

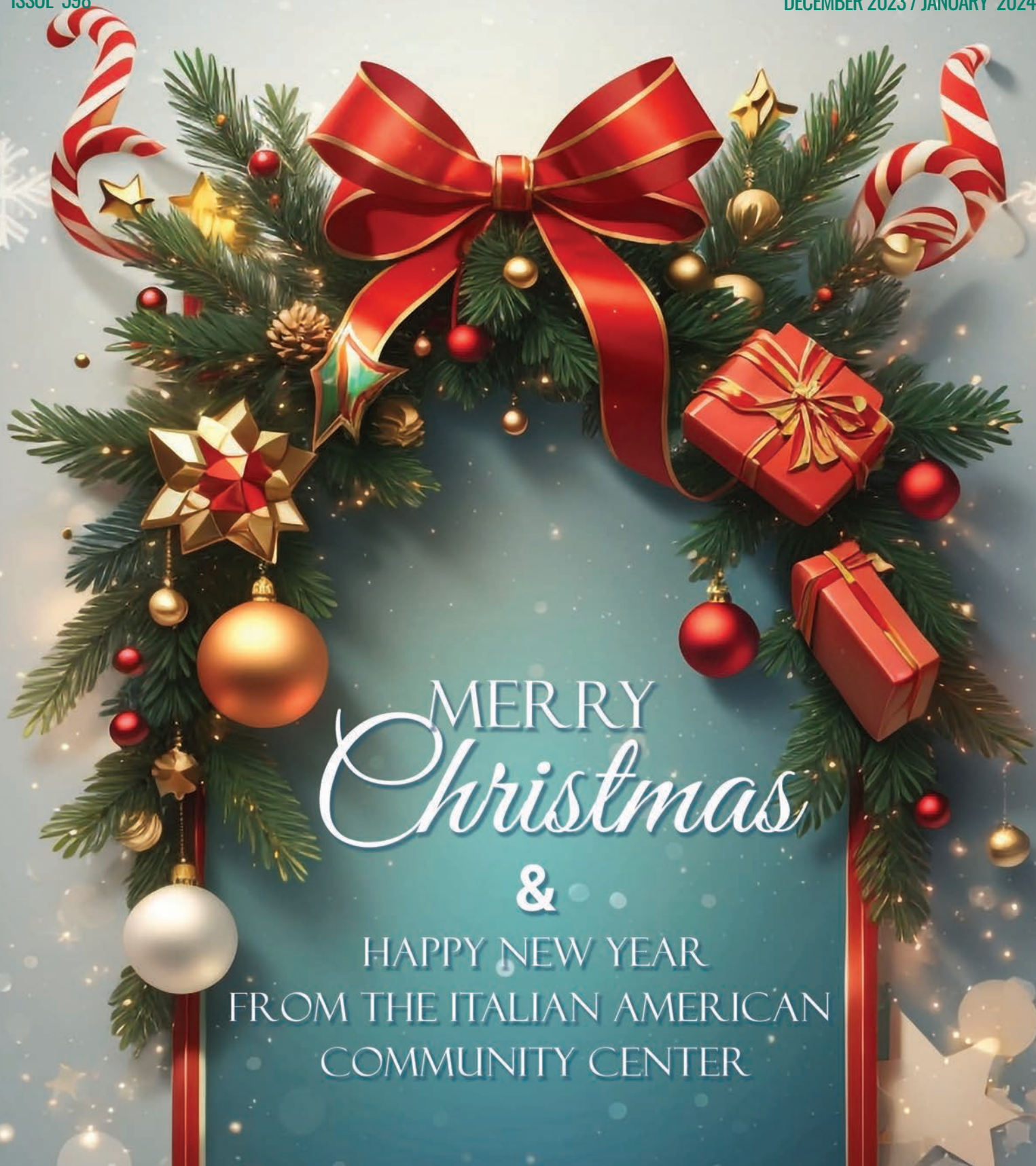


"WE ARE HERE"

Siamo Qui

ISSUE 598

DECEMBER 2023 / JANUARY 2024



MERRY
Christmas

&

HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM THE ITALIAN AMERICAN
COMMUNITY CENTER



IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Current I.A.C.C. Memberships expire Friday, December 31st, 2023
Membership renewal starts Tuesday, December 26, 2023.
New enrollment begins January 2nd 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.
(A 3% service fee will be added on credit card payments).

Thank You For Being A Member.

Here's To An Amazing 2024 At The Club!

