

# VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

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

November 2021

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



## President's Message:

Hello November! Thanksgiving dinner has been on my mind. Every year since moving to Florida, I have shared this dinner with friends. Our friends have become like family, and as in any family, we sometimes do not agree on everything. But no matter, we are still bound together by a keen sense of the most important things we believe in. We have committed ourselves to these ideals: sharing what is most valuable; empathy to feel another's pain or discomfort; honesty by doing the right and ethical thing; and respect for one another's opinions and flexibility to listen and grow. We come to this banquet having prepared a wonderful array of dishes with recipes handed down from mother to daughter. I have a few of those. When I sit at our Thanksgiving table, I am reminded of the most important things I value in life and how grateful I am for my friends. Indeed, I will have something grand to be thankful for.

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To my GCICS family, I hope you will feel this profound sense of thankfulness by appreciating one another especially because we share in the same beliefs of family and the friendships we value.

Our Welcome Back Luncheon was not only an opportunity to welcome members and snowbirds returning to Sarasota, but also was a celebration recognizing for the first time in eleven years an Italian American of the Year, Father Fausto Stampiglia. This energetic personality brought a blessing to our luncheon and at the same time an unexpected dose of humor needed as we were gathering for the first time in nineteen months “in person.” It was an affirmation of our faith and the belief that all things eventually will heal. We can find strength no matter what befalls us with God’s undying love for us.

It would be difficult to give a full accounting of Father’s accomplishments in this message. There is much to say about his involvement in Sarasota and Manatee Counties as he encouraged and was responsible for new schools, churches, parishes, and help centers for the sick, the incarcerated and the poor. In this newsletter, we have included the Introduction of Father Fausto as well as the Official Citation recognizing Father’s accomplishments that led to our bestowing on him the “GCICS 2021 Italian American of the Year” recognition. Father was presented with a certificate as well as a check to donate to his favorite charity.

The luncheon marked our introduction to GCICS’s “new beginnings,” for this was our first official event in person in more than 19 months. I want to thank Ellen Roderick for partnering with me in orchestrating the Welcome Back Luncheon. In closing, as I looked around the room I realized and took note of how many members attended, how many brought guests, and how many new members were present. It gave me a sense that we would once again be a strong Society, caring about one another and accomplishing our goals. I thank our Board because our success is dependent upon their work. I look forward to seeing all of you at upcoming events.

**Julie Bondarenko**  
President

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**“GCICS WELCOME BACK PICNIC”**  
**Sunday, November 7, 2021: 12:30-4:30 pm**



**Greetings All,**

**Background:** At last, this is the announcement you had been told to expect in the last two Voce issues. Traditionally, our Society holds its welcome back bocce picnic the day after the Conservation Foundation holds its Fall Festival on the grounds where we maintain the bocce court. The Foundation has cancelled its 2021 festival which was to be held on November 6. This impacts us in that we will not have access to the many chairs and tables they graciously leave for our use the following day.

**New Plan:** The Picnic Committee recommended to the Board that we change the venue for just this year to a new location at the North Jetty Park in Nokomis. We have reserved the large pavilion which has many picnic tables undercover. The beach and restrooms are close by. We will attempt to delineate a makeshift bocce court and have a corn hole game for fun. This location is easy to find. After crossing the bridge to the Nokomis beaches, turn left and travel until the homes end. You will see a large sign on the right “North Jetty Park;” turn right into the parking lot. The pavilion is now visible to your left.

**WHEN:** Sunday, November 7, 12:30-4:30 pm

**WHERE:** North Jetty Park pavilion, Nokomis. Rain or shine



**SEATING:** Multiple picnic tables. Bring your own chair if you wish something more comfortable.

**DRINKS:** Alcohol is permitted. Bring whatever your personal beverages are. One restriction of Park Commission: no glass. Handle this the best way you can.

**UTENSILS:** We provide disposable plastic silverware. You are welcome to bring metal. We also will furnish disposable paper plates, napkins, and glasses.

**FOOD:** After many years we have found this system works! Each party brings whatever main course they themselves will enjoy. Each party is also asked to bring another item to share with the group. This can be an appetizer, a salad, or a dessert.

**FEE:** Hurray! NO charge! At last, we have an opportunity to be together outdoors at the beach. PLEASE COME and bring your smile!

**RESERVATIONS:** E-mail Tom at [dorisntom@gmail.com](mailto:dorisntom@gmail.com) or call 908-507-3048 to RSVP. We would like to be prepared!



