



ISSUE 596

OCTOBER 2023



COLUMBUS DAY GRAND GALA

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF TRADITION



2023 HONOREES



HONORABLE THOMAS DINAPOLI
New York State Comptroller
Italian American of the Year



HONORABLE DARIUS SHAHINFAR
the City of Albany Treasurer
Italian Spirit Award

ANGELO TARANTINO
IACC Presidents Award

ANTHONY FAZIO
Pasquale Tirino Service Award

SHARON PATREI
Cuore d'oro Award

DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF **Good Times**

TIME
5:30 COCKTAIL HOUR
7:00 DINNER
8:00 DANCING

PRICE
\$55.00 IACC MEMBERS
\$75.00 NON-MEMBERS

COMPLIMENTARY WINE, BEER, AND SODA
ARE INCLUDED. THERE WILL BE A CASH BAR.

MENU INCLUDES:
SALAD, PASTA, CHOICE OF ENTRÉE, AND
DESSERT.

CHOICE OF ENTRÉES:
BEEF FILET MIGNON
CHICKEN PARMESAN
BAKED SALMON

- BLACK TIE OPTIONAL
- SILENT AUCTION

OCTOBER 21, 2023 - 5:30 PM
PLEASE RESPOND NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 16, 2023

To make your reservation, call the IACC at 518-456-4222
or reserve online at www.italianamerican.com

Italian American Community Center
Washington Avenue Extension
Albany, New York 12205

HAPPY HALLOWEEN



NEWS & EVENTS

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SOCIAL CALENDAR

October



- 10/02/23** - Monday Grand Italian Buffet - 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
- 10/02/23** - Elementary Italian Language Class - 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- 10/03/23** - Co-Ed Bocce - 6:30 pm
- 10/05/23** - Fall Chair Yoga - 6:00 pm
- 10/09/23** - Elementary Italian Language Class - 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- 10/10/23** - Co-Ed Bocce - 6:30 pm
- 10/11/23** - Women's League Meeting - 6:00 pm
- 10/12/23** - Fall Chair Yoga - 6:00 pm
- 10/15/23** - Sunday Brunch - 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
- 10/16/23** - Elementary Italian Language Class - 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- 10/17/23** - Co-Ed Bocce - 6:30 pm
- 10/19/23** - Fall Chair Yoga - 6:00 pm
- 10/21/23** - COLUMBUS DAY GRAND GALA/50th ANNIVERSARY
5:30 pm - 11:00 pm
- 10/23/23** - Elementary Italian Language Class - 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- 10/26/23** - Grand Re-Opening Member Only Dinner - 6:00 pm
- 10/26/23** - Fall Chair Yoga - 6:00 pm
- 10/28/23** - Pavilion Clean Up Day - 10:30 am
- 10/30/23** - Elementary Italian Language Class - 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Upcoming Events:

- 11/12/23** - Annual General Membership Meeting/Club Elections/
Year In Review - 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm
- 11/23/23** - Thanksgiving Dinner Take Out by Regina's by 2Shea
- 12/03/23** - IACC Christmas Party & Tree Lighting - 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
- 12/09/23** - Christmas in Little Italy: Arthur Ave Bus Trip - 8:45 am

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As we begin Italian American Heritage Month, I am reminded that 50 years ago, a group of hardworking and dedicated Italian Americans got together and invested their own money to create a place where Italians and non-Italians alike could come and celebrate the authentic Italian way of life filled with family, love, laughter and, of course, food. Because of these members, we celebrate our 50th anniversary with a grand celebration made of gold later this month.

October 21st is our 50th annual Columbus Day Grand Gala. In honor of our golden jubilee, we are proud to be honoring the highest-ranking Italian American in state government: Honorable Thomas DiNapoli, our New York State Comptroller, as our **Italian American of the Year** and the Honorable Darius Shahinfar, the City of Albany Treasurer with our **Italian Spirit Award**.

We will also honor three members for their commitment and service to our club. I am proud to award the **President's Award** to Past President Angelo Tarantino, the **Pasquale Tirino Service Award** to Tony Fazio, and the **Cuore d'oro Award** to Sharon Patrei. If you need to make your reservation, you still have time. Visit www.italianamerican.com or call the membership office.

