

# *VOCE DI GCICS*

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

1811 Englewood Rd., #317, Englewood, FL 34223 [WWW.GCICS.ORG](http://WWW.GCICS.ORG) Nov 2025

Mary Rinaldi, Newsletter Editor



Dear Members,

This current issue of Voce Di GCICS is very special in that it marks a new beginning. After five years of capable and dedicated leadership, Julie Bondarenko is stepping down as president and will be assuming an alternative role as Membership Chair. With her departure, we now welcome Phil Miner as our new president. Customarily, we begin our issue with the President's Message. But for this special edition we will commence with a brief biographical sketch of our new President and, subsequently, present his first Message as GCICS President.

Mary Rinaldi, Newsletter Editor



## MEET OUR NEW GCICS PRESIDENT PHIL MINER AND WIFE PATTY MINER



Patty and Phil Miner

Interviewed by: Ellen Roderick, Sept 9, 2025

Photo by: Ellen Roderick, Sept 9, 2024, at Salute

Phil Miner moved 5 times from birth through high school graduation related to his father's occupation. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a BS in mathematics and from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia.

Phil completed a pediatric residency training program and then served seven years in the US Army Medical Corps. By the time he exited the Army, he decided that he wanted to specialize in Pediatric Neurology. He began a second residency at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. As luck would have it, he met the love of his life there – Patty Johnson, a pediatric nurse practitioner completing a fellowship in Adolescent Healthcare/Neurology. In 1982 they married and raised a family: identical twin boys, Aaron & Benjamin, and a daughter Gloria.

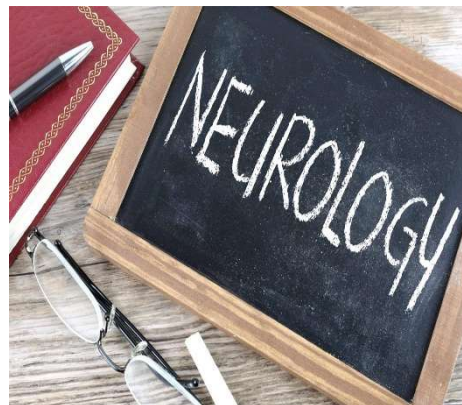
After living and working in several cities, the Miner family settled in Rockford, IL where Phil and Patty worked together in pediatric neurology. When their daughter moved to Sarasota to attend the LECOM School of Pharmacy in Lakewood Ranch, they decided to follow her in 2014. Phil worked intermittently at the Arnold Palmer Children's Hospital in Orlando and finally retired in 2019.

Phil & Patty's family has grown with the addition of Benjamin's wife Jill, their two children ages 2 & 4 years with another baby on the way; and Gloria's husband Aaron. All three children are in the medical profession. Benjamin is an Emergency Medicine physician in the Clearwater area, Aaron is completing his EM residency in Ft. Lauderdale, and Gloria is

an intensive care pharmacist at Manatee Memorial Hospital, Bradenton. She and her husband, Aaron, live in St. Pete. Moving to Florida was a wise decision considering their entire family resides in the Sunshine State. How lucky can you be!!

Hobbies include hiking, boating, Scottish Country dancing, and playing in a bell choir. Patty volunteers at the Mote SEA aquarium. They have a corgi/beagle and an aquarium.

Anything else you wish to know about Patty and Phil you will need to discover on your own. I will share that they have been extremely active members of GCICS, having joined on 11/15/2021. Phil was elected to the Board on 5/14/24 with his first role being that of Happy Hour Chair. It later expanded to include La Cena. In December 2024 he became Membership Chair. We formalized his title as Membership & Social Chair. On 10/25/25 the gavel was passed from Julie Bondarenko, 2020-2025 President to Phil Miner, our new GCICS President.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am truly honored to be elected by the Board as the eleventh president of GCICS. I will continue to schedule the Happy Hours and La Cena dinners in addition to my presidential responsibilities.

In addition to membership recruitment, membership retention is key to maintaining a functioning organization. I will maintain an open-door policy. You may communicate with me either by email, text, or phone.