**COVID Precautions:** As we continue to live amid the COVID pandemic, your Board strives to take all reasonable preventive measures when holding in-person affairs. You are asked to attend ONLY if you have been fully vaccinated (2 shots: Moderna or Pfizer; or 1 shot: J&J) and remain symptom-free. Per CDC, “in general, fully vaccinated people do not need to wear a mask outdoors; they might choose to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised.” 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.

Thank you,  
Tom Hurban, Bocce Chair

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## ITALIAN BOOK SHELF

By Leita Davis



### **Auntie Poldi and the Sicilian Lions by Mario Giordano Translator: John Brownjohn, Thorndike Press, 2018**

“On her sixtieth birthday my Auntie Poldi moved to Sicily, intending to drink herself comfortably to death with a sea view.” So, her nephew introduces his aunt, a glamorous detective, and the widow of Peppe, a Sicilian gentleman. She wears a black wig and stylish clothes, and scandalizes her neighbors in the village of Torre Archirafi where she finds a villa that pleases her because of its sea view. She befriends young Valentino Candela, who does house repairs for her and introduces her to various characters in the area, some of whom are respectable, others not so much, men she instantly labels as mafiosi. One day she finds Valentino murdered on the beach, shot in the head with a lupara, a sawed-off shotgun popular with mafiosi. Poldi immediately assigns herself the case to find the murderer. Though she mourns her Peppe, Poldi is still one hot pomodoro and soon seduces the smoldering Police Chief Inspector Montana. She finds one lead after another, always a step ahead of Montana who does not appreciate her interference in his case, especially as she finds hidden evidence he did not detect. When he becomes cross with her, she reverts to her favorite formula: “When the chips are down, show plenty of cleavage.” Searching the area where Valentino was murdered before he was dragged to the beach, she discovers the skeleton of a young girl in a cistern. She learns from Signora Cocuzza, the local café owner, who the girl’s long-ago lover was, but I won’t tell you if he was also Valentino’s killer.

Hilarious, wild and endearingly melancholy at times, Auntie Poldie is the protagonist of a series of adventure mysteries by Mario Giordano. Auntie Poldie and the Vineyards of Etna, Auntie Poldie and the Lost Madonna, ... and the Handsome Antonio, ... and the Fruits of the Lord, etc. As I mentioned before, I don’t read mysteries, but I think I must read all the Auntie Poldi books. [Return](#)

# REVIEW OF ZOOM TRANSATLANTIC CULTURAL EVENT

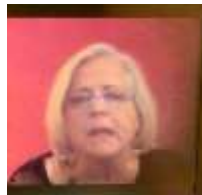
## ITALY, FLORENCE: RENAISSANCE BREEDING GROUNDS

GEORGE ARFIELD, SOCIAL & CULTURAL CHAIR



Why did Italy in general and Florence in particular provide such a key performance stage for the emergence and development of the Renaissance, the movement during the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century that saw Europe leave behind the Middle Ages?

Francie Hammond



covered much of this far-ranging topic during an international GCICS Zoom conversation session held on October 11. Francie, known to many members as she visits her Sarasota home when not at home in Aci Castello, Sicily, is particularly suited to discuss the topic, having taught in the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) at installations in Japan, Turkey, and Sicily.

The richly illustrated two-hour session included a lively Q&A period and covered topics from pictorial art to architecture, literature, and scientific advances. Francie's presentation also featured contributions from her husband, master sculptor Gianni Sessa, whom members might recall as a subject in a previously held Zoom session. We plan to hold similar sessions in the future and welcome speaker suggestions from members.

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**“Review of GCICS ITALIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE MONTH  
WELCOME BACK LUNCHEON”**

**October 23, 2021**

**Article & Photos by: Ellen Roderick**

**Life changed for GCICS on October 23, 2021. We gathered in person for our first formal event as a Society since the COVID pandemic began in March 2020. And it was well worth the wait. Julie Bondarenko, GCICS President, and yours truly, Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary, teamed up to gift you with a memorable luncheon, keynote speaker and ceremony. Permit me to share the highlights.**

**\*67 folks made reservations and 67 attended! That was amazing. We welcomed 59 members, of whom 7 were NEW members, and 8 guests.**

**\*Our 7 new members were: Tony & Edna Di Bianca, Josephine Fontana, Russ & Maria Heifner, Rose Perante, and Phyllis Shonk.**



**Josephine Fontana &  
Vince Amato**



**Russ & Maria Heifner**



**Edna & Tony DiBianca**



**Diane Quincy & new member  
Rose Perante**



**Phyllis Shonk**

**\*Our 8 guests were: Vince Amato, Judy Buffa, Eleanor Coppa, Alessandra De Stefanis, Joyce & Michael Dina, and Magdalena & Neill Dooley.**