The renovations on the club's first floor are complete, and I must tell you, the place looks stunning. The Shea Family is so excited for our members to see it that they are hosting a free dinner on Thursday, October 26th, at 6 p.m. The dinner is for members only; if you want to attend, please visit the website at www.italianamerican.com or call the membership office to make your reservation. Reservations are required to attend.

Finally, now that summer is officially over, I would like to thank the many committees and volunteers who made all our summer events possible. I would especially like to thank Jim Sano for his tireless effort to make our pool the best place to be in the summer heat and Maria DeNitto and her pavilion committee who made our Friday nights so memorable.

Ciao,

FRANK ZEOLI
ITALIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER
PRESIDENT



I.A.C.C. OFFICERS

PRESIDENT ~ FRANK ZEOLI
(518) 463-2106
VICE PRESIDENT ~ SHARON PATREI
(518) 810-4746
TREASURER ~ PETE SCAVULLO
(518) 869-8234
SECRETARY ~ DONNA ZUMBO
(518) 452-2617

I.A.C.C. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LINDA HOFFMAN ~ (518) 785-1741
DINO BARBATO ~ (518) 438-8902
TERRY ANDRIANO ~ (518) 364-4873
JIM SANO, IACC FOUNDATION ~ (518) 438-4631
DAVID QUADRINI- IACC FOUNDATION~ (518) 438-7602

I.A.C.C. COMMITTEE CHAIRS

POOL~ JIM SANO
FINANCE~ PETE SCAVULLO
MEMBERSHIP~ SHARON PATREI
BY-LAWS/POLICIES & PROCEDURE ~ JIM SANO
HOUSE~ DAVID QUADRINI
GRIEVANCE ~ JEANNE SACCA
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES~ FRANK ZEOLI
COLUMBUS DAY GALA~ FRANK ZEOLI,

SIAMO QUI

EDITOR ~ JOAN WALLIS
CREATIVE DIRECTOR ~ CATALINA ARANGO
ADVERTISING ~ JIM SANO

I.A.C.C. OFFICE

HOURS: M-F 9:30AM TO 2:30PM
THERESA LAJOY- OFFICE MANAGER
PHONE # (518) 456-4222
EMAIL: IACCOFFICE@ITALIANAMERICAN.COM

\$20 for
Members
after 50%
discount

Regina's
BY 2SHEA

SUNDAY BRUNCH → *October 15th*



October 2nd ← GRAND ITALIAN
BUFFET



Assisi

By JIM SANO



Basilica of San Francesco

Assisi is a charming small town in the Umbria region of central Italy. It is famous for being Saint Francis and Saint Clare's birthplace and has a rich history as a center for religious and spiritual activities that date back to Roman times. Frequent conquests and sieges from conflicts between the Germanic and Byzantine peoples marred Assisi's medieval history. This turbulent era led to the construction of numerous castles in the area, including Rocca Maggiore. It is conceivable that the violence and turmoil during this period influenced Saint Francis' yearning for peace in his hometown and his mission to propagate a message of worldwide peace.

Saint Francis dedicated his life to serving God through aiding the poor and relinquishing his family's wealth. In 1208 AD, he established the Franciscan order, renowned for its worldwide message of peace and tolerance, deeply influencing Assisi and its surrounding region. The Franciscan religious order played an important role in developing and nurturing the arts and humanities in Assisi. They established many monasteries and churches, now significant parts of the town's historical and cultural heritage. Today, the town has several museums and cultural centers dedicated to

preserving the Franciscan order's legacy. Assisi is also a renowned destination for spiritual tourists and is known for hosting events promoting peace and interreligious dialogue. The historic center of Assisi and its iconic monuments earned UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 2000, showcasing the unique blend of history, culture, and breathtaking natural surroundings.

Among these sites is the Basilica of San Francesco. This remarkable landmark church is a masterpiece of art and architecture and played a significant role in the city's development. It is widely considered the crowning glory of Assisi's historic center and serves as a testament to the region's lasting legacy of the Franciscan order.

