



"WE ARE HERE"

Siamo Qui

ISSUE 563

DECEMBER 2020 - JANUARY 2021

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Merry
Christmas

Christmas
Tree
Lighting

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6
5:00 PM

Buon
Natale

2021

HAPPY NEW YEAR

THE I.A.C.C.
WISHES YOU ALL

A

*Merry
Christmas*

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR 2021



NEWS & EVENTS

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SOCIAL CALENDAR

DECEMBER & JANUARY

DECEMBER

- 12/2/20 ~ Member Exclusive: Weekly Co-Ed Poker Game - Noon*
- 12/2/20 ~ Member Exclusive: Weekly Men's Poker Game - 5:00 pm*
- 12/6/20 ~ Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony - 5:00 pm
- 12/09/20 ~ I.A.C.C. Women's League Meeting - Special Time - 6:00 pm
- 12/16/20 ~ IACC Board Meeting 6:30 pm
- 12/25/20 ~ Merry Christmas - I.A.C.C. Membership Office Closed

JANUARY

- 01/6/21 ~ Member Exclusive: Weekly Co-Ed Poker Game - Noon*
- 01/6/21 ~ Member Exclusive: Weekly Men's Poker Game - 5:00 pm*
- 01/13/21 ~ I.A.C.C. Women's League Meeting - Winter Break
- 01/21/21 ~ IACC Board Meeting 6:30 pm

*Co-Ed and Men's Poker are held every Wednesday.



Upcoming Events*

- Feb. 7 ~ SUPER BOWL 55 PARTY 4:00 PM- 10:00 PM
- Mar. 14 ~ SAINT PATRICK'S/SAINT JOSEPH'S MASS/BRUNCH- 11 AM
- Mar. 27 ~ ARTHUR AVENUE BUS TRIP-THE REAL LITTLE ITALY-8 AM

*All these events are being planned and scheduled provided COVID 19 restrictions are lifted.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



There are many old adages that we are all familiar with but one comes to mind that best sums up 2020, "Things happen by change not by chance!" What a year it has been. One could easily say it is most likely the worst year of our lives in terms of COVID 19 and the negative impacts and disruptions it has had on our lives, including this organization. It is certainly a tough observation to argue a counter point of view, but I shall.

In many instances by staying home and slowing down, we spent more time with our loved ones. Many of us renovated parts of our living spaces and, amidst this often chaotic world, we saw many people reaching out to feed, cloth and shelter the less fortunate among us. Here at the club, we welcomed our new tenants, 2Shea Catering, to our family. They hit the ground running by marvelously transforming the most dated and tired space in our complex, the old dining room area. They took this area that would turn potential wedding/event customers off and made it an enticing area where you would want to host your wedding or event. Their commitment to fulfill a promise to renovate this area, exclusively with their own funds and with no source of income from banquets or events, will not soon be forgotten. Once restrictions were eased, we immediately reopened for our Monday Night Grand Italian Buffet, with never before offered outdoor dining in our Roman Garden, and Sunday Brunch with safety procedures in place that far surpassed the minimums set by state or federal mandates. We asked the Shea's to bring back Take Out Thursday's so that our members who were not quite ready to dine in could experience the fabulous food that they prepare. Our members who have had the food prepared by 2Shea Catering absolutely love it, as they should. The Shea family probably could not have chosen a worse time to enter into a new venture in the restaurant/banquet business but I am constantly buoyed by their unbridled enthusiasm for their chosen business and the future they envision for our facility. This will be a great relationship with mutual benefits for many years to come.

From the club activities standpoint, once allowed, we were able to open the swimming pool, Friday Nights at the Pavilion and hold our annual Ferragosto celebration. Through expert planning and the cooperative efforts of dedicated members, staff, and patrons, all of these activities went off without any issues whatsoever concerning people's health and safety. We were able to allow members to use the Caruso room and pavilion for small gatherings of up to 40-50 people. This as well went off without incident because people adhered to basic safety rules.

I will not sugar coat our finances. We have been surviving primarily from our dues money and savings with little money coming in from elsewhere due to current restrictions on the hospitality industry. With infections rising, If the government steps in and shuts the restaurant again, we will be relying solely on dues monies to pay the bills. With our savings at a critically low level, your continued loyalty and support has never been more needed than at the start of 2021. This is why we are offering a loyalty incentive (dues frozen at 2020 level) to all members in good standing if they pay their dues before February 28th.

My tenure as your President once again has come to an end. To say these last two years have been challenging would be the mildest of understatement but I am happy to once again have offered my time, knowledge and service to this great organization. I want to thank all our employees, volunteers, members, patrons, and Board of Directors for all that you do every year.

In closing, I want to wish you all a joyous and safe holiday season and cheers to a great 2021! Do not ever forget, together we continue to make the impossible, possible!