NEWS & EVENTS

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SOCIAL CALENDAR

DECEMBER & JANUARY

- 12/03/23 ~ IACC Member Christmas Party & Tree Lighting - 4:00 pm
- 12/04/23 ~ Monday Grand Italian Buffet - 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
- 12/09/23 ~ Experience Little Italy Christmas: Arthur Ave Bus Trip - 8:45 am
- 12/17/23 ~ Sunday Brunch 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
- 12/13/23 ~ I.A.C.C. Women's League Meeting - Special Time - 5:30 pm
- 12/25/23 ~ Merry Christmas - I.A.C.C. Membership Office Closed
- 01/01/24 ~ Happy New Year - I.A.C.C. Membership Office Closed
- 01/08/24 ~ Monday Grand Italian Buffet - 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
- 01/10/24 ~ No Women's League Meeting - Winter Break
- 01/21/24 ~ Sunday Brunch - 10:00 am - Noon

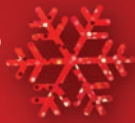
Upcoming Events:

- 02/11/24 Super Bowl 58 Party - 4:00 pm - 10:00 pm
- 02/22/24 Chair Yoga Begins - 6:00 pm
- 02/26/24 Intermediate Italian Language Classes Begin - 7:00 pm
- 03/15/24 Saint Patrick - Saint Joseph Mass and Brunch - 11:00 am
- 03/23/24 Arthur Avenue "Little Italy in the Bronx" Spring Bus Trip - 8:45 am



2024
Happy
New Year

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I can't believe another year is over. This year was remarkable for the IACC as we celebrated our 50th anniversary. Looking back, we held numerous cultural events, took several bus trips, had a record-breaking pavilion and pool season, reopened the first floor of our club after a 1.2-million-dollar renovation, and held a grand gala to celebrate not only our golden jubilee but our Italian heritage.

Our 50-year-old Italian club continues to thrive and be a place *where strangers become friends, and friends become family*. I take great pride in that our club means so much to so many people, and I am excited to be a part of that legacy now and in the future.

It has been a great year but isn't over yet; we still have plenty of fun to come. On December 3rd, we will host our annual member Christmas Party and Tree Lighting. This event is free for members; however, guests of members are welcome for a fee. On December 9th, we will make our annual pilgrimage to Arthur Avenue in the Bronx to get all our Italian delicacies in time for Christmas. Unfortunately, the trip is sold out, but we are going again on March 23rd, so mark your calendars.

Finally, I wish you and your family Buon Natale e Felice Anno Nuovo (Merry Christmas & Happy New Year).

Ciao,

FRANK ZEOLI
ITALIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER
PRESIDENT



I.A.C.C. OFFICERS

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THERESA LAJOY- OFFICE MANAGER
PHONE # (518) 456-4222
EMAIL: IACCOFFICE@ITALIANAMERICAN.COM



IACG MEMBER CHRISTMAS PARTY & TREE LIGHTING

DECEMBER 3, 2023
4:00PM TO 7:00PM

ENJOY A FAMILY -STYLE DINNER, DESSERT,
CHRISTMAS MUSIC AND HOLIDAY FUN!

FREE FOR MEMBERS

GUESTS OF MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

CHILDREN | \$15.00 ❄️ ADULTS | \$25.00

**MEMBER
EXCLUSIVE**

Mysterious Octagonal Castel del Monte of Puglia



By JIM SANO

What do you know about the mysterious place whose image is depicted on the Italian 1 Euro cent coin? When I began my research for this project, I initially thought it would be just another castle, and I admit I was not very enthusiastic about it. Who ordered construction with frescoes and statues, and why did this one need to be more opulent than all the others? But, as with many preconceived thoughts, I couldn't have been more wrong; this castle is like no other one in the world.

Castel del Monte, located on the Pugliese Murgia plateau, is a famous cultural site in Puglia and a World Heritage Site named by UNESCO in 1996. Built by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen of Swabia in 1237, the Castle is a masterpiece of medieval military architecture constructed of limestone, white marble, and coral breccia. It is the thirteenth most visited Italian state site, with over 200,000 visitors annually.

Castel del Monte, located in the Murgia region of Apulia, is a distinctive octagonal castle and is a source of much discussion and admiration among historians. It is considered the most important building built by Frederick II and is the subject of much controversy and debate.

Frederick II was a polymath (an expert in multiple fields of study or knowledge) with diverse talents and

interests. He was fluent in multiple languages and had extensive mathematics, astronomy, astrology, natural sciences, and physics knowledge. Many regarded him as the last "Pharaoh" during his reign; some even saw him as a new Messiah. His experiences in the Middle East during the Crusades significantly influenced his thinking. The design of Castel del Monte was carefully planned, with its strategic location, complex octagonal shape, precise mathematical proportions, astronomical accuracy, and repetitive use of the number 8, holding symbolic significance in every aspect.

Castel del Monte is a unique medieval architectural work that combines cultural elements from classical antiquity, the Islamic Orient, and North European Cistercian Gothic. The Castle is considered a masterpiece of architecture that reflects Frederick's humanistic ideals. Its octagonal plan symbolizes the intermediary geometric form between the infinite (the circle meaning heaven and God) and the earthly dimension (the square meaning humanity and the Earth), symbolizing elevation.