The Basilica of San Francesco is a complex consisting of two churches built on top of each other in the 13th century. The Upper Church, also known as the Basilica Superiore, was consecrated in 1253 and is known for its Gothic style and beautiful frescoes depicting the life of Saint Francis. It is also home to the Cripta di San Francesco, the tomb of Saint Francis, and remains a place of reverence for many Catholics. The Lower Church, or Basilica Inferiore, was constructed between 1228 and 1230 and has a more austere appearance. It is decorated with frescoes by some of Italy's greatest artists, including



Rocca Maggiore

Giotto, Cimabue, Lorenzetti, and Martini. The Basilica of San Francesco is an important landmark in developing Italian and European art and architecture. Its frescoes are among the most famous works of art in Italy.

In addition to the Basilica of San Francesco, Assisi boasts other significant Franciscan sites, such as the 14th-century Basilica of Santa Chiara, where the tomb of Saint Clare, a devoted companion and disciple of Saint Francis, is located, and the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli.



Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli

Saint Clare of Assisi was a significant figure in the city, a spiritual pupil of Saint Francis, and the founder of the Order of Saint Clare. At 18, she left her wealthy family to join Francis at the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli.

The Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli, built in the 16th century, contains the Porziuncola. This little chapel was erected under Pope Liberius (352-366) and was the original home of the Franciscan order where Saint Francis prayed, ministered, and died. The St Maria Sopra Minerva Basilica, San Damiano training monastery, and the Cathedral of San Rufino, where Saint Francis and Saint Clare were baptized, are additional Franciscan sites in Assisi.



Porziuncola



Basilica of Santa Chiara

Other landmarks in Assisi's center include the Church of San Pietro, Santa Maria Maggiore, the Renaissance fort of Rocca Maggiore, and the Carceri Hermitage, a series of caves where Saint Francis and his companions once lived. The chapel of Santo Stefano, the oldest house of worship in Assisi, is also part of this UNESCO site.

The iconic landmarks of Assisi are a testament to the enduring legacy of the Franciscan order in the region and offer visitors a unique insight into the history and culture of the town. The Franciscan message of love, compassion, and humility has had a lasting influence on the town of Assisi and its people and continues to attract followers worldwide. The town's rich history and cultural significance, along with its beautiful natural surroundings, make it a must-visit destination for anyone interested in the history and culture of central Italy. □



Cathedral of San Rufino



San Damiano Training Monastery



St Maria Sopra Minerva Basilica

❖ PAVILION RENTAL ❖



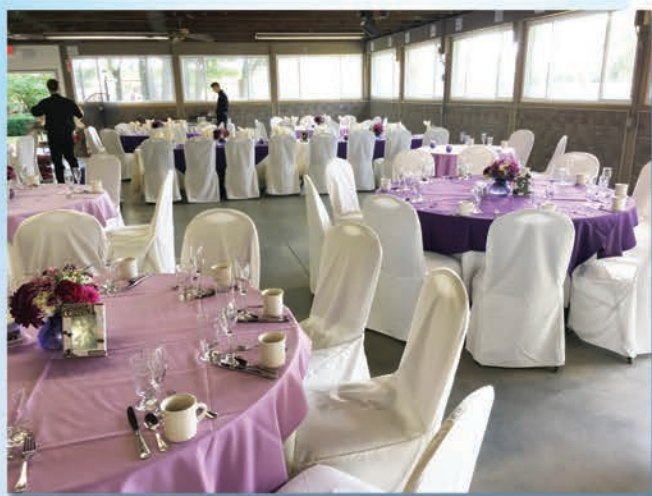
I.A.C.C. FOUNDATION

Book The Pavilion For Birthdays, Family reunions, Corporate events!

MEMBERS: \$250 - (SUN.-FRI.), \$350 (SAT.)

NON- MEMBERS: \$400 (SUN.-FRI.), \$500 (SAT.)

CALL THE MEMBERSHIP OFFICE AT 518-456-4222



PLENTY OF WEEKDAYS AND WEEKENDS
STILL AVAILABLE
FOR YOUR PARTY THROUGH OCTOBER



LABOR DAY

POOL BBQ



Thank you to all for another great summer at the Italian American Community Center (I.A.C.C.)! We are already looking forward to next year's season! On September 17th, the I.A.C.C. concluded another fantastic "Summer at The Pool!" We held our annual "Pool Closing BBQ & Cleanup" and successfully prepared everything for the 2024 season. Our members always make our pool BBQs something special. We would like to express our gratitude to our lifeguard staff: Michele Sano, Maggie O'Brien, Isabel O'Brien, Maggie Norton, Ryleigh Hotaling, Joey Webber, and Hannah Webber. Thank you to all who celebrated their summer with us at the I.A.C.C.-Pool Director Jim Sano





ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

According to our By-Laws, election to the Board of Directors will be held in November. Two seats will be available for a 4-year term. Please contact the Membership office as soon as possible.