**\*Our Honorary Member, Rev. Fausto Stampiglia, S.A.C., Pastor, St. Martha's Parish, Sarasota, was conferred the honor of being named "GCICS 2021 Italian American of the Year." He also served as our keynoter. The Citation for the honor appears below. Father spoke about her childhood, growing up in Rome, Italy, during WWII.**



**\*Mattison's 41 chef and servers did an outstanding job. We dined on appetizers, Caesar salad, penne ala Vodka, a chicken, salmon or paella entrée, mini desserts (delicious), coffee and tea.**

**\*Member feedback: loved having a luncheon rather than brunch. Honoring Father Fausto and listening to him speak about his childhood in Rome was such a special and memorable program. (Note: He received many rounds of applause!)**



**Ellen Roderick wrote and delivered the following introduction for  
REV. FAUSTO STAMPIGLIA, S.A.C.  
“GCICS 2021 ITALIAN AMERICAN OF THE YEAR”**

**\*Dateline: Rome, 1935 – a baby boy comes into the world.**

**\*Fast forward 86 years. . .**

**\*Dateline: Sarasota, 2021 – a beloved Sarasota, FL Catholic Pastor is our guest, our speaker, and our honoree this afternoon.**

**\*I am honored to introduce Rev. Father Fausto Stampiglia, Pastor of St. Martha’s Catholic Parish in downtown Sarasota.**

**\*Our President, Julie, will be reading the official citation a bit later, recognizing Father Fausto for his accomplishments that have led GCICS to declare him “GCICS 2021 Italian American of the Year.”**

**\*Thus, my introduction will not include his incredible accomplishments. Rather, I will speak about his service through the years to Catholics in the USA.**

**\*Born and raised in Rome, Father was ordained as a Pallottine priest in 1960. Just 4 years later, off he traveled to East Harlem, NY where he served for 10 years as associate and then pastor of St. Ann’s Catholic Church.**

**\*A key asset was that he was fluent in Spanish. He attended the Berlitz school to master the English language.**

**\*His next assignments were in upstate NY at St. Rita’s (an Italian parish) & Sacred Heart (a French parish). From the frigid winters of the north, Father was transferred to the Sunshine state; he found himself as Pastor of St. Joseph’s Church in Port St. Joe in the FL Panhandle.**

**\*But not for long, because, in 1975, a new diocese was forming: the Catholic Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee.**

**\*Soon thereafter, he found himself as Director of Permanent Diaconate/Pastoral Institute and Episcopal Vicar for rural ministry. During that time, he founded four parishes in the FL Panhandle.**

**\*In the early 80’s, Father joined the St. Petersburg Diocese, followed by a brief stay in Texas.**

**\*With the founding of the Diocese of Venice in 1984 (of which Sarasota is a part), Father came to our Gulf Coast and has remained ever since.**

**\*He holds the distinction of being the only priest in the USA to have established the Permanent Diaconate Program in three dioceses: Pensacola, St. Petersburg, and Venice.**

**\*30 years ago, Father was installed as St. Martha's Pastor where he remains to this day and is beloved by the members of his parish. You will learn about his accomplishments at St. Martha's when Julie presents the award.**

**\*I must share with you his educational credentials:**

**\*Bachelor's Degree – Philosophy & Theology, Gregorian University, Rome \*M.S. – Psychology, Fordham University, NYC \*Doctorate – Theology, St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome**

**\*Without further ado, ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming the Rev. Father Fausto Stampiglia, who will share remarks about his Italian heritage. Father. . .**

**THE FOLLOWING CITATION FOR REV. FAUSTO STAMPIGLIA, S.A.C. "GCICS 2021 ITALIAN AMERICAN OF THE YEAR", was written by Ellen Roderick & delivered by Julie Bondarenko**

**\*It has been 11 years since GCICS last recognized an "Italian American of the Year." This is an important event for our Society, and the Board is pleased that so many of you have joined in this celebration to honor Father Fausto.**

**\*Soon after its founding, GCICS established the "GCICS Italian American of the Year Recognition." The Society was eager to honor a Gulf Coast resident who has made major contributions to the welfare of the men, women, and children of Manatee or Sarasota County, or both. That person must be of Italian American ancestry.**

**\*I am pleased to report that the Board of Directors was unanimous in its selection of Father Fausto as our 2021 recipient.**

**\*It is an honor to share Father's major contributions to our Gulf Coast citizens. As the 30-year Pastor of St. Martha's Catholic Parish in downtown Sarasota, and as a leader in the faith community of Manatee/Sarasota, Father has founded important institutions and has been a leader in his assistance to the poor of our area.**