The most iconic feature of the



Castle is its octagonal shape, which may have been inspired by the octagonal crown used to crown Frederick II as Emperor. The octagonal floor plan consists of eight towers with spiral staircases and eight vaulted rooms on each trapezoidal floor, forming an octagonal perimeter with interconnecting doors. The eight towers also have cisterns to collect rainwater for plumbing, a remarkable feature for the 13th century. There is only one entrance, no kitchen, and an octagonal courtyard in the center of the Castle. The mystery of the Castle's shape has intrigued many scholars and researchers, and several theories have been proposed. Some suggest connections to astronomy, while others point to esotericism and links to Cheops' pyramid. The Castle also features astrological elements, including two lions above the columns at the entrance that indicate the summer and winter solstices. This hidden symbolism has made Castel del Monte a mysterious octagonal puzzle scientists have attempted to solve for centuries.

One major debate topic among historians is Castel del Monte's purpose. Why was an octagonal castle built in the middle of nowhere? Some suggest it was made in a crown to symbolize Frederick's magnificence and ego. In contrast, others believe it was an astronomical observatory due to its open roof that allows visitors to see only a specific part of the sky. Some suggest that the building might have been a hunting lodge because Frederick liked hunting with birds and even wrote a guide about it. However, the Castle seems too elaborate for a simple hunting lodge, and there is no evidence that he ever used it. Finally, some question if it was part of Frederick's network of defensive castles, as its position is not strategic and lacks defensive walls and standard elements like drawbridges and moats. Instead, it features enormous, marble-covered rooms worthy of a lavish royal residence.

So, was Castel del Monte a palace? Unfortunately, its shape and lack of functional living spaces, such as kitchens and adequate fireplaces, suggest otherwise. However, the 26-meter-high walls and thick, quartz-bearing limestone

towers indicate it was more than a residence. Some historians believe it was conceived as a temple of knowledge, a place for the emperor to dedicate time to science, literature, and the arts, or simply a retreat for relaxation.

Historians continue to debate the Castle's mysteries, including its purpose and possible connections to the Knights Templar. Other questions include the meaning of the number 8, numerology, and using the Fibonacci Sequence in the Castle's design. Who planned the layout that utilizes astrology, mythology, and complex mathematics?

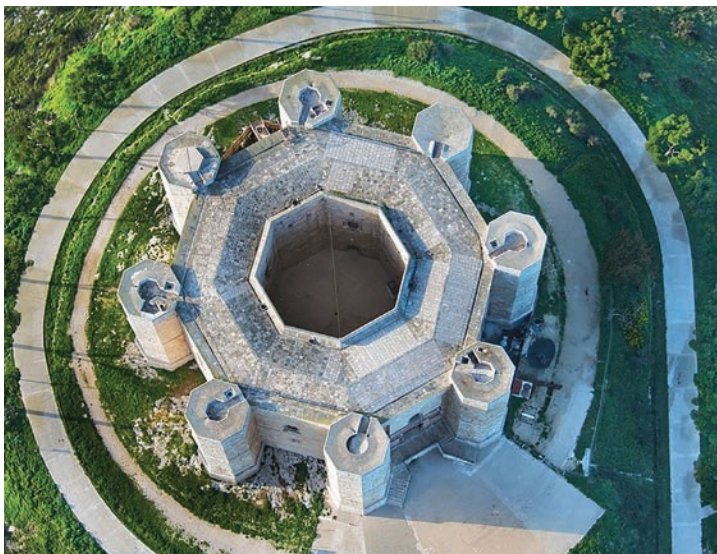
Let's start with the last question first. Who designed and built Castel del Monte? Unfortunately, this mystery remains unsolved after years of study and investigation. The architect-builder is unknown.

How was the Castle connected to the Knights of Templar? Templars were mysterious knights bound by the rules of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They wore a white cloak with a red cross on the left shoulder (patent cross) and followed a strict daily routine, including waking up early and keeping their hair short or shaved. Legends suggest that they knew the secrets of poisons and alchemy, revered black cats, practiced necrophilia, hid vast treasures, and constructed octagonal buildings.

Below are some popular scholarly ideas regarding the connection between Castel del Monte and the Knights Templar.

- The unique shape and octagonal towers of the Castle are believed to symbolize a large Grail Cup, where one can experience true magic and alchemy.
- It is thought that the Templars built their structures based on astronomical and esoteric principles that were not found in the skills of other builders at that time.
- Puglia was one of the eleven provinces in which the Templars had estates.
- The Castle shares the same meridian as the Cathedral of Chartres, Milan Duomo, and Egyptian pyramids.
- Castel del Monte is thought to be a giant obelisk that responds to the sun, a source of heat and life.
- The Legend of the Holy Grail: This chalice may have been hidden here at some stage in its mysterious history.
- The Castle is located almost halfway between the French cathedral and the Sphinx of Cheops.