If you are interested in applying for one of these vacancies and can satisfy all of the following requisites, please submit your brief resume to the IACC office.

IACC By-Laws state that “each candidate for director shall satisfy the following requisites:

- **Be at least 21 years of age**
- **Be a United States Citizen**
- **Be a voting member of the corporation in good standing.**
- **Have at least one year as a member immediately preceding the election**
- **Never have been convicted of a felony**
- **Not be a full-time employee of the IACC**

No director, including the past president, may be elected to serve two consecutive terms.

Directors shall not be eligible for re-election or appointment to the board for one year after they complete their term on the board.

Husbands and wives may not serve on the Board of Directors simultaneously.”

If you have any questions about the duties of being a Board member, feel free to contact Jim Sano at 438-4631 or jsano15@aol.com

The election will be held at the General Membership Meeting on Sunday, November 12 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 pm.

TELEGRAMMI ...



ROBERTO COLANNINO CEO PIAGGIO DIES

It is with great sorrow that the death of Roberto Colaninno, former president of Telecom and Piaggio was announced. He was an outstanding manager who made Italy great in the industrial, entrepreneurial and financial fields. A true protagonist of the economy of our country, his undisputed vision and leadership skills, also recognized on the international scene, will be missed by all of us.

MUORE ROBERTO COLANNINO AD PIAGGIO

Grande dolore per la scomparsa di Roberto Colaninno, ex presidente di Telecom e Piaggio. Se ne va un grande manager che ha fatto grande l'Italia nel campo industriale, imprenditoriale e finanziario. Un vero protagonista dell'economia del nostro Paese. Le sue indiscusse capacità di visione e di leadership, riconosciute anche nel panorama internazionale, mancheranno a tutti noi. Al figlio Matteo, alla famiglia e ai suoi cari va il mio più grande abbraccio.

ICONIC ITALIAN SINGER-SONGWRITER TOTO CUTUGNO DIES AT 80

Toto Cutugno, one of the greatest interpreters of Italian music, died on August 22nd around 4 p.m. at San Raffaele Hospital in Milan. The death of the singer-songwriter, who had just turned 80 in July, was reported to ANSA by his manager Danilo Mancuso, who explained how "after a long illness, the singer's conditions had worsened in recent months." The world-famous artist had been hospitalized for months at Milan's San Raffaele Hospital. Cutugno was one of the most popular Italian performers on a global scale. He was the winner of the 1990 Eurovision Song Contest with his song "Insieme: 1992".



He was also one of the most successful Italian songwriters of all time, having written for artists such as Dalida, Adriano Celentano and Domenico Modugno. Cutugno was considered a veritable ambassador of Italian music in the world, especially in countries such as Romania, Spain, Turkey, Germany and Russia. His song "L'Italiano", released in 1983, has been translated into many languages and is considered a symbol of Italian culture and identity.

MUORE A 80 ANNI TOTO CUTUGNO

L'artista di fama mondiale era ricoverato da mesi all'ospedale San Raffaele di Milano Toto Cutugno, uno dei massimi interpreti della musica italiana, è morto 22 agosto 2023 intorno alle 16. presso l'Ospedale San Raffaele di Milano. La morte del cantautore, che aveva appena compiuto 80 anni a luglio, è stata denunciata all'ANSA dal suo manager Danilo Mancuso, che ha spiegato come "dopo una lunga malattia, le condizioni del cantante erano peggiorate negli ultimi mesi". Cutugno è stato uno degli interpreti italiani più apprezzati a livello mondiale, vincitore dell'Eurovision Song Contest 1990 con il brano "Insieme: 1992". È stato anche uno dei cantautori italiani di maggior successo di tutti i tempi, avendo scritto per artisti come Dalida, Adriano Celentano e Domenico Modugno. Cutugno era considerato un vero e proprio ambasciatore della musica italiana nel mondo, soprattutto in paesi come Romania, Spagna, Turchia, Germania e Russia. La sua canzone "L'Italiano", pubblicata nel 1983, è stata tradotta in molte lingue ed è considerata un simbolo della cultura e dell'identità italiana.