I welcome all suggestions regarding future ideas and activities. While Happy Hours and La Cena dinners might be enjoyable as culinary delights, some members might appreciate getting to know others better by participating in smaller group activities. Suggestions include coffee klatches, Italian cooking demonstrations, Italian authors' book club, Italian ancestry, Italian card games, and Italian dancing.

"Culture" is a word in the title of our organization. Does anyone have any suggestions regarding cultural events? I am sure that Camille Kramer, our Program Chair, would be interested. I cannot emphasize that GCICS is your organization. Our members are at the heart of everything we do.

As stated in our Bylaws, GCICS is an apolitical organization. To keep things

welcoming, we ask that everyone avoid political discussions during our activities. This includes political slogans or items that express political messages. This helps ensure all members feel comfortable and respected, no matter what their views. Thanks for helping us keep the vibe positive and inclusive.

I want to thank one individual whom I never met. He died three years prior to my birth. I am referring to mio nonno paterno, Phillip John Miner, his Americanized name. His birth name was Rocco Fedele Mainiero. I am his namesake. I am told that he was a kind and empathetic man. He was a brewmaster for Pabst Blue Ribbon. During the Great Depression, he made sure that no employees lost their jobs. Maybe he passed his good "genes" on to me.

In closing, it is my pleasure to announce that the Board has elected two new members. Jolene Ruffo will serve as our Courtesy Chair. Phillip Gordon, a Program Committee member, will serve as a Director-at-Large. Jolene and Phillip will serve 3-year terms commencing November 1, 2025. Welcome aboard!

Phil Miner  
GCICS President

# HOLIDAY PARTY

12/14/2025



You are invited to our GCICS Holiday/Christmas Party & Scholarship Fundraiser (12/14/25). Space is limited so do not delay signing up. And paying on-line is the quickest way to secure a space. **We are implementing the “bring a dish” system as we have done in the past.**

The dishes will be “heavy” appetizers (hors d’oeuvres) and desserts.

**Event: GCICS Holiday/Christmas Party & Fundraiser**

**Date/Time:** Sunday, **Dec 14, 2025**, 5:30-9:00 pm

**Location:** Mike and Patty DiMicele’s home, 8425 Turnberry Circle, Sarasota, FL 34241

**Attendees:** Open to all who have renewed their membership (i.e., dues are current for **2025-2026**). Guests are welcome.

**Donation:** \$40 per member & \$40 per guest (both are non-refundable).

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

**Registration:** Please use GCICS website to register/pay (steps appear at end of email)

**If Unable to Register Online:** Mail check to Josephine Fontana, 8347 Canary Palm Ct., Sarasota, FL 34238; payable to GCICS; include each person’s name.

**Deadline for Registering & Paying:** Online by **Dec 4**; or in Josephine’s mailbox by **Dec 4**.

**Deadline for Signing Up for a Dish:** E-mail Pam Arfield ASAP after deciding you will attend. (See below.)

**Point of Contact:** Ellen Roderick, 301-775-1344 ([itrain@erols.com](mailto:itrain@erols.com))

**VERY IMPORTANT:**

**If you decide to attend, take 2 steps:**

**STEP#1:** Register/pay for this event on GCICS website or send check to Josephine Fontana (see above).

**STEP#2: ONLY AFTER you have paid on the website or put your check in the mail, e-mail Pam Arfield ([pamarfield3@gmail.com](mailto:pamarfield3@gmail.com)) with your 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> choice of the specific dish you wish to bring; please be very detailed on what your choices are; and include your phone number in the email. **Pam will contact you to discuss and confirm.****

**STEPS FOR PAYING ONLINE**

\*Go to this GCICS web address: [www.gcics.org/payment](http://www.gcics.org/payment)

\*On 1<sup>st</sup> page, check “Member”, enter first & last name, email address, phone #, and click on the blue block.