What is the significance and meaning of 8, Numerology, and the Fibonacci Sequence in constructing Castel del Monte? Historians have many theories about the hidden meanings behind using the number 8 in the Castle's construction. Some believe the Castle was designed to symbolize the universe's perfection and the emperor's desire to connect with God. The octagon is an intermediary symbol between a square (representing the Earth) and a circle (representing heaven). There are also theories that Frederick II was inspired by the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem or the Palatine Chapel of Aachen Cathedral,

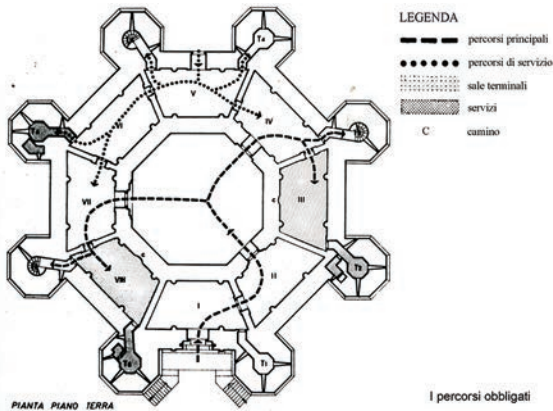




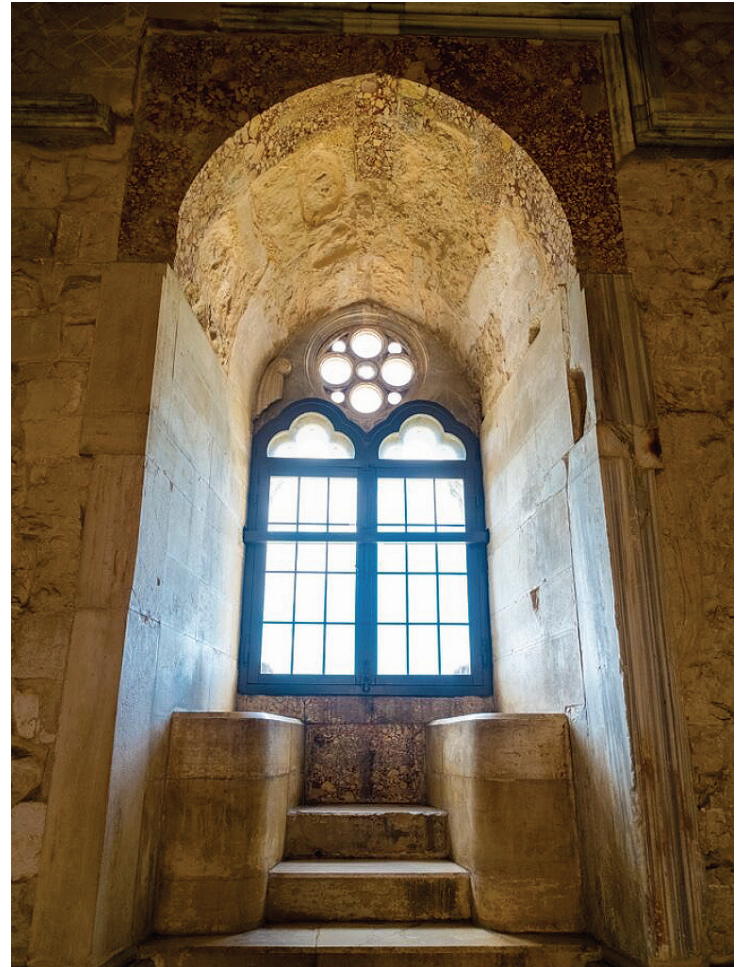
which he saw during the Sixth Crusade. The number 8 has been associated with the union of Earth and the sky since ancient times, and its horizontal position resembles the mathematical infinity symbol. ∞

In Germanic religions, the number 8 symbolized the resurrection and represented the eight months between the disappearance and appearance of the Pleiades and the goddess Nerthus. Additionally, every eighth year was considered a leap year to align the 13 Germanic months with 28 days.

In Christianity, according to biblical tradition, God rested on the seventh day, and on Sunday, the eighth day, Jesus rose from the dead. The number eight thus became associated with new birth, baptism, and the New Covenant in Christian number symbolism during the Middle Ages. The octagonal form of early Christian baptisteries embodies this meaning of the eighth day and the eight people who survived the Flood according to biblical tradition, symbolizing God's covenant with humanity (Noah's covenant), which was renewed by Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection.