KANYE WEST AND WIFE BIANCA CENSORI REPORTEDLY BANNED FROM WATER TAXI IN VENICE

The Daily Mail Australia reports that the couple has been banned for life from a Venice water taxi rental company for indecent exposure. Last week, the rapper was captured by paparazzi sitting with his buttocks exposed while Censori's head seemed to rest on his crotch, insinuating that the two were engaging in inappropriate behavior.

In a statement shared with the tabloid, Venezia Turismo Motoscafi confirmed West and Censori "will certainly no longer be welcome on board our company's boats." It's one of the most popular private water taxi companies and is often used by celebrities from Lady Gaga to Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck during the Venice Film Festival.

KANYE WEST E LA MOGLIE BIANCA CENSORI SAREBBERO VIETATI DAL TAXI A VENEZIA

Il Daily Mail Australia riporta che la coppia è stata bandita a vita da una compagnia di noleggio taxi acquei di Venezia per atti osceni. La scorsa settimana, il rapper è stato catturato dai paparazzi seduto con le natiche scoperte mentre la testa di Censori sembrava appoggiata sul suo inguine, insinuando



che i due stessero adottando un comportamento inappropriato. In un comunicato diffuso al tabloid, Venezia Turismo Motoscafi ha confermato che West e Censori "non saranno sicuramente più i benvenuti a bordo delle imbarcazioni della nostra azienda". È una delle compagnie di taxi acquei privati più apprezzate, spesso utilizzata dalle celebrità durante la Mostra del Cinema di Venezia, da Lady Gaga a Jennifer Lopez e Ben Affleck.

MEMBER'S ONLY
GRAND OPENING
FREE THANKSGIVING DINNER
OCTOBER 26, 2023 | 6:00PM

MEMBER EXCLUSIVE

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION AT WWW.ITALIANAMERICAN.COM OR CALL 518-456-4222

OCTOBER 2023 / 13

LA VITA SOCIALE



On September 13th, we traveled to the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y. and had a wonderful experience. The highlight of our visit was a fantastic three-course lunch at the renowned Bocus restaurant. Dining with friends from the IACC certainly added to the enjoyment. The campus of the institute is truly remarkable, with its picturesque beauty. Additionally, we were highly impressed by the warm and friendly nature of the students we met during our time there.



Chair Yoga is a gentle form of yoga that is practiced sitting in a chair or standing using the chair for support. Remember to wear loose comfortable clothing!



DATE CORRECTION ⇨

CHAIR YOGA IS BEGINNING A NEW 8 WEEK SESSION

This class is enjoyed by so many and is returning for an 8-week fall session. Classes will be on Thursdays at 6:00 p.m.

The new dates are October 5th through November 30th.

The class is held upstairs in the Caruso Room. Classes are open to men and women.

Please call the membership office at 456-IACC (4222) to sign up.

The price is for 8 weeks is \$60.00 or \$10.00 per class to walk in.

Bocce Champions



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GIANTS FOR WINNING THE 2023 MEN'S BOCCIE LEAGUE SUPER BOWL. THE GIANTS ARE JACK LIBERIS, BOB VINE, GEORGE URCHIOLI AND TONY VINE.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Hello ladies,

Summer is finally over and autumn is upon us. Time for apple picking, pumpkin carving, maybe a vineyard tour and a little wine tasting and, of course, Halloween. This month, we also celebrate the 50th anniversary of the IACC at the Columbus Day Gala on October 21st. It is not only a time for celebration, it is also a time to remember those visionaries who had the foresight to bring us to where we are today. The IACC is not only a place to come together socially, but it's a place to share our Italian heritage with each other. The IACC is an amazing place with many members who have become a second family to many of us. This holds true for me, especially over the last few years since my mother's death. I still can spend time with people speaking Italian and cooking dishes that bring back so many memories from long ago. May we be the stewards and continue this for another 50 years.