**\*Under Father's leadership, two new schools were built for the children of Sarasota and Manatee: St. Martha Catholic School & St. Mary Academy – located at Fruitville & McIntosh. St. Martha's is a Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade school while St. Mary's is a school for special-needs children, ages 5 to 15.**

**\*Under Father's leadership, diverse communities have "found a home" at St. Martha's for years. . . three examples are Latinos, Vietnamese, and those who have been followers of the Latin Rite in the Catholic Church.**

**\*Under Father's leadership, two parishes were spun off from St. Martha's. . .Father played a key role in the founding of St. Jude's Parish on 17<sup>th</sup> St. and Christ the King Parish just north of the Gulf Gate area. St. Jude's welcomes all but has a particular focus on the Latino community. Christ the King is for those who wish to worship in the Latin Rite.**

**\*Under Father's leadership, the parish has worked closely with other Sarasota churches and with the Diocese of Venice on local outreach. Three examples are:**

- 1. Bethesda House: a drop-in community center that provides services to persons with HIV/AIDS.**
- 2. Jail Ministry: serving those in the Sarasota County Jail; both priests and lay ministers support the spiritual needs of those incarcerated.**
- 3. Caritas: a community outreach effort of five downtown churches to provide support to Sarasota residents in acute financial need.**

**\*And finally, under Father's leadership, he has brought together numerous faith communities to recognize and celebrate UNITY and INCLUSION. . .**

- 1. Each January, Christian Unity is celebrated with a black church in greater Sarasota, inviting their choir to perform and holding a Southern barbecue dinner catered by a company in Newtown.**
- 2. Each March, the Feast of Abraham is celebrated in which members of the Islamic Community, the Jewish Community, and St. Martha's parishioners break bread together in a show of unity, mutual respect, and understanding.**

**\*These are key highlights of Father Fausto's extensive contributions to the Sarasota and Manatee faith communities. I know you will join me in a round of applause as we thank Father for being such an inspirational leader in our world today.**



**Dr. Ellen Roderick, Rev.Fausto Stampiglia S.A.C.,  
President Julie Bondarenko**

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## HOLIDAY PARTY

### GCICS Holiday Party & Scholarship Fundraiser

This year our GCICS Holiday Dinner Party will be at the home of Mike & Patty DiMicele. It will be a "Bring a Dish" and "Scholarship Fundraiser." We do hope that you will join us in welcoming in the season. Patty & Mike have planned a delightful get-together. The food categories are appetizers, salads, vegetables, entrees, and desserts. Instructions for the food selection process appear in the cover email.

**Date/Time:** Sunday, Dec 12, 5:30 - 9:00 pm

**Place:** DiMicele Residence, 8425 Turnberry Circle, Sarasota, FL 34241 (941-923-4584) (Misty Creek Community off Lorraine Rd, south of Bee Ridge Rd.)

**Donation:** \$35 per person; check payable to GCICS Scholarship Fund; deadline-12/1; mail: Ellen Roderick, 770 So. Palm Ave, #1003, Sarasota, FL 34236

**Bring:** Your dish, wine to share, your badge and your grand holiday spirit.

**Questions:** Call Ellen Roderick (301-775-1344)



## HOLIDAY PARTY



Dear GCICS Members,

Attached is your invitation to our traditional GCICS Holiday/Christmas Dinner Party & Scholarship Fundraiser (12/12/21). The details are below and in the attachment. We are handling the “bring a dish” system differently this year. Here is the process:

Once you have decided to attend, please take 2 steps:

1. Send a check (\$35 donation for each person, whether a member or guest) payable to GCICS Scholarship Fund, to Dr. Ellen Roderick, 770 So. Palm Ave, #1003, Sarasota, FL 34236, providing name(s).
2. E-mail Pam Arfield ([pamarfield3@gmail.com](mailto:pamarfield3@gmail.com)) with your 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> choice of what you would like to bring; please be very detailed on what these choices are; and include your phone number in the email. Pam will contact you to discuss and confirm.