JIM SANO
ITALIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER - PRESIDENT



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VICE PRESIDENT ~ SHARON PATREI

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TREASURER ~ CAIN SCALZO

312-2784

SECRETARY ~ DONNA ZUMBO

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FINANCE~ CAIN SCALZO

MEMBERSHIP~ SHARON PATREI

BY-LAWS/POLICIES & PROCEDURE ~ JIM SANO

HOUSE~ DAVID QUADRINI

GRIEVANCE ~ JEANNE SACCA

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WOMEN'S LEAGUE~ GRETCHEN VANVALKENBURG

COLUMBUS DAY GALA~ FRANK ZEOLI,

SIAMO QUI

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ADVERTISING ~ MARIA MARCHIO

IACC OFFICE

HOURS: M-F 9:30AM TO 2:30PM

THERESA LAJOY- OFFICE MANAGER

PHONE # (518) 456-4222

EMAIL: IACCOFFICE@ITALIANAMERICAN.COM

DINNERS TO GO

Date: Every Thursday

Time: 4:00PM TO 6:00PM

Place: Italian American Community
Center

SAUSAGE & PEPPERS

Fresh Italian Sausage Mixed With Sautéed Peppers & Onions Over Penne Pasta

HADDOCK ALLA REGINA

Baked Haddock Over Rice Topped With Chunky Tomatoes, Black Olives, Sweet Onion, Mushrooms & Oregano
Accompanied by Seasonal Vegetable Medley & Rice Pilaf

CHICKEN PARMESAN

Lightly Breaded Chicken Sautéed Golden Brown and Finished With Homemade Sauce and Melted Mozzarella
Accompanied by Penne Pasta Marinara

EGGPLANT PARMESAN

Lightly Breaded Eggplant Pan-Fried, Layered With Mozzarella Cheese & Tomato Sauce Baked to Perfection
Accompanied by Penne Pasta Marinara

All Dinners Feed Up to 4 & Include
Garlic Bread & Caesar Salad
\$40 per Order + 8% Sales Tax

RESERVATIONS

Reservations Are Required by Wednesday
Please Call (518) 456 - 4222 Ext. 1 or
Email Julia@2sheacatering.com

DECEMBER

Join us for the Grand
Italian Buffett every
Monday night 5-7 PM.
Members enjoy a
50% discount up to a
party of 30

DINNERS TO GO

Date: Every Thursday

Time: 4:00PM TO 6:00PM

Place: Italian American Community Center

VEAL & PEPPERS

Fresh Veal Mixed With Sautéed Peppers & Onions
Over Rigatoni Pasta

HERB ENCRUSTED SALMON

Baked Salmon Encrusted With Fine Herbs in
Lemon Butter
Accompanied by Seasonal Vegetable Medley &
Rice Pilaf

CHICKEN CACCIATORE

Bone in Chicken Smothered in Onions, Olives
Mushrooms, Tomatoes & Sausage
Accompanied By Rigatoni Marinara

CHICKEN PARMESAN

Lightly Breaded Chicken Sautéed Golden Brown
and Finished With Homemade Sauce and Melted
Mozzarella
Accompanied By Rigatoni Pasta Marinara

EGGPLANT PARMESAN

Lightly Breaded Eggplant Pan-Fried, Layered With
Mozzarella Cheese & Tomato Sauce Baked to
Perfection
Accompanied by Rigatoni Pasta Marinara

All Dinners Feed Up to 4 & Include
Focaccia Bread & House Salad With Little B's Honey Mustard
\$40 per Order + 8% Sales Tax

RESERVATIONS

Reservations Are Required by Wednesday
Please Call (518) 456 - 4222 Ext. 1 or
Email Julia@2sheacatering.com

JANUARY



Join us for the Grand
Italian Buffett every
Monday night 5-7 PM.
Members enjoy a
50% discount up to a
party of 30

Mini Italian CHRISTMAS MARKET

AT
THE AMERICAN ITALIAN HERITAGE MUSEUM
1227 CENTRAL AVENUE, ALBANY, NY 12205 • 518-435-1979

NOVEMBER 9th THRU DECEMBER 14TH
12 to 2pm on Mondays, Thursdays & Fridays
1 to 4 PM on Saturdays

Come, celebrate this festive holiday Tradition taking place within our museum building. We modified the way we usually hold our annual event due to the coronavirus by transforming our various Exhibit Rooms into safe market places while adhering to CDC guidelines.

ITALIAN THEME NOVELTIES

ITALIAN LANGUAGE
GREETING CARDS

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MADE IN ITALY FOODS

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BOOKS FOR ALL AGES

LOGO HATS

... & SO MUCH MORE!



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Your support of this major Fundraising Event is very much appreciated.
The A.I.H.A.&M. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

The Islands of Sicily

By JIM SANO

Sicily is the name of the largest island in the Mediterranean, but it also refers to the region of Sicily which encompasses many smaller satellite islands in the Ionian, Mediterranean and Tyrrhenian Seas. Comprising three archipelagos and several standalone formations, these dazzling islands are well known to Sicilians but remain off the radar of many travelers.

The most important element of shared identity of the islands around Sicily is precisely the fact that they are islands of the island. The smaller islands around Sicily offer visitors a unique mix of attractions such as nature watching, volcanology, history, food and wine.

There are significant differences in the stories of the different islands: some have been inhabited since Neolithic times, others from the end of the Paleolithic era and others remained remote and deserted until recent times.

Aeolian Islands

Rising out of the cobalt-blue seas off Sicily's north-eastern coast by Milazzo are the UNESCO-protected Aeolian Islands. The archipelago is formed by seven islands, Panarea, Stromboli, Vulcano, Alicudi, Filicudi, Lipari and Salina along with 5 more small islets. All have volcanic origins but are quite different from each other. Over the centuries, the Aeolian Islands have provided two different kinds of eruption, Vulcanian and Strombolian, and have given the science of volcanology the chance to enrich its education and improve its knowledge.