Last month the Women's League met for one last time at the pavilion for our Mexican themed dinner. In our typical fashion, we had more food than we could eat. The tables looked like a Mexican Fiesta, with a little bit of Italy!! Our next meeting will be on October 11th at 6:00 pm, upstairs in the Caruso room. We will have a catered meal from Luigi's Deli Fiorello Importing. The price will be \$15 per person. If you are planning on attending, please contact Darlene Carino at (315) 266-7726 or e-mail her at darlenecarino27@gmail.com by Monday October 9th.

November 3rd is the American Heart Association Capital Region Go Red for Women Luncheon at The Albany Capital Center. Join us to Go Red and improve women's heart health. The program runs from 10:30 am - 1:30 pm and includes a heart healthy lunch, health screenings, silent auction and Hands - Only CPR Training.



Tickets for a table of 8 are \$125 (or ~\$16 per person). If you're interested in joining us, please contact Gretchen Van Valkenburg @ (518) 598-2418 by October 20th.

Christmas time is drawing near and we are looking for individuals to portray Mr. & Mrs. Claus at our annual Christmas Tree Lighting & Family Party on December 3rd. We are also looking for cookie bakers, tray assemblers and delivery people. We would like to send the cookies to local hospitals and nursing homes. Please contact Donna Zumbo or myself if you are interested.

As the winter months will soon be here, we will continue to collect for the Capital City Rescue Mission. Their biggest request is for hats, gloves, sweaters and coats. These items can be new or gently used. Please feel free to contact me and we can arrange pick up of items. The warm summer weather is finally gone but remember it's only 85 days till Christmas!!

Georgjeann Greene
PRESIDENT



It's the Ottima Zucca/Great Pumpkin

& Halloween in Italy



Hey Charlie Brown, The Great Pumpkin is Italian!

Stefano Cutrupi, a farmer from Radda in Chianti, Tuscany, broke the world record for the heaviest pumpkin on September 26, 2021. His monster zucca weighed in at 2,702 lb. 13.9 oz. The 2022 winner from England fell short of his record by nearly 100 pounds. Stefano's entry in 2022 finished 7th in that year's competition. As this article is being written, the competition is underway, and we shall see if Stefano retains his world record. The Great Pumpkin Commonwealth (GPC), an international organization that maintains records for giant pumpkins and other large vegetables, recognized this record. The GPC holds weigh-off events worldwide where pumpkin growers can compete to see who has grown the heaviest of these giant gourds.

Pumpkins have different cultural associations. In America, pumpkins are associated with fall and Halloween. Pumpkin pie and pumpkin-flavored products have also become popular. In Italy, pumpkin



has been used in cuisine since the 16th century, with the Marina di Chioggia/Mantua pumpkin being the most sought-after for its sweet flesh and rich flavor. There isn't a dish in which you can't use pumpkin: baked or barbecued, puréed, diced in soups, fried or grilled. Not many people know that the flowers of the zucca can also be used just like zucchini flowers by breeding and then frying them; the seeds are a healthy snack, roasted or salted, and are known as brustolini locally.

Pumpkin tortelli/tortelloni are traditional as part of Christmas dinner. Equally tasty are risottos, gnocchi, lasagna, numerous pasta dishes, and pumpkin soup or baked pumpkin. There are also surprising jams, mostarda (chutney), pumpkin, and caramel puddings. The Marina di Chioggia/Mantua pumpkins have unique skin tones and sweeter flesh. Like the pig, people would say, "Nothing of a pumpkin cannot be used."

THE PUMPKINS OF ITALY

The ancient Romans loved pumpkins and even had a display at Palazzo Te in Mantua featuring a mosaic portrait of the renowned poet Virgil with pumpkins in the background. *Zucca Mantovana* or Mantua pumpkin is known for its special connection to the local folk, as seen in their sayings: "L'è meì na fèta ad süca in pace che n'arost in guera" is an old saying (a piece of pumpkin in peace is better than a roast in war) or this one "Cun süca e fasoei as tira su i fioei" (with pumpkin and beans your sons grow big." The Mantuan pumpkin is unique, with a rounded turban-like shape, a wrinkled gray-green exterior that is hard to peel, and a dense, bright yellow/orange flesh with a sweet, almost almond-like flavor due to its high sugar content. The pumpkin can weigh between 1 and 5 kg. Visitors can see Halloween pumpkins on display in autumn and watch locals burn sugar cane thickets along the river, creating a beautiful red sky over the valley.