\*On 2<sup>nd</sup> page, enter the total amount of your payment, **then enter in the block directly below “12/14/25” and list the name(s) of the person(s) for whom you are paying. 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 once you have completed the transaction.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary



## IN MEMORIUM



JERRY L. HALL  
(July 18, 1947 – August 24, 2025)



Jerry Hall and Beth Rose

GCICS Member, 2015-2025  
GCICS Board Member, 2020-2025  
GCICS Website Coordinator, 2020-2021  
GCICS Happy Hour Co-Chair & Zoom Coordinator, 2022-2023  
GCICS Language Instruction Chair, 2023-2025

### **Obituary: Written by Jerry's sister, Sandra Hall-Brown**

It is with a heavy heart that I report the passing of my brother, Jerry L. Hall, age 78, of Sarasota, Florida, on August 24, 2025, following a medical emergency. Born in Montpelier, VT, Jerry was the son of Guy U. Hall and Ruth E. Olsen Hall. Jerry was a Balboa High School (Canal Zone, Panama) Class of '65 graduate. He went to Canal Zone College and pursued employment with the Panama Canal Commission as an Electrician Apprentice. Jerry was then called to serve his country

and completed 1 ½ tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot.

Following service, Jerry returned to Panama where he met his wife, Caroline, in 1970. They briefly moved to FL but quickly returned home to the Canal Zone. Jerry went on to enjoy his career as a Marine Controller for the Panama Canal Commission until 1999 when his family relocated to Sarasota. In the Canal Zone, both Jerry and Caroline were known for their active involvement in productions for

the Ancon Theatre Guild, United Way, and Surfside Theatre. Jerry was very proud of his hand-built boat, "Little Chap." He loved photography, traveling to Italy, return trips to Panama, and being a supportive member of the Gulf Coast Italian Culture Society (GCICS).

Jerry was predeceased by his wife, Caroline Lambert Statler Hall (2019), and son, Garrett O. Hall (2005). He is survived by his sister, Sandra Hall-Brown (Sandy-BHS Class of '71) of Bethlehem, PA; nephew, Justin A. Brown and family of Palmerton, PA; his partner of 5 years, Elizabeth (Beth) Rose of Sarasota; and his loving dog, Nove. Nove now resides with Beth.

Jerry and Beth described their relationship as their "Chapter 2". Beth expresses that "Jerry is her kind, gentle, non-judgmental man" (and I, as his sister, concur). For me, Jerry is the best brother one could have. He is, and always will be, my "Rock."

Jerry and Caroline were interred at Sarasota National Cemetery on October 21, 2025.

*"Spread your wings and fly in the heavens, Jerry. You will always be with us. The world was a better place with you in it!"*

**NOTE:** Donations may be made in memory of Jerry Hall to the GCICS Scholarship Fund: Address: GCICS, 1811 Englewood Road #317, Englewood, FL 34223





## *A Tribute: Jerry Hall*

Written by: Julie Bondarenko, Past President, and current Membership Chair

It is with deep sadness that I inform you of Jerry Hall's sudden passing on Sunday, August 24<sup>th</sup>. Beth Rose, Jerry's partner of many years, along with his sister, Sandy Hall Brown, were at his SMH bedside when he passed. Jerry was a beloved and highly valued member of the GCICS Board of Directors. He was often seen on Sundays preparing the bocce court where members and guests come together for afternoon play. Jerry and Beth attended almost all Happy Hours and GCICS events together over the years. He was a close friend to many GCICS members and Board members. It goes without saying that he will be greatly missed. In the hours before his death, Beth secured permission from the hospital for Jerry's beloved dog Nove to visit him. Although Jerry was in a coma and seemingly unresponsive, he appeared to be aware of his poodle's presence.

For all of us fortunate enough to know and work with Jerry during his time on the Board of Directors, and who shared many social occasions together, it is a time to remember and honor Jerry's memory with a celebration of a well-lived life. Our hearts go out to Beth, and I know we all wish to comfort and support her and Jerry's family during this time. Please feel free to send cards and acknowledgements to Beth Rose and Sandy Hall Brown (addresses below).