Panarea Island



Stromboli Island

Panarea, although only one square mile in size, is arguably the most sought-after of the Aeolian Islands. An influx of celebrity visitors in recent years has resulted in a lively social scene where the Bronze Age ruins at Capo Milazzese, snorkeling, and scuba diving mix with the jet set.

Stromboli is the Aeolian isle to visit for a glimpse of glowing red-hot lava. Mt. Stromboli is one of three active volcanoes in Italy. Its activity tends to be moderate but consistent with small eruptions occurring all the time. Though the volcano's activity tends

to be explosive, visitors can climb to the summit with a guide and brave souls can opt to camp atop the volcano overnight. The main village of San Vincenzo has a small selection of reasonably priced hotels and restaurants, and a few lively clubs and cafés.

Lipari is the largest and most developed of the Aeolian Islands. Lipari enchants visitors with its pastel-hued homes, hot springs, mud baths and, at the island's plateau, a 16th-century castle and a 17th-century cathedral. No matter what time of year, it is worth exploring the Museo Archeologico Eoliano, which showcases prehistoric finds (some dating back to 4000 BC) as well as Greek and Roman artifacts giving testimony to the island's past conquerors. A popular day trip from Lipari is to the neighboring isle, Vulcano, where an ascent to the crater of the long-dormant volcano (1,266 feet) rewards visitors with a stunning view of the Aeolians.



Salina (shown here) is the lushest and tallest of the Aeolian islands with Mt. Fossa delle Felci topping out at over 3,000 feet. Salina is perhaps best known for its capers, some of the best in the world, and Malvasia, a golden dessert wine made from dried grapes and produced only on this island. The western part of the island is home to Pollara, a village that has capitalized on its fame as one of the locations featured in the popular 1990s film, *Il Postino* (The Postman).

Rustic Alicudi covers only two square miles and is perhaps the least populated of the Aeolian Islands. There are no cars or roads here, only lava-stone paths to traverse on foot or on the back of a donkey. The island has a handful of shops and one hotel.

Filicudi, at only four-square miles, may seem like little more than a dot in the sea, but there is plenty to do here. Less popular than some neighboring isles in the Aeolian archipelago, this undiscovered gem is a peaceful respite for archaeology buffs, hikers, and bird watchers.



Lipari Island

The Islands of Sicily

At Capo Graziano, visitors can see the remains of a Bronze Age village dating back to the second millennium BC.

Vulcano (shown here) is a small volcanic island and the southernmost of the seven Aeolian Islands, just 12 miles away from Milazzo. All other volcanoes are named for this island off Sicily. The word “volcano” derives its name from Vulcan, the Roman god of fire who, according to mythology, made this island his home. This place has a growing appeal among travelers for its natural mineral hot springs, black sand beaches, natural mud baths and the experience of climbing the volcano summit.



Filicudi Island



Vulcano Island



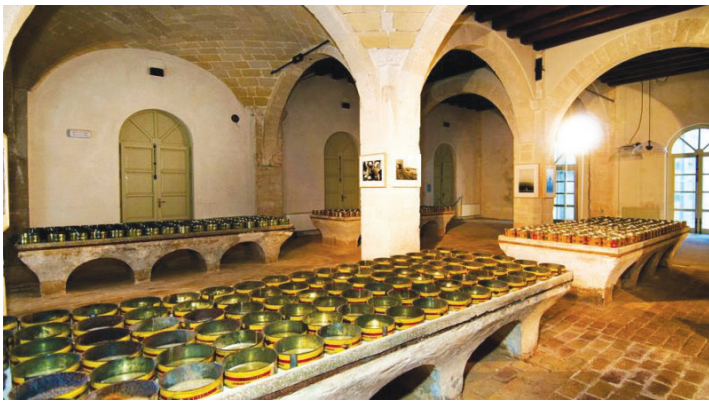
The Egadi Islands

The Egadi Archipelago is not far from the Trapani shore. Unlike many other Sicilian islands, the Egadi are not volcanic but rather dolomitic in origin. With a permanent population of around 5,000 spread over the three islands, Favignana, Maritimo and Levanzo, they boast a long history.

The historical highpoint of the islands, at least on an “international” level, was in 241 BC when the First Punic War was ended here. Catulus defeated the Carthaginian fleet there and a treaty was signed whereby Sicily was handed over to the Roman Empire.

Today, the archipelago is a flourishing holiday destination renowned for its unspoiled nature and crystal-clear sea water. Each island has its own distinct characteristics, but all share one important feature which is the irresistible, crystalline waters of the Egadi Islands Marine Reserve.

Favignana (shown here) is situated off the western point of Sicily and is the largest of the three Egadi Islands. Once named Aegusa (Goats' Island), Favignana, or La Farfalla, as it is often referred to thanks to its butterfly shape, is the largest and most important of the Egadi Islands. Lying some 15km off the coast of Trapani, it is a popular holiday destination in the summer months, largely thanks to the crystalline azure waters of bays such as Cala Rossa. The main town, also called Favignana, has a small port and is dominated by the Fort of Santa Caterina, originally built by the Arabs as a watchtower and the Palazzo Florio, a grand mansion overlooking the harbor.



