

VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

1811 Englewood Rd., #317, Englewood, FL 34223 WWW.GCICS.ORG March 2024

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



President's Message

I have some exciting news to share with you regarding our GCICS Scholarship and Grants Program. GCICS has the distinct honor of being a **Giving Partner** with the Community Foundation of Sarasota County (CFSC) along with many other charitable organizations in the greater Sarasota and Manatee County areas. Being a Giving Partner provides us with the opportunity to raise funds for our Scholarship and Grants Program AND double our donations. The opportunity is called **The Giving Challenge** which takes place from 12 noon on April 9 to 12 noon on April 10. In that 24-hour period, any donation that you make to GCICS up to \$100 on a specific credit card is doubled through the generosity of the Patterson Foundation collaborating with the Community Foundation. The Giving Challenge takes place every other year, so we are excited that 2024 provides us with the chance to double our fundraising efforts for our high school seniors and the Youth Opera and Youth Ballet.

Two years ago, when The Giving Challenge last took place, our members generously donated \$4,500 during the 24-hour period.

Two months later we received a check from the Community Foundation for \$9,000. That truly strengthened our Scholarship Fund and guaranteed that we would continue to give scholarships to worthy high school seniors and issue grants to the Youth Opera and Ballet.

Many of you know but others may not that GCICS is established in the state of Florida as a Corporation organized exclusively for charitable, educational, scientific, cultural, and public benefit purposes. Because we are a 501(c)(3) organization, your donations are tax deductible. The Board genuinely appreciates the donations members make when they renew their membership each fall, when they attend the Holiday Party and Carnevale, and even when they purchase raffle tickets! Each one of these donations is important and valued. But what happens in the April 9-10 24-hour period can really make a difference for how much help GCICS can give our young people here on the Gulf Coast.

The support we provide in donating to our Scholarship and Grants Program has been

returned to us many times over. We need only to recall in our cherished albums of memories to realize the correlation and value of sustaining our Scholarship Programs. The premise of our organization is the intertwining of our social and cultural programs, what we receive, and our scholarship programs that we give back. The fruits of giving are experienced every time we attend HH's, La Cena dinners, cultural lectures, Holiday and Carnevale fundraisers, Italian language classes, and Bocce. It is during our Scholarship Luncheon that we have the pleasure of meeting graduating seniors of Italian heritage, each worthy of an award of \$2,000. These graduating seniors, among the brightest in Sarasota and Manatee County schools, are grateful for this award.

Our support is also greatly appreciated by the Youth Opera and Ballet.

The Giving Challenge is a significant component that allows us to demonstrate our generosity, our charity. It is critical to the success of our scholarship programs. Do recall the adage "it is far better to give than to receive." We may then understand and see that we have attained much through our benevolence and our generous donations through our participation in GCICS. (NOTE: Closer to April 9-10, we will provide directions on accessing the website to make your donation.)

Thank you so very much!
Julie Bondarenko, President



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 (\$40) 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 family members, will be seated with you.

***Event:** GCICS SCHOLARSHIP FESTA

***Date/Time:** Saturday, April 13, 2024, 11:30-2:15 pm

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

***Cost:** \$40 (all inclusive)

***Payment:** I encourage you to pay online using our website. Directions are below. 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 6, 2024.**

*Menu:

*One complimentary Mimosa, Bloody Mary, or House Wine

*Entree Choices (select one)

(1) Oven Roasted Salmon with fresh dill and citrus butter

(2) Chicken Piccata sauteed with capers, shallots, white wine, fresh lemon

(3) Vegetarian (Mushroom Ravioli)

*Dessert: NY Style Cheesecake

*Beverage: Coffee/Tea or Iced 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.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 type in the block directly below: 4/13/24 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.

*Note: Do not be concerned about the student/parent entree if you are sponsoring one; I will be working with them to secure the informatio

RENAISSANCE TITANS: THEIR WORKS COMPARED

Review By George Arfield

GCICS members filled to capacity a projection room at the Gulf Gate branch of the Sarasota Public Library system for a comparative talk by Prof. Chrystine Keener of the Ringling College of Art and Design on January 25 on Leonardo Da Vinci's and Michelangelo Buonarroti's timeless work.

The presentation ran to two hours during which Dr. Keener illustrated fascinating and little-known details of some the masterworks of these two men who defined much of what became known as The Renaissance.

Both Florentines and born 23 years apart, Michelangelo being the youngest, their output was original for the times, retaining its relevance and importance through the centuries.

Dr. Keener is a Professor of Renaissance and Baroque Art and Culture at the Ringling College of Art and Design. She is a resident of Sarasota.