With deep appreciation for a cherished memory, I will always hold and for everything he did, both personally and in his dedication to the organization, and with sincere sympathy,

Addresses:

Ms. Beth Rose, 4724 Meadowview Blvd.,  
Sarasota, FL 34233

Ms. Sandy Hall Brown, 1559 Graham St.,  
Bethlehem, PA 18015

## BOCCE NEWS

NEW MEMBERS PLEASE READ! Our GCICS maintains an older bocce court at the Big Waters Land Trust Property, formerly known as Gulf Coast Conservation Foundation. It is a public property, but the court is reserved for us from 2-4 on Sunday afternoons because we do the court maintenance. We typically have had 8-12 members enjoy the informal games, but because of health issues our numbers are less. We are a friendly group and would like to invite you to join us. Bocce is an easy game to learn and NO EXPERIENCE is needed! The property is near the beautiful water so we usually enjoy a nice breeze and delightful shading palm trees above us. The address is 400 Palmetto Ave, Osprey, sort of behind the Osprey Library on Highway 41 and adjoining Spanish Point.

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

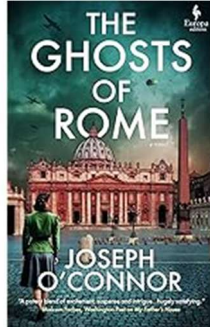


The following restaurants have recently donated gift certificates. Thank you, Phil Miner, for all your hard work in obtaining all these gift cards. Remember, the monies obtained by raffling off these gift cards at our events help to fund our scholarships.

Aji Ceviche  
Amore Restaurant  
Bella Vita  
Brio Italian Grill  
Café Venice Restaurant and Bar  
Drift Kitchen & Bar at Lido Beach Resort (dinner for 4)  
Evie's on the Bay (The Point Restaurant)  
Fin & Tonic  
Flavio's Ristorante  
Maestrale Restaurant and Pizzeria  
Marcel DW Restaurant  
Post Kitchen and Bar  
Roessler's Restaurant  
Sharkey's on the Pier  
Valentino Restaurant  
Vino Vino Restaurant

## Italian Bookshelf

Review By: Leita Davis



*The Ghosts of Rome* (The Rome Escape Line Trilogy - 2)  
Joseph O'Connor  
Europa Edition, 2025

In 1943, a Resistance group known as The Choir hides refugees and helps Allied soldiers escape from Nazi-occupied Rome via a secret route known as the Escape Line. Their headquarters are in the Vatican where an American airman falls wounded from his plane and finds The Choir, only to plunge it into deeper danger...

The Escape Line's collapse would leave thousands stranded. Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty, its architect and the acknowledged leader of The Choir, broods inside the Vatican, daunted by the perils of keeping his Roman underground railroad functioning. Meanwhile, SS Commander Paul Hauptmann has been tasked with

destroying the entire operation, and the price of failure is high—his wife and children are under Gestapo lock-and-key in Berlin. Into this thrilling melee steps Contessa Giovanna Landini, a reckless, audacious member of the Italian Resistance who has the nerve to challenge Hauptmann's authority.

Beautifully written and expertly crafted, *The Ghosts of Rome* is a historical suspense novel bursting with action, atmosphere, and unforgettable characters by one of contemporary fiction's most acclaimed writers. It is part two of a trilogy in which the first volume is *My Father's Home* and a third to follow.

## 10/8/25: WINE TASTING AT TOTAL WINE

Article by: Camille Kramer

Photos by: Phil Miner

On October 8, 2025, in an inviting classroom setting surrounded by wines and maps of wine-making countries and regions, John Jester of Total Wine led nineteen members and guests of GCICS on an imaginary tour of the famous vineyards of Italy.

The event, spear-headed by Phillip Gordon of the program committee, included a charcuterie board featuring cured meats, a variety of cheeses, grapes, crackers and olives. Two members of the program committee provided the sweets.

John explained the color, textures, and aromas of the wines as well as vineyard climates as we sipped eight different Italian wines, two white and six reds. We learned what temperatures the wines are best served at and the strict certification process Italy imposes on the wine makers. His explanation of the difference between light, medium-bodied, and full-bodied wines made it all crystal clear. “Think of milk,” he said, “light would be skim milk,

medium would be 2%, and full would be whole milk!”

The line-up included Tesoro della Regina Prosecco from Veneto; Armani Pinot Grigio Colle Ara 2023 from Valdadige; Terre Darrigo Etna Rosso DOC 2023 from Etna, Sicily; Barba Montepulciano d’Abruzzo Yang 2022 from Abruzzo; Tenuta di Renieri Chianti Cls Rsva 2021 from Tuscany; Tesoro della Regina Amarone from Veneto; Casalino Brunello di Montalcino 2019 from Brunello di Montalcino; and La Sacrestia Barolo 2019 from Piedmont.