Tonnara Favignana



This grand palace was built by Ignazio Florio once one of Italy's richest and most powerful industrialists. Ignazio Florio did not just build and invest in Favignana, he purchased the whole island in 1874 along with all commercial fishing rights. Florio set about enlarging and beautifying an existing tuna processing plant situated across the bay from his palazzo. The tonnara on Favignana (interior view shown here) was one of several owned by the Florios in Sicily, but was arguably their most important, for it was here that they perfected new industrial processes. The most famous was a groundbreaking technique for preserving tuna in olive oil and the invention of a key-opened tin can. The island was once largely dependent on tuna fishing, but its focus has since shifted to tourism. Yet every spring, the mattanza (traditional tuna slaughter) is performed in town for the sake of tradition. Although there are few beaches here, Favignana is popular for scuba diving and snorkeling at several spectacular bays like Cala Azzurra and Cala Rossa.

Marittemo, a rocky island, is the westernmost and most remote of the Egadi Islands, just over an hour's hydrofoil ride from Trapani on Sicily's western tip. Marettimo's main settlement is little more than a humble fishing village. Looking down from a vantage point above the village are the remains of a Roman military outpost, built after the First Punic War and testimony to the strategic importance the island played in antiquity. Next to these ruins is a small Norman church, built after the Arabs were ousted from Sicily in 1072. It was the same Arabs who built a fortified watch tower (shown here) on the top of Punta Troia, (northeastern



Favignana Island

tip of the island). This dramatic fortress was the site of a Saracen watchtower and later a Spanish prison. Roger II, the Norman king responsible for building the cathedral in Cefalù, transformed it into an impregnable castle which remained in use variously as a prison, a military outpost and a communications center until the early 20th century. The best way to enjoy Marettimo is by boat which allows for exploration of various otherwise inaccessible grottoes and secluded swimming spots.

Vegetation filled Levanzo is the smallest and wildest island of the Egadis. Levanzo has no paved roads and a population of a few hundred who live in a small village fronting a picturesque harbor. Grain cultivation was once a major activity here but today most agriculture has been abandoned. The island is most famous for the Grotta del Genovese, where visitors can see Neolithic and Paleolithic cave paintings. Levanzo can be seen in three or four hours, and it is only a 20-minute hydrofoil ride away from Trapani. Peace and quiet are ensured and stressful city life will soon become a distant memory.



Marittemo Island



Pelagian Islands

Taking their name from the Greek for 'high sea', the Pelagian Islands (Isole Pelagie) are the closest of the Sicilian Islands to Africa. Belonging to the Sicilian province of Agrigento and situated between Malta and Tunisia, this group of three islands, Lampione, Linosa and, the largest of the three, Lampedusa, are an ideal bridge between the European continent and Africa. Thanks to their isolated position, the Pelagie Archipelago is an unspoiled paradise, where tourists can always find peace and quiet. Their remote nature allows them to avoid large-scale tourism and serves as a haven for scuba divers and people looking to enjoy a little solitude.

Southwest of Sicily, Lampedusa, the largest of the Pelagian Islands, is the southernmost part of Italy. Its northern coast is characterized by dramatic cliffs and caves, while the southern coast is home to fine, white-sand beaches and turquoise waters that make this island a popular tourism destination. Lampedusa lies in the Sicilian Channel 205 kilometers south of the Sicilian coast, 113 kilometers from Tunisia, and 150 kilometers from Malta. Spiaggia dei Conigli (Rabbit Beach), is widely considered by many as the most beautiful beach in all the Mediterranean. For hikers, there are trails leading to Lampedusa's three highest peaks: Monte Rosso, Monte Nero, and Monte Vulcano. There are around six thousand permanent resi-



dents. The island was owned by the Tomasi family until the middle of the nineteenth century. On Lampedusa there are military facilities and a small prison, as well as facilities for refugees who frequently arrive by boat from Africa.

Linosa is a small island of volcanic origin with a population of fewer than 500. Although it has brightly painted homes and volcanic features like craters



and black-sand beaches, the island's biggest attractions are the loggerhead sea turtles. Linosa is one of the few remaining places (along with Ionian Calabria) where the turtles of the *Caretta* species lay their eggs, on the Pozzolana beach precisely. Nesting season generally lasts from May to August.

Lampione, the smallest of the islands, is uninhabited and houses a solitary building which is a lighthouse. It is a premier destination for scuba-divers with parts of the sea floor descending to 60 meters in depth and an abundance of sea-life to keep divers and photographers busy. The island is devoid of vegetation being nothing more than a rocky outcrop, which makes it a perfect home to a variety of seabirds including gulls, sea hawks and cormorants.

USTICA

Sitting in the Tyrrhenian Sea, 52 kilometers north of Palermo is Ustica, a small island barely 9 kilometers across that attracts divers from all over the world. This turtle shaped volcanic island originally populated by the Phoenicians takes its name from the Latin *ustum*, meaning burnt, which refers to its blackened appearance. Its proximity to mainland Sicily makes it a popular daily jaunt for Sicilians from the north-east of the island wanting some peace and quiet, but it is the crystal-



Ustica Island

clear waters and deep dive sites that attract the biggest proportion of visitors. It is easy to explore the numerous underwater shipwrecks and abundant marine life here. It is possible to rent a boat to go around the island but walking paths and bus routes that circle the island make it just as easy to get around. There is also plenty of history on dry land to keep the tourists entertained. The houses in the town's main piazza with their colorful painted murals entice photographers, while the prehistoric ruins at Faraglioni draw historians interested in the remnants of the village that dates to the 14th century BC. Now home to 1,300 inhabitants, the island was once used as a penal colony and, during Italy's Fascist years, Benito Mussolini banished thousands of political opponents and undesirables to Ustica. A portion of the former prison now houses the Museo Archeologico Case Carabozzello Fosso, which is another popular destination with the island's visitors.