The Capello pumpkin is a unique variety that has recently gained popularity. It stands out from the Mantua pumpkin due to its hat-like shape, which is divided into an upper and lower part resembling the headwear worn by priests. On the other hand, the Mantua pumpkin has a rounded, turban-like shape. This pumpkin is grown in the quaint village of Quistello on the Secchia River and is known for its valuable seeds. Quistello, with a population of only 5,000, is known as the pumpkin capital and has a special designation of origin. Every October, Quistello celebrates its unique local heritage with a pumpkin festival. The harvesting of the pumpkins starts in September and is done manually. A harvested pumpkin can last for several months. This region, which has around 30 villages along the Po River, hosts pumpkin festivals, farmers markets, and cooking classes from September to December to honor the pumpkin and its rich cultural heritage.

SIAMO QUI NEWSLETTER



Like many other countries, Italy has its own version of the festival of the dead – All Soul's Day. It is celebrated on November 2 and is a religious holiday. The increasing popularity of pagan festivals caused Pope Gregory II to move All Saints' Day (*Ognissanti*), which honors all saints and martyrs who died for the Church, to November 1, and he established All Souls' Day, November 2 (*Il Giorno dei Morti*). Halloween has been linked to *Ognissanti* or All Saints' Day. Since the beginning, the word 'Halloween' is derived from 'All Hallows' Eve': 'the eve of all saints.'

Throughout Italy, there are spooky destinations for those seeking a Halloween thrill. There's something for everyone, from dark catacombs with haunting histories to massive crypts filled with mummies. Borgo a Mozzano, located an hour north of Pisa and 90 minutes from Florence, boasts Italy's first and largest Halloween celebration. Halloween enthusiasts in Italy on October 31 should not miss this spine-chilling event. The Passage of Terror, a spine-tingling trail using the Devil's Bridge (shown here), and the Black Night, an immersive game set in the historical region of Tuscia will satisfy the bravest Halloween fans.





In Rome, visitors can explore some of the country's most macabre attractions, such as the Saint Priscilla and Saint Sebastian catacombs and the renowned Capuchin Crypt. It is this crypt which features walls, chandeliers, and clocks made from the skulls of former monks.



Triora, a village on the Italian-French border in Liguria, holds a special place in Halloween history due to its infamous 16th-century witch trials. Today, the town has an annual Halloween festival featuring events throughout the day and concerts that go on long into the night. In Orsara, Puglia, they celebrate the night of *Fucacoste e Cocce Priatorje* ('bonfires and heads of purgatory'). The 'cocce' are carved pumpkins, originally in the shape of a cross, containing lit candles. This festival probably dates back as far as the year 1000.

For a genuinely Halloween-focused experience, travelers can visit Corinaldo in the Le Marche region, which boasts itself as the Italian Capital of Halloween. During the last week of October, the medieval walled town (shown here) offers frightening attractions, entertainment, and taverns, culminating with a grand music, fire, and light show on Halloween night. On the 'Night of Purgatory,' the night between November 1st and 2nd, pumpkins with the symbol of the cross were left in front of houses to drive the souls of the damned away from the evening banquet, which only good souls could participate in.

Pumpkins are also traditional in Calabria, especially in Serra San Bruno. Children carve a pumpkin to represent a *coccalu di muortu* (a skull), then wander the streets (shown here) asking, 'Mi lu pagati lu coccalu?' ('Will you pay me for the skull?'), something very similar to our own 'trick-or-treat?' In the Abruzzo region, pumpkins are called 'cocce de morte' (literally dead people's heads) and



are carried around by children. They knock on doors and say, '*l'aneme de le morte!*' (The soul of the dead) and the householder has to offer sweets, dried fruit, or some coins.

In the North of Italy in Friuli, the ancient Celtic New Year (October 31) is still celebrated with the *Fiesta dalis Muars*. In the local dialect, *muars* means pumpkin. These are hollowed out, lit, and placed in front of one's house to ward off the entrance of spirits. In many places in Italy, it is a custom to make special sweets, called *dolci dei morti* (cakes of the dead), to celebrate one's deceased relatives on November 2 -the day of the dead. These recipes vary from region to region.

