitti's translation.

The protagonist, Francesco Sangiorgio, is a politician from Basilicata who aims to gain power, recognition and to conquer Rome. In classical writing style, Serao writes lengthy, poetic descriptions of everything the eyes might meet. She spreads out the ancient city on a map of words. Sangiorgio is enchanted with Rome. He proves to be a brilliant politician, strategist and orator and is quickly elevated to a ministerial position. At the

height of his career, however, he meets the irresistible Donna Angelica, who is married to Don Silvio, a much older husband and overly ambitious politician who ignores his lovely, acquiescent wife. Sangiorgio burns with desire at the pedestal on which Angelica stands wrapped in her untouchable purity. He watches her in the Pantheon on the occasion of King Vittorio Emmanuele's death. "...that dearest of mourners, pale as a pearl under her black veil, her sweet lips still apart for the passage of her prayer, her gaze dissolved in sad religious meditation – to him she appeared as a divine shape." They become close friends, but Angelica is appalled when she realizes that Sangiorgio harbors carnal desires for her. She flees, closing the door on any further relationship.

Paralyzed by his passion, Sangiorgio neglects his political duties and eventually his colleagues determine that he is incapable of fulfilling them. He returns home crushed, realizing that Rome, like Angelica, is a "woman who knows not how to love." "...in very truth Rome had conquered him."

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GCICS ANNUAL MEETING: 3/4/22

Peridia Golf & Country Club, Bradenton, FL

Article by: Dr. Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary

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



LUNCHEON: Julie Bondarenko, GCICS President, welcomed 65 members, thanking them for attending this important event. Frank Cerullo offered the blessing. Lunch was served. (Note: This event was rescheduled from 1/15/22 due to COVID-19's Omicron variant.)

ANNUAL MEETING: Julie offered remarks highlighting how “strong” and “active” GCICS remained during the 2020-2022 pandemic. She thanked members for remaining steadfast. She expressed how appreciative she was for the dedicated work of the Board members who introduced themselves and the role they play in the Society. Sheryl Lazzarotti, a past GCICS President, was introduced. Julie then turned the floor over to Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary.

TOWN HALL: Ellen paid tribute to four members who passed away since our 1/22/21 virtual Annual Meeting. Steve La Brutte, Noel Chiantella, Bill Korp, and Harry Woske all served in the US military and were faithful members of GCICS. Bill's widow, Kate Korp, and Steve's widow, Aida La Brutte, were acknowledged. A moment of silence and reflection was held in their memory. Ellen then introduced the 15 new members in attendance: Dana & Mary Dalton, Dave & Diane Johnson, Edna & Tony Di Bianca, Enza & Jim MacDonald, Sally Rogind, Maria Heifner, Phyllis Shonk, Michele Takei, Josephine Fontana, Vince Amato, and Rose Amato. In the interest of time, Ellen asked the group for their concurrence that she issue the Town Hall questions to them in an email and receive their feedback online. Concurrence was obtained.

CULTURAL LECTURE: George Arfield, Social & Cultural Chair, introduced our speaker, board member Gordon Bloom, whose topic was "Enrico Fermi, A Story of Family, Science, and Emigration." His presentation was accompanied by excellent power point slides that contained photos as well as text. The audience learned about Fermi's family, upbringing, education, mentors,

work experiences in Italy, his marriage and children, his incredible work on the Manhattan Project, and his recognitions while living and after his passing. A Q&A segment was held.

CLOSING: Julie extended profuse thanks to Gordon for his outstanding and informative presentation. She then encouraged members to support the April 9, 2022 Scholarship Luncheon at Stoneybrook CC, and The Giving Challenge (April 26-27, 2022) sponsored by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County (CFSC). The GCICS Annual Meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm.