PANTELLERIA

Pantelleria (ancient Cossyra) is unique for being the largest of Sicily's satellite islands. Often called the Black Pearl of the Mediterranean, this volcanic island lies to the south of Sicily's westernmost point and is 40 kilometers closer to Tunisia than Sicily which is visible from the island on clear days. Pantelleria is one of Sicily's most characteristic minor islands and is not part of an archipelago like the Egadis or the Aeolians. Its rocky coastline extends for just over 31 miles. Like most of the Mediterranean islands, Pantelleria has had a checkered history with dominant civilizations, including the Phoenicians and the Spanish, coming and going over time, and each one leaving its mark. However, the greatest influences are Arabic, and this can be clearly seen in the traditional houses called Dammusi, the design of which dates to the 10th century. Built from lava rock with distinctive domed roofs, the houses have walls thick enough to provide insulation in winter and a cool living space during the summer months. The two most famous local wines, Moscato and Passito, are made from Zibibbo grapes, which were imported by the

Arabs, and many Arabic place names remain. Its proximity to Africa means that it is often buffeted in spring and autumn by the strong scirocco winds which earned Pantelleria the nickname of Bint-al Rion (Daughter of the Wind), by the invading Arabs in the 8th century. Pantelleria is most famous for its capers, with many experts claiming the Pantescan variety to be the world's best. The island is also famous for its dessert wines, Moscato and Passito, both made from the locally grown Zibibbo grape. It has extensive vineyards and produces two fortified dessert wines, Moscato di Pantelleria and Passito di Pantelleria. Pantelleria is not a destination for beach-lovers. Swimming is mostly off rocks; the island's only "beach" is inland, and it is made of mud. If that does not sound too appealing, think again, as the Specchio di Venere ("Mirror of Venus") is a heart-shaped lake (see photo) in a volcanic crater fed by rainwater and hot springs. Its colors modulate from emerald to aquamarine to turquoise to deep blue. It is both a luxuriously self-indulgent and a gratifyingly therapeutic bath.



Slather on the mineral-rich mud, rinse off with a swim to the center, and emerge, regenerated, with skin like velvet. There are many thermal pools on Pantelleria. One of the best places is a large natural sauna cave in the mountains near the region called Monestero. Pantelleria according to legend was the love nest of Calypso and Ulysses but in present day can only boast of being the hideaway of Giorgio Armani and Luca Zingarelli (alias Inspector Montalbano), who both own villas here.

CYCLOPS ISLANDS

Off the coast of Aci Trezza, north of Catania, lie the Cyclops Islands. Composed of Lachea Island and a few neighboring rock formations, the entire archipelago is designated as a protected marine area, which makes it perfect for snorkeling, scuba diving, and riding in glass-bottomed boats. Lachea is home to a center for biological studies at the University of Catania, located here specifically because of the abundance of flora and fauna.



Cyclops Islands

At the top of the island sits a natural history museum that details the area's native species and Faraglioni (stacks of coastal and oceanic rock formations eroded by waves). as well as archaeological and geological finds. These rock formations are indeed known to the locals as "Islands of the Cyclops," because, according to legend, on his journey home from the Trojan War, Ulysses docked on the Island of the Cyclops. He was 'greeted' by the savage, man-eating giant Polyphemus, one of the Cyclops who in Greek and Roman mythology were members of a primordial race of giants with a single eye in the center of their foreheads. The Cyclops devoured many of Ulysses' travel companions. To be able to escape, Ulysses devised a plan to make Polyphemus drunk, then blinded him in his only eye. Enraged, Polyphemus began to throw large boulders against Ulysses's ships as they were sailing away, thus giving rise to the Faraglioni. (shown here)

ISOLA BELLA

Not to be confused with an island of the same name in Lake Maggiore, Sicily's Isola Bella is a small island off the coast of Taormina. Isola Bella is also known as the Pearl of the Ionian Sea. It is no longer an island per se, but in centuries past, when water levels were generally higher than they are today, it was separated from land at high tide. The area is a nature reserve, administrated by the Italian branch of the Worldwide Fund for Nature.

Isola Bella means 'beautiful island'. The gardener and pioneering conservationist, Florence Trevelyan, bought Isola Bella in the 19th Century and built a house there. It was a private property until 1990. It was purchased by Sicily's government and turned into a nature reserve.

ISOLA DELLE FEMMINE (FOR SALE)

Located a short distance from Palermo and the mainland (300 m), the Isola delle Femmine (literally, Island of the Women) is 15 hectares (10,000 square meters) wide with a maximum height of 35 m above sea level, where the remains of an ancient watch tower rest. The legend states that thirteen Turkish maidens condemned for serious crimes were castoff by their relatives on a ship and left adrift in the middle of the sea. A storm wrecked the ship on a small rocky island, where the girls lived alone for seven long years. When their families, having realized their horrible doings, managed to find the girls, the girls decided not to return to their homeland but were happy with their new lives. They named it Capaci (literally here the peace) while the island was renamed Isola delle Femmine. Since 1997, the island has been included in the natural reserve of Isola delle Femmine and the Italian League for Bird Protection (LIPU) is the managing authority. This island is for sale! If you purchase this island please remember me, since vacationing in warm climates is my thing!