Each table had its own bucket where we could pour wine we didn’t want to finish. So no one needed to drink more than they wanted to drink!

Along with the tasting and the learning, we had a fun and social evening as we got breaks between tastings to get more food and to chat with each other



# GCICS ITALIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE MONTH WELCOME BACK LUNCHEON

October 25, 2025

Article: Camille Kramer

Photos: Gordon Bloom

Continuing the annual GCICS tradition, the Welcome Back Luncheon held on October 25, 2025 at Stoneybrook Country Club celebrated not only Italian Cultural Heritage Month but the launching of a new program year. While enjoying an excellent buffet and reconnecting with old and new friends, a special lecture on Italian immigration in Florida was presented by Professor Emeritus Dr. Gary R. Mormino of the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg. In President Julie Bondarenko's absence, Program Chair Camille Kramer presided. At the end of the luncheon, Phil Miner, GCICS's incoming President was introduced, addressed the group, and closed the event.



Dr. Gary R. Mormino

Here are the highlights:

- 59 attendees (57 members and 2 guests).
- Josephine Fontana, GCICS Treasurer, welcomed attendees, while Phil Miner, GCICS incoming President, sold raffle tickets.
- Gordon Bloom, GCICS Technology Chair, handled the technology and took photos as well as introducing Camille Kramer as MC.
- The GCICS Board stood and introduced themselves including the newest Board members, Jolene Ruffo, Courtesy Chair, and Phillip Gordon, Director at Large.
- Two new GCICS members stood and introduced themselves, Diana Barrese and Dennis Cimmino.
- Tom Hurban, GCICS Bocce Chair, gave the blessing and led a moment of reflection in memory of GCICS Board member Jerry Hall, and members Bart Snider and Ted Wilson who passed in recent weeks.



- Camille Kramer, GCICS Program Chair, introduced the speaker, Dr. Gary Mormino.
- Dr. Mormino, who among his numerous awards was also inducted into the Florida Humanities Hall of Fame, gave a fascinating and informative talk on Italian immigration in Florida, primarily in Ybor City, Tampa. Camille Kramer presented him with a gift of two Italian wines as a thank you.
- Camille Kramer called up George Arfield, GCICS former Board member, to honor him for his seven and a half years of service and gave him a lovely orchid as a token of appreciation.
- Thanks go out to attendees for supporting the raffle for restaurant gift certificates. \$456 was raised for our Scholarship and Grants Program. The speaker and his wife were happy winners of a gift card!

Although Julie Bondarenko, outgoing GCICS President and Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary, were not present, they planned, organized, and orchestrated the entire event!



Jack Norman, Mary Rinaldi,  
Jolene & Joe Ruffo



Joe & Linda Tomaselli, Elaine &  
Phil Quirin, Carolann Garafola



Rose Amato, Mike & Patty DiMicele,  
Phyllis Shonk



Gary holding his bag of wine with  
Camille Kramer



George Arfield with his orchid with  
Camille Kramer



Patty and Phil Miner



## **OFFICERS/DIRECTORS**

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### **Secretary**

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### **Treasurer**

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### **Bocce Chair**

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### **Scholarship Chair**

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### **Membership Chair**

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### **Program Chair**

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### **Courtesy Chair**

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[ruffojd@yahoo.com](mailto:ruffojd@yahoo.com)

### **Director-at-Large**

Phillip Gordon  
[pgordon7474@gmail.com](mailto:pgordon7474@gmail.com)

## **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
Julie Bondarenko	2020-2025

## *Trivia Italiana: Did you know?*

by Camille A. Kramer



- 1. Italy is home to the most UNESCO World Heritage Sites.**
- 2. Mount Etna is Europe's most active volcano.**
- 3. Italy produces the most wine in the world.**
- 4. Italy is home to the oldest operational university - University of Bologna founded in 1088.**
- 5. You can visit two sovereign states within Italy - Vatican City and San Marino.**

### **Source:**

<https://www.insightvacations.com/blog/fun-facts-about-italy/>