Sacred geometry is prominently featured throughout the design of Castel del Monte. The number 8 was logically chosen as the imperial number, reflected in the basic octagonal form of imperial buildings. The imperial crown was also octagonal, not round. Castel del Monte features the number 8 in its structure, with 8 rooms on each ground and second floor and 8 towers. The rooms are trapezoidal and arranged to form additional octagons. The lower part of the pediment and



the top of the columns in Castle del Monte contain 21 carvings, with 34 four-leaf clovers interspersed among them and 17 double-splayed slots. In numerology, 21 is considered a sacred number as it is formed from the numbers 2 and 1, which equate to 3. The numbers 8 and 3 represent perfection and are recurring themes in the Castle's design. The Castle's entrance has three rose windows and three mullioned windows. Additionally, on the wall to the right of the door is a Pythagorean triangle, symbolizing truth. These two numbers belong to the divine series identified by mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci, who introduced the Arabic numeral system to Europe. It is speculated that Frederick II's meeting with Fibonacci during the founding of the University of Naples in 1224 may explain the obsessive repetition of the number eight in the construction of Castle del Monte.

The Fibonacci Sequence is visibly carved in concrete at the Castle. The Sequence begins with 0, 1, and 1 again, and each subsequent number is the sum of the two preceding it: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, etc. Starting from the fifth position, the ratio between each number and the previous one is the golden ratio (approximately 1.618). The golden ratio has been called the "Number of God," as all the dimensional relationships of the human body's parts obey this sacred numerical constant. According to numerological considerations and

the golden implications, the Castle's dimensions are also related to the Fibonacci Sequence. For example, there are 34 four-leaf clovers, 21 carvings, 13 single-lancet windows facing the courtyard, 8 towers, 8 lower-floor rooms, 8 upper-floor rooms, 8 curtains, 8 windows facing from the upper floor to the outside, 5 fireplaces, and 5 hanging cisterns. Additionally, there are 3 towers with spiral staircases, 2 entrances, and 1 Castle. Each number belongs to the Fibonacci series, just as every dimensional relationship of the Castle develops according to the aforementioned golden constant.

The mathematical precision of Castel del Monte's layout, based on the number eight, allowed the building to be positioned in such a way as to create two special symmetries of light. The first of these symmetries occurs during the summer solstice and winter equinox when the Sun's rays hit a certain point of the Castle where the two-entryway lions look at the entrance door. The second remarkable symmetry occurs at certain times of the day, when the Sun's illumination casts shadows in the octagonal courtyard, forming the Golden Ratio used in the Fibonacci Sequence. Frederick II was not just any sovereign but an intellectual who knew astronomy and classical culture well. For readers interested in further relationships between Castel del Monte, Numerology, or Knights of Templar, a complete text may be found at the following link:



<https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/7db6f91b/files/uploaded/ACADEMY%20OF%20TEMPLARI%20handbook%20.pdf>

What gave rise to the belief of Frederick II as the new Messiah? We need not look any further than Frederick himself. In addition to his brilliance, Frederick had a troubling streak of megalomania. He encouraged people to compare him to Jesus Christ, and when he conquered Jerusalem during the Sixth Crusade, he emulated Christ's ride into the city. One of his famous sayings was: "I am second only to Jesus."

Frederick was a Hohenstaufen, a member of the noble and warlike German family that had controlled much of modern-day Germany and Italy. He was King of Sicily from 1198, Roman-German King from 1212, Emperor of the Roman-German Empire from 1220 until his death, and the grandson of the famous Barbarossa. On his mother's side, Frederick was a member of the Norman aristocracy of the island of Sicily. He fought against the Saracens in Sicily, the Mongols, the communes of Italy, and the various high chiefs of Germany. However, he fought most fiercely with the Pope. His years in power were marked by disputes with the Pope and his struggle for legitimacy as emperor.