Please follow the link below if you are interested.
https://www.romolini.co.uk/en/island_for_sale_sicily_mediterranean_sea_isola_femmine_1523/

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the office at 518-456-4222!**

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Hello Ladies,

Our November meeting was enjoyed by eighteen ladies. Our guest for the evening was Lynn Willigan, Program Director from Yankee Trails, who graciously stepped up when our original speaker from Wounded Warriors was unable to come. Lynn talked to us about some of the trips that she had scheduled for 2020 but were postponed due to COVID-19. She did mention that many of those trips will be rescheduled for 2021 and she provided her business cards to everyone at the meeting.

Our upcoming December meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 will be our Christmas Party. We will start the evening with a cocktail party which will be followed by the main meal of Sliced Roast Beef or Baked Salmon with balsamic reduction. The cost of the meal is \$25. Please be sure to either call Lynn Indelicato at (518) 479-3714 or email her at lynn.indelicato@yahoo.com on or before Sunday, December 6, 2020. The cancellation policy remains in effect and any cancellation must be made no later than Tuesday, December 8, 2020.

We will be having an Ugly Sweater Contest so I hope everyone will come up with some very creative ideas. You can either purchase an ugly sweater or make one yourself out of a sweater you have at home along with any creative and unusual ideas you come up with to decorate them. I am looking forward to seeing some unique designs this year. In addition, we will be doing our Christmas Grab Bag.

Anyone who brings in a grab bag gift can choose a gift from someone else. We limit the cost of the gifts to between \$20-\$25. It is optional to participate in the Christmas Grab Bag.

At this meeting, we will be electing our new president to lead us for 2021-2022. Georgeanna Greene has volunteered to run for the office of President of the Women's League for 2021-2022. I hope that all of you will be there to encourage her and help her just as you have all been there to help me during my two years as your President. The election of the other officers will also take place at our December 2020 meeting. One vote by the secretary or someone else is all that is needed for the remaining officers as they are staying in their positions.

As I come to the end of my term as President of the Women's League, I would like to thank everyone for being so helpful, supportive and encouraging to me during my two-year term. Anytime I had questions or needed help with something, there were always people that I could count on for answers. My two years of being your President have been a wonderful and exciting experience for me and I would not hesitate to run for another office in the future.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Gretchen Van Valkenburg
PRESIDENT



PER TUA INFORMAZIONE
(FOR YOUR INFORMATION)

Sicilian Marionettes and Puppet Theatre

By JOE SANO



Any visitor to Sicily has seen shops selling wooden marionettes bedecked in bronze armor with historic names like Orlando and Rinaldo. They may look like tacky souvenirs made for the tourist market, but these marionettes are a core symbol of Sicilian folk-art and as integral to the Island's cultural identity as painted horse carts and cannoli.

The Marionette and Puppet Theatre became popular in Sicily late in the Middle Ages, during the fifteenth century, and is considered an important part of Sicilian folk culture. Puppets and marionettes were a popular form of entertainment for all classes of people throughout Medieval Europe. It is probable that the earliest performances involved local history and folklore.

The Sicilian puppet is based on the classical European marionette but differs from the latter in that the classical European puppet is moved by fairly long strings while the Sicilian puppet is moved by two rods, one of which is connected to the hand while the other goes inside the head. The marionettes are the major props in the Opera dei Pupi and are protected as "Intangible" Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. The marionettes themselves are made of wood with cloth with metal accoutrements. The

puppets are carved, painted and decorated. Sets are painted in the Sicilian folk style with traditional colors, using canvas for the backdrops.

The Opera dei Pupi was the preeminent form of cultural expression for working-class southern Italians and Sicilians, yet its subject matter was nothing less than the masterpieces of medieval and Renaissance literature. Traditionally the marionettes and their theatre depict subject matter derived from various periods of Sicilian history, works of literature, local folklore and comedy. Heroes of the Norman Conquest such as Roger (Ruggiero) and Tancred (Tancredi) do battle with the Saracens or vie for a maiden's hand. Other characters like Godfrey (Goffredo) and Reynald (Rinaldo) are fictional characters whose origins are based upon real-life participants in the Crusades, with various liberties taken for the sake of art. Much has been adopted from the lyric poetry of the Troubadours and the epic tales of chivalry known as the Chansons de Geste (the songs of deeds). The performances that include Orlando and Carlo Magno are derived from the famous Song of Roland (Chanson de Roland) and the subsequent Italian interpretations such as Orlando Furioso by Ludovico Ariosto.

The Opera dei Pupi also covers subjects from classical Greece and Rome such as Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. Religious and biblical performances can include tales from the Old Testament, including the tale of the Exodus.

As folk art, the productions are typically expressions of the popular perception of personages and events rather than faithful chronicles of history and literature. These tales are meant to be inspirational, in the sense that spectators may in some way compare the stories or characters to their own lives.