Halloween is much less of an event in Italy than in America. Certain areas enjoy their customs, but trick or treating is rare, except for the larger towns and cities. Italians believe sending your children to strangers' doors seeking treats is not wise. Young children typically celebrate with costume parties during the day, followed by trick-or-treating in the city center, where local shops often hand out candy. Many venues, such as nightclubs, bars, and restaurants host Halloween costume parties for adults at night.

It should be noted that traditional Italian costumes tend to be spooky, including characters such as zombies, vampires, and witches. Italians perceive costumes that do not align with this theme as unusual. You won't find too many Superman or Wonder Woman costumes there. □

VA Veterans Soon to be Moms Luncheon

On September 22nd, we once again organized a luncheon in collaboration with our local VA hospital to honor and support veterans who are welcoming a new addition to their families in 2023. This year, the Stratton VA hosted a second baby shower, building on the success of the previous event held in May. So far, over 2,400 new veteran parents and parents-to-be have participated in this program nationwide. Thanks to the support from partners like the I.A.C.C. Foundation, each participant received gifts and enjoyed a delicious and nutritious lunch.



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October Birthdays



Condolences

Condolences to the family, of the passing of Lifetime Member, **Ann Keneston**.

Ann was an incredibly dedicated and highly involved member of various organizations. She played an active role in the Women's League, Bocce, and the Bingo

Committee, where she contributed her time and efforts to ensure the success of these groups. Additionally, she took on the responsibility of coordinating all the volunteers for the festivals, showcasing her exceptional leadership skills and commitment to these events.

She was predeceased by: her parents, Pasquale Mucci and Concetta Mucci; her husband Millard J. Keneston (Bud); her siblings, Phillip Mucci (Angelina), Anthony Mucci (Mary) and Isabella Mancini (Nick); and her son Millard Keneston. She is survived by her brother-in-law, Nick Mancini, also a lifetime member.

Ann's dedication, involvement, and ability to overcome adversity have left a lasting impact on those who knew her. Her contributions to the I.A.C.C. she was a part of and her unwavering commitment to her loved ones will be remembered and cherished by all.



The best part of summer ending is the abundance of homegrown tomatoes. Many Italians, including my grandmother, would use the season's bounty and jar them to be used all year long in their "Sunday sauce."

Another great use for them is to make Bruschetta. This classic appetizer is a perfect way to capture the flavors of garden-ripened tomatoes, fresh basil, onions, garlic, and olive oil. It's ideal for any party. I usually make a large batch when the homegrown tomatoes are plentiful, that way I can serve it all year.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 4 to 5 plum tomatoes (approx. 1.5 lbs.)
- 1 medium sized onion (white or yellow)
- 6 cloves of fresh garlic
- 5-7 large basil leaves
- ½ cup of fresh chopped Italian parsley
- ¼ cup of extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup of parmesan cheese
- Salt (to taste)
- Pepper (to taste)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Clean the tomatoes well and cut them into quarters. I leave the skin on, but you can remove the skin if you like. Cut the onion into strips. I always use white onions, but you can use yellow or red.
2. Chop the parsley and cut the garlic in half.
3. Add the tomatoes, onions, garlic, basil, parsley, and half of the olive oil in a food processor. Blend for a few seconds on high until the mixture is chopped but not pureed (be careful not to liquify the mix).
4. In a mesh strainer, add the mixture and move the mixture around using a rubber spatula so all the water drains out. Do this until almost all the water is gone.
5. Transfer the mixture to a mixing bowl and add the rest of the olive oil and the parmesan cheese. Salt and pepper to taste. You can adjust the flavor if there isn't enough garlic by adding granulated garlic or if the tomatoes are not as sweet as you would like by adding white sugar. If the tomatoes are ripe, you won't need any sugar.

Tomato Bruschetta



6. Put the mixture in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours, but overnight is better if you can. This will give the bruschetta a chance to meld the flavors of all the ingredients together.

Toast a slice of Italian bread and place some of the bruschetta on top. For added flavor, you can also drizzle a little balsamic vinegar on top. This recipe can be doubled or tripled if you want to make a larger batch like I do. I hope you enjoy it!

Look for more recipes in the next edition of the **SIAMO QUI**





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