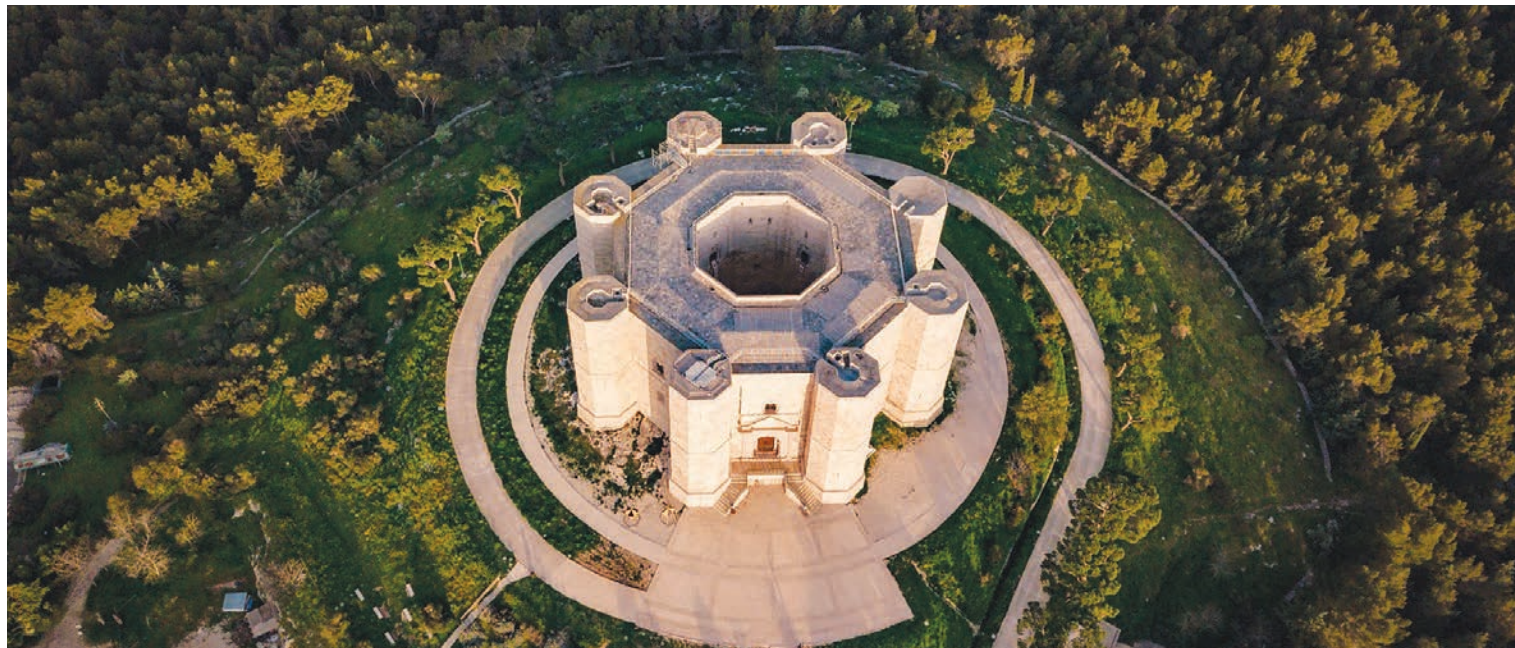
Frederick was a tolerant ruler, a modern humanist leader, and protective of Sicily's Jewish and Muslim minorities. He brought scholars together from throughout the Mediterranean, combining Eastern and Western traditions to satisfy his curiosity about the world. Known to his admirers as "stupor mundi," the wonder of the world, Frederick was one of the great personalities of the High Middle Ages. Frederick's concept of the emperor's function was rooted in the ideology of the late Greco-Roman period and the Judeo-Christian philosophy of the Middle Ages. However, Frederick's belief in the sacredness and universal character of being a sovereign ruler, his openness to Muslim customs, and his unwillingness to follow the Pope's orders caused tension with the papacy. As a result, Frederick was branded a heretic and antichrist by Pope Gregory IX and was excommunicated.

In October 1238, Frederick's son Enzo married Sardinian princess Adelasia and thus became the King of Sardinia, which the papacy controlled at the time. The Pope feared that the Papal States would be isolated and encircled, mainly because a pro-imperial party had been formed in Rome. Under the pretext that the emperor intended to drive him from Rome, Pope Gregory IX, who deeply distrusted Frederick, excommunicated Frederick for the second time on Palm Sunday, March 20, 1239.

Frederick countered the ex-communication with a manifesto that emphasized the cardinal's role in the church's leadership and demanded the church return to the poverty and saintliness goals of the early Christian community. In addition, he tried to evoke solidarity among the secular princes of Europe to join in a defensive league against the power-hungry prelates. However, the papacy countered by branding the emperor as the anti-Christ and began a smear campaign accusing Frederick of many unsavory acts.

Frederick II and his army took the offensive, occupying the March of Ancona and the Duchy of Spoleto. In February 1240, his army marched into the Papal States and threatened Rome. At the last moment, however, the Pope won the support of the Romans. While still encamped before Rome, Frederick received the news of Pope Gregory's death and withdrew to Sicily.

In 1243 Innocent IV was elected Pope; Frederick, urged on by German princes and King Louis IX of France, opened negotiations with the new Pope. Agreement between the Pope and the emperor seemed close on the evacuation of the Papal States when in June 1244, Pope Innocent fled to Lyon, France. In Lyon, in July 1245, Pope Innocent convened a council that no longer recognized the legitimacy of Frederick as the Emperor. Frederick's planned journey to Lyon to plead his case was constantly interrupted by wars and personal tragedies until he died from dysentery in 1250.



In Sicily, a tale emerged that Frederick was conveyed to the Etna volcano, while in Germany, he was thought to be entombed in a mountain, with the belief that he would return as the Emperor in the future to discipline the corrupt church and peacefully reestablish the Holy Roman Empire. Others speculated that his legacy would continue through his descendants. However, all of his descendants met their demise 22 years after he died, falling victim to the altercation initiated by their father against the papacy.