The Opera dei Pupi is intricately connected with other forms of expression, such as those of the "Cantastorie" and "Cantari" (singers of tales): the adventures of these chivalrous heroes are narrated in episodes. The dialogue of Sicilian Puppet Theatre is usually improvised, even if the plot remains the same. Nobody is born a puppet master or puppeteer; it is an art learned over many years. It is a demanding field requiring numerous, highly developed skills. The skill of the performer is not only displayed in the actions of the marionettes, but also in the clever improvisation of the dialogue.

The Opera dei Pupi is characterized for championing a series of rather ancient codes of conduct, adopted from epic novels of the Middle Ages. One can expect to find the struggle between good and evil as knights follow a sense of honor, chivalry and faith, experience and fight against injustice, face obstacles, love, hate, suffer, and grieve.

An essential feature of Sicilian puppet plays are the ever-present battles. These are choreographed with precision so that the knights facing each other lunge and strike each other's sword simultaneously. They can also jump onto horseback from a standing position, remove swords from their scabbards and put them back again, and lower their visors. During a battle, a shield can break into two, armor can fall, a knight can be decapitated or sliced in half. The movement of battles is symmetrical and repetitive, and fast with a uniform rhythm. Whether good or evil, the characters and their deeds are all much larger than life, the equivalent to today's fictional superheroes.

Puppet theatre reached the height of its popularity in Sicily during the middle of the nineteenth century. Although mostly geared for children, it appealed to adults as well. The enduring fascination with an art form that dramatizes battles between Christian defenders and Saracen invaders is sometimes linked to the island's long history of invasion by foreign armies.

The ever-present theme of justice prevails in these presentations. The puppet theater became the



place of people's dreams, where they could imagine themselves free from outside invaders and free from the hardships of their past.

Sadly, the popularity of Sicilian Puppet Theatre began to decline sharply during the middle of the 20th century. Television, the post-war economic boom, and an unprecedented indifference toward local cultural traditions led audiences to abandon the Opera dei Pupi. Most pupari sold their puppets to collectors and were forced to seek their livelihood through other means.



Yet the Opera dei Pupi did not die out completely thanks to the efforts and tenacity of some puppeteer families and support from patrons who recognized the worth in preserving this unique folk-art. On May 18, 2001, UNESCO designated Sicilian Puppet Theater as an Oral and Intangible Masterpiece in the Heritage of Humanity and devised a plan to save it from extinction. Part of the plan included the formation of puppet theatre festivals and even a Sicilian puppetry school. Today the Museum continues to offer a permanent exhibit along with a regular schedule of puppet theater as well as an annual festival. These endeavors, in conjunction with Sicily's ever-growing tourist industry, will hopefully ensure both a supply of trained artisans as well as an eager audience.

CARING & SHARING

Please offer prayers for a fast and
full recovery FOR CHARLIE FERRARA

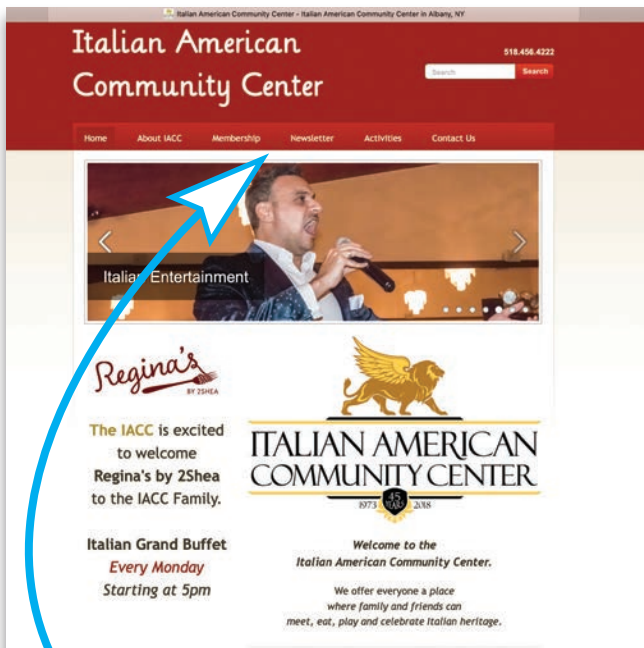
BIRTHDAYS

December

- Lynn Aronowitz
- Lucy Bremm
- Stephen Bubonia
- Thomas Burke
- Gabriel Castellanos
- Jeanne Ciampino
- Laurie Elmendorf
- Marie Facciolli-Erkes
- Stacy Galvin
- Joan Goodman
- Jack Greene
- Diane Hasenbein
- Merry Hutchinson
- William Iannone
- Ann Keneston
- Josephine Knack
- Anna Marie Logrippo
- Erik Loy
- Joseph Marchese
- Gregory Massaroni
- Michele Mealy
- Marc Merrill
- Angelo Paglialonga
- John Paolucci
- Sharon Patrei
- Maran Person
- Fred Peters
- Nick Piccirillo
- Loren Place
- Joseph Restifo, Jr
- Peter Scavullo
- Connie Seeley
- Maggie Smith
- Linda Staples
- Susan Supliski
- Maryellen Tedesco
- Sylvester Verrigni
- Terry Weinman
- Donna Zadrozinski
- Nancy Zeoli