Bocce Corner News

We had a wonderful day of bocce followed by fun at The Cascades on Saturday February 3rd with our Invitational match. It was rewarding to have many new members involved. We had 50 participants, 36 of whom were players. The weather was perfect, our hosts very accommodating, and the day was a grand success! Our teams fared better this year and surprised our opponents. With the handicap of very different courts and our many newcomers, GCICS teams won a few, tied a few, and came close in many other games. Most everyone played four matches of approximately 1/2 hour. Although a trophy was involved, I do not think either team wanted to store it for a year! No problem, WE will not have to store it. Our pride should be intact, as we did ourselves proud! The matches were from 1-4, at which point we went into their newly refurbished hall. We ate antipasti, wings, and two types of pizza, while being entertained by some of their musicians. We also always provide a musician. Sheryl Lazzarotti was not there this year, but we had a great replacement. Gianni Sessa was wonderful with his singing and dancing. He was great fun! Thank you, Gianni!

Years back we established a tradition of our members bringing homemade desserts for all to share. Well, praises are in order as we came through again with A+ desserts. Each person was allowed to approach the two large tables of desserts in a staggered fashion with a limit of sampling only two. We later enjoyed dancing to mostly 50s-60s era music. The event was billed to be a fun day, and it was! GCICS is a vital growing organization. On the other hand, CIAO (Cascades Italian American Organization) has recently disbanded. This year's event was accomplished by the hard work of just a few from their former club. We will have to see what happens next year. If this Invitational does not occur again, both organizations can say it was a darn good run, WITH MUCH FUN!

As a reminder, unless an announcement is made to the contrary, we play bocce each Sunday from 2-4 at the Conservation Foundation grounds in Osprey. Details have been in most previous issues. Any questions, contact me.

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



Phil & Patty Miner; Randy & Marsha Jack & Joan Ferrante; Russ Heifner George & Linda Muller Boswell (guests)



Tom & Doris Hurban

Dennis Pacheco & Margie Ryder

Francie Hammond, Linda Mercurio, Mustafa Bulut



Sherman & Phyllis Shonk

Julie Bondarenko, George DiCostanzo, Carol Miranda

Patty & Mike DiMicele



Gene Barattini, Joe & Blanche Barresi,
Barbara Barattini



Sue Selvidio-Stanley, Ellen Roderick,
Joe Stanley

First St. Patrick's Day Celebrated

Since around the ninth or 10th century, people in Ireland have been observing the Roman Catholic feast day of St. Patrick on March 17. The first St. Patrick's Day parade took place not in Ireland but in America. Records show that a St. Patrick's Day parade was held on March 17, 1601 in a Spanish colony in what is now St. Augustine, Florida. The parade, and a St. Patrick's Day celebration a year earlier were organized by the Spanish Colony's Irish vicar Ricardo Artur.

More than a century later, homesick Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched in New York City on March 17, 1772, to honor the Irish patron saint. Enthusiasm for the St. Patrick's Day parades in New York City, Boston and other early American cities only grew from there.

Fun Facts:

The shamrock: According to legend St. Patrick used the three-leaf clover (or shamrock) to explain the Trinity.

Dyeing the river green: The practice of dyeing the river green started in Chicago in 1962, when city officials decided to dye a portion of the Chicago River green.

Corned beef and cabbage: This is an Irish American dish. Irish Americans were so poor they could not afford certain meals. On St. Patrick's Day, the best meal they could afford was beef and cabbage. It became a staple of the holiday.

CARNEVALE CELEBRATION & SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER

Article & Photos by Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary



Hosts Mike & Patty DiMichele

It was a joy to return to the home of Mike & Patty DiMichele for Carnevale (2/22/24), a bit after Shrove Tuesday, but nonetheless, an evening full of fun and festive spirit. Although 38 registered, life got in the way (as it often does) and we were 27 folks ready to party! Members were dressed in gorgeous colors – hot pinks, striking blues, and sparkling outfits (Doris, Nadine, Patty – wow, wow, wow). And then there were costumes – with Jerry & Beth from the Pirates of Penzance to Gianni & Francie from Asia and the rolling hills of Austria. New to our Carnevale was a “photo booth” where members donned special masks and had their photos taken with a unique backdrop – thanks to Patty & Maria Heifner. As the photos illustrate, there were plenty of beads, feathers, and masks. Another first was keeping the menu to heavy hors d’oeuvres and desserts. We thank the cooks and bakers, we thank Pam Arfield for food coordination, Julie and her committee that assisted, and our very gracious hosts, Patty & Mike. We raised \$1,520 for our Scholarship & Grants Program. Thank you all for your generosity.