Some scholars highlight similarities noted below between Castel del Monte, the Holy Land, the Temple of Solomon, the Ark of the Covenant, and biblical texts that Frederick II may have considered himself the second Messiah.

- There are 12 entrance steps at Castel del Monte, the same number of steps from the Priests' courtyard to the Temple of Solomon Sanctuary.
- The Seal of Solomon is represented with a floor mosaic in the VIII hall on the ground floor.
- The Star of David in the circular single lancet windows on the walls of rooms I and VI.
- The orientation of the building casts solar projections that evoke biblical events on the bas-relief (molding) in relation to the period of the year.
- Some keystones represent biblical subjects.
- The cistern in the courtyard has the shape of the Ark of the Covenant.
- Castel del Monte's shape mimics the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, whose planimetry is also octagonal.
- The structure isn't aligned to the four cardinal points (North, South, East, and West) but is several degrees west of North, just like the Dome of the Rock.

This list is not definitive; Castel del Monte has too many theories and is always ready to unveil new unexplored mysteries. Magic and mystery aside, no one knows why Frederick II wanted Castel del Monte to be built. The monarch, nicknamed the Wonder of the World for his contributions to developing culture and science, made this extraordinary Castle a reflection of his mysterious personality. Castel del Monte is a unique example of a balance between architecture and the environment; between what's man-made and what has been created by nature. It is much more than an octagonal castle in the middle of nowhere. □



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{ CATERING }

SUNDAY BRUNCH

→ **December 17th &
January 21st**



**December 4th &
January 8th**

← GRAND ITALIAN
BUFFET





SUPER BOWL 58 PARTY



SUNDAY FEBRUARY 11

12 FOOT HD SCREEN

RAFFLES & PRIZES



Doors open: 4:00 pm



Pre-Game Buffet: 5:30 pm

Cost: \$45 for members
\$50 for non members



THE ROCKEFELLER CHRISTMAS TREE TRADITION

As my presidency of the Women's League ends, I have volunteered to write ongoing articles for the newsletter. I'm excited about this new adventure. The column will be called "Did You Ever Wonder?" I've always been curious about the origins of things and the beginnings of traditions. Since it is December, have you ever wondered where the Rockefeller Christmas tree tradition originated?



In 1931, Italian immigrants established a Christmas tradition by erecting the inaugural Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center on Christmas Eve, a gesture of joy

during the challenging times of the Depression. The workers adorned a 20-foot balsam fir tree with an eclectic array of decorations, including string, fruit, fabric, buttons, flowers, caps, cans, and bottles. Two years later, in 1933, this adorned tree officially became a holiday symbol for New Yorkers and visitors alike. The iconic skating rink was later introduced in 1936, further enhancing the festive atmosphere of Rockefeller Center during the holiday season.

In a time of financial hardship, Cesidio Perruzza, born in the 1880s in San Donato Val di Comino, Italy, embarked on a journey to the United States in 1901 at the age of 20. With only a third-grade education, he looked for work in New York City and found his place in the demanding and gritty excavation field. This hazardous labor, typically under the supervision of predominantly Irish supervisors, demanded a great deal of resilience and determination. Despite some tension between the Italian and Irish communities, Cesidio and his fellow Italians received some preferential treatment from their Irish bosses because of their shared Catholic faith.

Perruzza and thousands like him spent the first half of the twentieth century breaking open the earth of Manhattan Island to make way for many iconic buildings that still exist today, including Rockefeller Center, Foley Square Courthouse, and subway tunnels. The Italians were hard workers who were not afraid of dust, rain, freezing cold winters, or blazing hot summers. Whenever rock needed to be blasted, the boss sent in Cesidio, Micca lunga!! (long fuse) or Micca corta!! (short fuse)—Booom!!!

Legend has it that Cesidio collected money from the men to buy the tree. The tree was a tribute to the city that had welcomed them and rescued them from poverty in Italy. It was their way of expressing gratitude for being saved from the horrors of poverty. They cherished the tree, and each year, it grew bigger with more elaborate decorations and lights.

This year's Norway Spruce tree comes from Vestal, NY! It traveled nearly 200 miles to reach the bustling midtown



Manhattan Plaza. As it lay on its side on the trailer, it occupied over half of the NYC block, measuring an impressive 80 feet. And let's not forget about the dazzling decorations! The tree is beautifully adorned with more than 500,000 lights, and on top sits a magnificent Swarovski star ornament, measuring approximately 6 feet in diameter and weighing a whopping 550 lbs.!!

So, when you catch sight of the towering tree glowing with its vibrant multicolored lights, please take a moment to appreciate its humble beginnings over 90 years ago. Reflect on the resourceful and big-hearted Italian immigrant workers who made it possible and the indomitable spirit of the people who came to this country. They pooled their meager resources and started a cherished American tradition.