January

- Anna Acconi
- Eugene Aiuppa
- Stephanie Aliseo
- Helen Articolo
- Janice Batchelor
- John Bremm
- Alison Burnside
- Luciana Caranfa
- Jessica Carrow
- John Coppola
- Nadine Cunningham
- Susan Daniels
- Maria DeNitto
- Gail Dillon
- Stephen Franke
- Kimberly Fredericks
- Thomas Galvin
- Stephen Giles
- Bryan Goldberger
- Gretchen Graydon
- Edward Haddad
- Vera Hall
- Sally Hart
- Cara Joyce
- Laura Konopka
- Mary Ann Macri
- Christine Marando
- Julie Massaroni
- Nick Mazza
- Marcella Michel
- Martin Muller
- Frank Padula
- Barbara Palumbo
- Debra Placito
- John Relyea
- John Riley
- Lynda Scalzo
- Cathy Sims O'Neil
- Marie Smith
- Michael Swanson
- Christopher Thorncroft
- Julie Tsai
- Andrea VanDecar
- Florence Whitney
- Kristine Zaccardo
- Patricia Zapotocki



PLEASE NOTE:

Due to the limited activity at the club caused by Covid-19, this month's newsletter is for the months of December and January. We will return with a February issue however, until activities are able to resume, we will only be publishing an online edition. All newsletters are posted on our website by the first of each month. To receive a newsletter via email please ensure the office has your correct email address.

We will resume printed editions once we can hold events again.

Thank you for your understanding.

PLEASE GO TO OUR WEBSITE; WWW.ITALIANAMERICAN.COM, CLICK ON THE NEWSLETTER TAB AND SELECT THE MONTH YOU WISH TO VIEW.



IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Current I.A.C.C. Memberships expire Sunday, December 31st, 2020
Membership renewal starts Monday, December 28, 2020.
New enrollment begins January 4th at the I.A.C.C. Membership office.

REMEMBER TO SPREAD THE WORD TO YOUR FRIENDS

You may enroll by sending your invoice (with payment)
in or by calling the I.A.C.C. Membership Office at (518) 456-4222.
Cash, Checks, Credit and Debit cards are accepted.

Thank You For Being A Member.

Here's To An Amazing 2021 At The Club!

Mangia Bene, Viva Bene

By FRANK ZEOLI



Christmas Fish



Christmas at my grandmother's house was the most special time of the entire year. She had a record player in the living room that held 30 LPs and she would play it all the time. The house was filled with Christmas favorites from Dean Martin, Perry Como, Connie Francis and, my grandmother's favorite singer, Jerry Vale. Every time I hear Christmas songs by these artists, I can see my grandmother sitting on her living room floor wrapping Christmas gifts in front of the tree.

The food was memorable too. She made so many things on Christmas Eve, however the dish I remember the most was something I never ate, but now as an adult, I wish I had. **Christmas Fish**, as I would call it, was one of her staples. I now know the real name was **Cod Puttanesca**. She always tried to get me to eat it and I would not touch it. It had two things I hated, olives and fish. It's funny that after she died white fish and olives became two of my favorites. It seems she has more powers in the after-life than I thought.

Her version of the dish not only contained olives but it also had artichokes. She never cooked with capers so I did not include them here but they do well in the dish, if desired.

Enjoy her recipe for Christmas Fish.

Prep Time: 20 Minutes

Ingredients

- 4 cloves of garlic
- 2 T of Olive Oil
- 2- 28 oz cans of plum tomatoes, *pureed with an immersion blender or crushed with your hands like my grandmother would do.*

Cook Time: 60 Minutes

- 1 can of artichoke hearts, cut in half (8 to 10 artichokes)
- 1/2 cup of Kalamata olives
- 4 cod fillets
- 8-10 fresh basil leaves, torn
- Salt & Pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mince the garlic.
3. In a medium sauté pan, add the olive oil and sauté the garlic on medium high heat for about 1 minute. Add the tomatoes, salt, pepper, and basil and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 30 minutes.
4. On a separate plate, season the fish with salt and pepper.
5. Add the fish to a baking dish and pour the tomato mixture over it. Make sure the fish is completely covered.
6. Bake the fish for about 25 minutes or until the fish cooks through.

Transfer the fish to a platter and spoon some of the sauce over the fish.

Buona Natale!



Look for more recipes in the next edition of the **SIAMO Qui**.



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DECISION REGARDING DUES AT THE IACC

On November 15th, the Board of Directors, at its monthly meeting, reviewed the budget for the upcoming year. Unfortunately, expenses have risen to the point where they now outpace current incoming dues. While there is enough to cover expenses for the remainder of the budget year, our fund is getting depleted. In order to offset rising costs, the Board has voted to raise membership dues \$25 for **new members only** beginning January 1, 2021. It should be noted that this is the first increase in membership dues since 2000.

This will not affect any full members in good standing provided that their current dues are paid before February 28, 2021. Members who have not paid their dues by March 1st will forfeit their earned loyalty discount. Existing members will continue to receive an extension on their current dues rate for 9 more years, through December 2030, provided that their current dues are paid each year before February 28th.

We are hoping that this does not greatly affect our membership and that everyone will continue to be a valued contributor to the Italian American Community Center. If there are any questions or concerns regarding this increase, please notify the office immediately.

We want to invite you to stay connected with all that we are doing and will keep you updated during the ongoing pandemic via email and on social media. We encourage you to connect with us on Facebook or visit our website www.italianamerican.com.

We value your membership. Together we can continue to make what seems impossible, possible and ensure that the IACC continues to thrive for generations to come.



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