We are trying this new sign-up system rather than assigning food categories via the alphabet so that we may have a greater variety of dishes. I hope you understand. The categories are as follows:

1. Appetizers
2. Dinner Starter Salads (non-pasta)
3. Dinner Pasta Salads

**4. Dinner Veggies**

**5. Dinner Entrees: meat, fish, pastas**

**6. Desserts**

**Date/Time: Sunday, Dec 12, 2021, 5:30 - 9:00 pm**

**Location: Mike and Patty DiMichele's home, 8425 Turnberry Circle, Sarasota, FL 34241**

**No. of Attendees: 50-55**

**Donation: \$35 from each member and guest.**

**Bring: Your dish, wine to share, badge, and holiday spirit.**

**Deadline for Checks: In my mailbox by 12/1/21 please.**

**Deadline for Signing up for a Dish: e-mail Pam ASAP after deciding you will attend.**

**COVID Precaution: As we continue to live with the COVID pandemic, your Board strives to take all reasonable preventive measures when holding in-person affairs. You are asked to attend ONLY if you have been fully vaccinated (2 shots: Moderna or Pfizer; or 1 shot: J&J) and remain symptom-free. We want everyone to remain healthy. Understand that neither GCICS nor its directors are liable for health-related events at GCICS events or functions.**

**We look forward to welcoming you.**

**Ellen Roderick**

**GCICS Secretary**

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## **GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.**

### **SAVE THE DATES**

**10/24/21**



**\*11/7/21 (Sun) "GCICS Welcome Back Picnic" @ North Jetty Park, Nokomis, 12:30-4:30 pm; bring your own main course & a side dish to share.**

**\*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 that goes directly into Scholarship Fund).**

**\*1/14/22 (Fri) "GCICS Annual Meeting/Luncheon/Town Hall/Cultural Lecture" @ Del Webb Community Facility, Lakewood Ranch; 11:30-2:00 pm; no cost to members; lecture by member Gordon Bloom on Italian American Enrico Fermi (1901-1954).**

**\*2/19/22 (Sat) "GCICS Bocce Invitational VI" @ The Cascades, Sarasota; practice time: 12-12:45 pm; tournament: 1:00-4:00 pm; party: 4:30-8:30 pm.**

**\*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.**

**\*3/20/22 (Sun) "St. Joseph's Feast Day Celebration Luncheon" @ Café Baci; details later.**

**\*4/9/22 (Sat) "Scholarship Festa Luncheon"; time & location to be announced.**

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## **Dues Renewal**

**Dear GCICS Members,**

**It is time to renew your GCICS membership. Because our Fiscal Year begins on Oct 1, 2021, we are collecting dues commencing today, Aug 15<sup>th</sup>. Individual membership is \$35 and family membership is \$60. The GCICS Membership Renewal Form is attached for sending dues and perhaps a scholarship donation. Please print the form and send it with your check to the address shown on the form. We do welcome scholarship donations. If you are unable to print the form, simply put the information on a piece of paper. The deadline is Nov 30, 2021.**

**Do's & Don'ts – PLEASE. . .**

- 1. Mail your dues/scholarship donation to: GCICS, P.O. Box 2591, Sarasota, FL 34230.**
- 2. Do not give your dues/scholarship donation to another member and ask him/her to include it in his/her check. This has created problems in the past.**
- 3. Honor the deadline date of Nov 30, 2021.**
- 4. Do not include your dues/scholarship donation in a check that includes payment for an event. This has created problems in the past.**
- 5. Let me know if you decide NOT to renew so that I will no longer send reminders to you.**

# GCICS RENEWAL FORM

10/1/2021 - 9/30/2022

DEAR MEMBERS,

Membership covers the fiscal year that begins on October 1 of one year and ends on September 30 of the next year. If you initially joined GCICS on or after March 1, 2021, your membership is automatically extended through September 30, 2022. Dues must be received no later than November 30, 2021.

Individual Membership (\$35)  Family Membership (\$60)

Donation to Scholarship Fund

Select One: BOOSTER  \$20-\$49 DONOR  \$50-\$99

PATRON  \$100-\$249 SPONSOR  \$250-\$499 ANGEL  \$500-\$999

BENEFACTOR  \$1000+

Membership Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Scholarship Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone E-Mail Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Areas of special interest & personal talents you would like to share with the group

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please write "Membership" in lower left corner of your envelope & mail completed form and check to GCICS, PO Box 2591, Sarasota, FL 34230**

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## OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

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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

## Special Thanks



I want to conclude this issue by expressing appreciation and gratitude to all the membership who remain steadfast in their renewed support and belief in the vitality of this organization despite the trials and tribulations of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The loyalty of the membership helped to keep GCICS thriving and flourishing when many other organizations failed and ceased to function.

Through Zoom and on line sharing of activities we were able to remain connected and strong. Now, as we enter a new year of activity and celebration, we hope to be able to share fun and fellowship with as many participants as possible. We look forward to moving from digital connection to the pleasure of in person gatherings. We hope to see you all enjoying and taking part in this wonderful and vibrant organization.

Mary Rinaldi

Newsletter Editor

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