President Julie Bondarenko Presiding



Gordon Bloom, Guest Speaker



New members: Enza Amato McDonald, Vince Amato & Josephine Fontana



Mary & Phil Maresco, Blanch & Joe Barresi



New members Maria Heifer, Dana & Mary Dalton



Mike & Patty DiMichele



Judy Herman, Cherrie Randall, Carol Hirschburg, Gail Gardner



Dr. Ellen Roderick, Annual Meeting Co-Ordinator

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La Cena Review

The La Cena event that almost wasn't, turned out to be a cold (outdoors) evening full of warm (indoors) cordial socialization and fine dining for 28 GCICS members and 2 guests attending the event at The Rosemary in the similarly-named district just north of downtown Sarasota. The dinner almost didn't happen. An unforeseen glitch, discovered 72 hours before the dinner, had deleted our GCICS reservation from Rosemary & Thyme's system. Rising to the occasion, George Armstrong, owner of Rosemary & Thyme, the restaurant chosen originally, moved our reservation from patio seating to the indoor annex, The Rosemary, which is open for breakfast and lunch only. We had

chosen patio seating in the belief that mild, early spring weather would prevail. The gods were not listening. However, it turned out to be a fortuitous change, as the mercury that evening dropped into the low 60s, the Florida equivalent of sweater-and-jacket weather up north. As a result, we enjoyed in splendid comfort company, food and drink which combined to generate a delightful warm experience in an establishment entirely reserved for GCICS. Guests were seated at tables for six, which encouraged conversation at reasonable volume and a good amount of table hopping. Stay tuned for the next La Cena limited seating event to be held at another upscale restaurant.



Ellen Roderick and Joan Del Giudice



George & Linda Muller with Julie Bondarenko



Sherman & Phyllis Shonk. [RETURN](#)

Review of St. Joseph 's Day Luncheon

March 20, 2022

Article by Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary

Photos by Joan Ferrante, George Arfield, Ellen Roderick



Vince Amato, Dr. Ellen Roderick, Josephine Fontana

On Sunday, March 20, 2022, 52 GCICS members and 5 guests dined at Café Baci in Sarasota for our annual celebration honoring St. Joseph, Patron Saint of Italy. Our President, Julie Bondarenko, presided. She welcomed back four longstanding members of the Society who have not been able to participate in the last two years: Natalie & Bob Amadeo and Teresa & Joseph Latona. We honored not only St. Joseph but also eight attendees celebrating their feast day: Joe Barresi, Joe Latona, Joseph Polizzi, Joe Raia, Jack Joseph Ferrante, Dave Joseph Scalise, Josephine Fontana, and her son, Joseph Moran. Our program focused on the experiences of two GCICS members who were born and spent a portion of their childhoods in Italy. Ellen Roderick, Secretary, interviewed Josephine Fontana who was born in Abruzzo and emigrated when she was 12; and Vince Amato who was born in Sicily and emigrated when he finished high school at 17. They came to their “new lives” in Brooklyn and Chicago respectively, missed their homeland (cried often), had to learn English, earned college

degrees, and had successful careers and beautiful families. In addition to Josephine and Vince, there were 4 others in the audience who were born in Sicily: Mimi Lerario, Rose Amato, Enza Amato MacDonald, and Angela Amato Van Hooser. Phyllis Shonk paid tribute to St. Joseph recounting how he is honored around the world; and then invoked his blessings upon the Ukrainians and all of us gathered to celebrate his life. Joe Polizzi had a gift for everyone – a lithograph entitled “The Carpenter Shop” depicting Joseph, Mary, and the child Jesus. Penny Thomas secured special loaves of bread for us in the shape of St. Joseph’s beard. Roberto, Café Baci’s owner, and his staff did an outstanding job in preparing and serving the meal. Each attendee went home with a full stomach, a beautiful lithograph, a loaf of bread, and a feeling of warmth and camaraderie from our time together sharing our lives and stories. A huge thank you to Josephine Fontana and Vince Amato for sharing their early lives in Italy and their immigration story.

TRIBUTE TO ST. JOSEPH
By Phyllis Shonk, March 20, 2022

Some of you may know this, but for all of us a reminder, Saint Joseph's Day, also called the Feast of Saint Joseph, is in Western Christianity the principal feast day of Saint Joseph, husband of Mary and legal father of Jesus Christ, celebrated on March 19th. It has the rank of a solemnity in the Catholic Church. It is a feast in the provinces of the Anglican Communion, and a feast or Festival in the Lutheran Church. Saint Joseph is the Patronal Feast Day for Poland as well as for Canada and for persons named Joseph and Josephine. It is also Father's Day in some countries, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. In England, Joseph of Nazareth is remembered in the Church of England with a Festival on March 19th.