Diane Quincy,
Nadine LaPira, &
Kurt Johnson



Jerry Hall & Beth
Rose



Francie Hammond &
Sandra Russell



Laura & Jim Heald



Ellen Roderick & Julie Bondarenko



Gianni Sessa



Julie Bondarenko & Vin DeNicolas



Tom & Doris Hurban



Carol Miranda & George DiCostanzo



Maria Heifner & Julie Bondarenko

Italian Bookshelf



Old Calabria by Norman Douglas
Cover by Edward Lear
Review by Leita Kaldi Davis

This book is a treasure. First published in 1915, the British author of travel books devoted most of his life and career to Italy, especially Calabria. This book contains a fascinating map of the route of his wanderings from Taranto to Reggio Calabria, where he treks across Apennine peaks and malarial valleys. Douglas is an erudite scholar, who frequently uses Italian, Latin and French phrases with no translation, assuming his reader does not need them. He writes about Roman/ Byzantium history and the descendants who reflect the ancient languages to this day. He devotes a whole chapter to proving that Milton plagiarized *Paradise Lost* from the Italian poet Salandra. His observations of the Calabrese as sly, aggressive, conceited "of Greek character" though sometimes noble, are hilarious. He loves the country's natural attractions. "It was exhilarating to traverse these middle heights with their aerial views over the Ionian and down olive-colored hillsides towards the wide valley of the Crati and the lofty Pollino range, now swimming in midsummer haze."

Douglas thoroughly describes the condition of *contadini* enslaved to barons in the 19th century but has little sympathy for them. "...go to Argentina and sell potatoes, or to the mines of Pennsylvania. Then return and send your sons to the University ... let them become *avvocati* who shall harass into their graves these wicked owners of the soil."

He was anti-Catholic, anti-religion in general, believing basically that "real men" did not turn the other cheek or hold to ideals of goodness and peace. He was something of *amascalzone* himself, who seduced women and describes them in lascivious detail. "Their natural charms are enhanced by elaborate and tasteful golden ornaments, and by a pretty mode of dressing the hair, two curls of which are worn hanging down before their ears with an irresistibly seductive air." He was arrested a few times for his behavior. He spent a lot of time on his beloved Capri and finally died in a Catholic hospital, much to his chagrin, in 1952, quoted as moaning "Keep the nuns away from me." Anyone who has experienced and loves southern Italy will be riveted by this book, as I still am.

LINDA MERCURIO STEPS DOWN FROM THE BOARD

Vice President Linda Mercurio has decided to step down from the Board after almost 9 years of service. She joined the Board in May 2015 as Marketing Chair. In December 2016, Linda was elected Vice President and has served in that capacity ever since. She was responsible for establishing the Monday Happy Hours as we know them today. Originally, Caroline Hall, Pat Novak and Linda were holding informal HHs. Now, HHs are an integral part of our Society. Linda served on the Scholarship Committee early on in her tenure and assisted with events through the years including the annual November Sarasota Youth Opera Performance along with dinner together. Linda reached out to friends and encouraged them to join our organization. The Board expresses thanks to Linda for her work over the past nine years. Linda and husband Michael Kean remain active members of the Society.

MEMBER TO REPLACE LINDA MERCURIO

Linda Mercurio notified the Board that she is unable to continue her Happy Hour (HH) duties. GCICS needs a 3rd volunteer for the Happy Hour Committee. Jerry Hall and Ellen Roderick remain on the committee. Ellen Roderick announces the HHs weekly. Jerry Hall takes the reservations. The 3rd committee member is responsible for (1) lining up locations (i.e., making reservations with the restaurants), (2) calling the restaurant the day of the HH to provide the final count, (3) making sure the HHs run smoothly each week, and (4) providing Ellen with a listing of HH locations, dates, and times, so Ellen can announce them each Thursday. For our HHs to continue, we need a volunteer to perform Linda's previous HH duties. Perhaps it could be a team of two that assumes this role. If you have enjoyed the HHs and are willing to serve, please contact Secretary/HH Committee Member Ellen Roderick at itrain@erols.com

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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

National Women's Hall of Fame announces 2024 Inductees.

Patricia Bath: She is known as an early pioneer of laser cataract surgery and the first Black woman physician to receive a medical patent.

Ruby Bridges: She was the first Black child to integrate the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans in 1960. She established the Ruby Bridges Foundation to promote tolerance through education.

Elouise Cobell: Known as the "Yellow Bird Woman," was an entrepreneur and banker of the Blackfeet Nation, where she began as treasurer. She then founded the Blackfeet National Bank.

Kimberlé Crenshaw: As a pioneering scholar and writer on civil rights, critical race theory, Black feminist legal theory, and racism and the law. She is best known for coining the term "intersectionality."

Peggy McIntosh: An educational innovator, race relations and feminist activist, author, and public speaker best known for her article, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack."

Judith Plaskow: A theologian, author, and activist and is cited as the first Jewish feminist theologian. She is best known for publishing *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from the Feminist Perspective*.

Loretta Ross: A Black academic, feminist, and activist for reproductive justice who is driven by her firsthand experiences. She is an activist of reproductive rights within the broader context of human rights.

Sandy Stone: She is considered a founder of the academic discipline of transgender studies.

Anna Wessels Williams: She discovered how to produce the antitoxin for diphtheria cheaply and in enormous quantities, crucial to controlling the disease.

Serena Williams: She is a highly regarded tennis champion, entrepreneur, investor, fashion designer, and executive producer. She holds the record for the longest player ranked #1 and has earned the titles of most successful woman player of the Open Era and prized WTA player of all time, winning 23 career grand slams.