In Sicily where Saint Joseph is regarded by many as their patron saint, and in many Italian American communities, thanks are given to Saint Joseph (San Giuseppe in Italian). According to legend, Joseph interceded to relieve a famine in Sicily during the Middle Ages. There was a severe drought at the time, and the people prayed for their patron saint to bring them rain. They promised that if God answered their prayers through Joseph's intercession, they would prepare a large feast to honor him. The rain did come, and the people of Sicily prepared a large banquet for their patron saint. The fava bean was the crop which saved the population from starvation and is a traditional part of Saint Joseph's Day altars and traditions.

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

My Prayer to St. Joseph

I have something to share with you because I want to thank Saint Joseph for helping me. This week, while trying to select a package of corned beef in the supermarket, an elderly gentleman seeing my confusion said to me, "You need to choose the second cut" and handed me his choice. He said he had been a butcher in Sicily and the US and was long since retired. He proceeded to coach me in how to pick out a "proper cut." What about yours I asked? When he proudly picked out a new one, the "tastier and more tender cut," he simply said, "It was St. Joseph who found it"! Oh, St. Joseph. I felt then a sudden peacefulness of spirit within your presence that calmed me to write and speak today.

LET US PRAY:

Oh, St. Joseph. As we gather today in your honor we ask for your strength and protection before the Throne of God. We place in you all our interests and desires.

Oh, St. Joseph do assist us by your powerful intercession and obtain for us from your Divine Son all spiritual blessings through Jesus Christ Our Lord: So that having engaged here below your heavenly power we may offer our Thanksgiving and Homage to the most loving of Fathers.

Oh, St. Joseph. I never weary contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine Head for me, "and" ask him to return The kiss to me when I draw my dying breath and may I plead this kiss for the dying in Ukraine. Oh, St. Joseph. Patron of departing souls, if we were to ask your intercession, may you enter the hearts and minds of our World Leaders to end the bloodshed in Ukraine.

Oh, St. Joseph. In a world where many wake-in hungers on your feast day. Bless this meal we are about to share and bless those who prepared and serve it, to make today the special occasion that it is. St. Joseph. Pray for us. Amen.



Teresa Latona, Joan Ferrante, & Natalie Amedeo



Former VP Dr. Joe Latona, Past Board Member Bob Amedeo, & Dr. Jack Ferrante



George & Pam Arfield



Judy Herman & Penny Thomas with the St. Joseph's Bread



Edna DiBianca, Julie Bondarenko, Dr. Ellen Roderick, Tom Hurban



Robert Gaglio, Dr. Ellen Roderick, & Dr. Joseph Polizzi



Lucille Samartin, Blanche Barresi, Barbara Barrattini, Lucille Raia.



Vince and his three sisters

Vince Amato, Rose Amato, Enza Amato MacDonald, Angela Amato VanHooser

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Anthony Esposito	2015-2016
Sheryl Lazzarotti	2016-2020



The tie between Passover and Easter dates back to the Last Supper, when Jesus had a Passover Seder soon before his crucifixion. This happened on what is now Maundy Thursday, three days before Easter. Christians remember it as the day of the Last Supper, when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and established the ceremony known as the Eucharist.

The Last Supper was a Passover Seder meal that Jesus Christ and his disciples ate to celebrate this event. Jesus taught his disciples that the wine and the bread at the meal signified that he would become the sacrificial lamb by which sins are forgiven and reconciliation with God can occur.

The night of Maundy Thursday is the night on which Jesus was betrayed by Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane.



“Warm wishes on Easter to all our members and their families. May this pious day bring along positive energies and great joys in your life.”

The Board of Directors



Please note that in the United States, Women’s History Month is celebrated in March. The graphic stating October was placed in month’s newsletter was an error.

Mary Rinaldi