The decorated tree will remain on display at the entrance of 30 Rockefeller Plaza through January 6, 2024. If you have time, please take your family to see the tree. It is a beautiful sight to behold!! ☐

If anyone has a topic they would like me to research, please get in touch with me at [wdgreene@aol.com](mailto:wdggreene@aol.com).



TELEGRAMMI ...

MESTRE, BUS FALLS FROM AN OVERPASS AND BURNS IN FIRE. THE PREFECTURE: "21 DEAD, TWO ARE CHILDREN, AND 18 INJURED."

Oct 3, 2023 The La Linea transport company bus, which fell near the railway tracks between Mestre and Marghera, had been rented by some tourists from a campsite. Driver illness or a wrong maneuver are the hypotheses being examined for the accident. The toll from the accident in Mestre is 21 dead, two of them children, and 18 injured. The bus, which crashed from the overpass, had been rented by some tourists, many foreigners, who were at a campsite in Marghera. The bus was traveling along the overpass of the link road that leads from Mestre to Marghera and the A4 motorway when, for reasons yet to be ascertained, it crashed just before 8pm, falling about 30 meters. In the first downhill stretch, the bus broke through the parapet and fell down, ending up between a warehouse and the tracks of the Mestre station, then caught fire. Some of the first victims recovered apparently burned to death. The vehicle, powered by a hybrid methane-diesel fuel system, caught fire after touching the electricity cables. Mayor Brugnarò said, "A huge tragedy. The bus involved in the accident was going from Venice to Marghera. He went completely off the road and flew off the bridge. We are in mourning."

MESTRE, BUS PRECIPITA DA UN CAVALCAVIA E VA IN FIAMME. LA PREFETTURA: "21 MORTI, DUE SONO BAMBINI E 18 FERITI"

MESTRE - Oct 3, 2023 Il bus dell'azienda di trasporti La Linea, caduto vicino ai binari della ferrovia tra Mestre e Marghera, era stato noleggiato da alcuni turisti di un campeggio. Malore del conducente

o manovra sbagliata: le ipotesi al vaglio dell'incidente. E' di 21 morti, due sono bambini, e 18 feriti il bilancio dell'incidente avvenuto a Mestre. Il pullman, precipitato dal cavalcavia, era stato noleggiato da alcuni turisti, molti stranieri, che si trovavano in un camping di Marghera. Il bus stava percorrendo il cavalcavia della bretella che da Mestre porta verso Marghera e l'autostrada A4 quando per cause ancora da accertare è precipitato poco prima delle 20 facendo un volo di circa 30 metri. Nel primo tratto in discesa il pullman ha sfondato il parapetto ed è caduto giù finendo tra un magazzino e i binari della stazione di Mestre, poi ha preso fuoco. Alcune delle prime vittime recuperate sarebbero morte carbonizzate. Il mezzo, ad alimentazione ibrida metano-gasolio, avrebbe preso fuoco dopo aver toccato i cavi dell'elettricità. Il sindaco Brugnarò: "Un'immense tragedia. Il pullman coinvolto nell'incidente stava andando da Venezia a Marghera. È uscito completamente di strada, è volato giù dal ponte. Siamo in lutto".

ITALY'S FAR-RIGHT PREMIER MELONI DEFIES FEARS OF HARMING DEMOCRACY AND CLASHING WITH THE EU

BRUSSELS - October 4 - When Giorgia Meloni took office a year ago as the first far-right premier in Italy's post-war history, many in Europe worried about the prospect of the country's democratic backsliding and resistance to European Union rules. The European Commission president issued a decidedly undiplomatic warning that Europe had "the tools" to deal with any member, including Italy, if things went "in a difficult direction." There were fears in Brussels that Rome could join a strident nationalist bloc, notably Hungary and Poland, in a clash with EU democratic standards. But since being sworn in, Meloni, whose Brothers of Italy party has neo-fascist roots, has

confounded Western skeptics. She has steadfastly backed NATO support for Ukraine, especially on military aid for Kyiv against Russia's invasion. That's no small feat. Her main governing coalition partners are parties whose leadership was long marked by pro-Russian sympathies — the League of Matteo Salvini, and Forza Italia, founded by Silvio Berlusconi, the late former premier who was feted at his last birthday with bottles of vodka sent by Russian President Vladimir Putin. The first woman to be Italy's premier, Meloni "won out against Salvini and Berlusconi. She showed that she emancipated herself against these two male leaders," said political analyst Massimo Franco. Since becoming premier, Meloni has topped surveys of eligible voters, hovering near 30% — compared to the 26% of votes her party garnered in the 2022 election. "The lack of a progressive, strongly pro-European alternative is definitely missing in Italy, and that also, of course, helps Meloni feel more stable," said Grossi. For her second year, Meloni pledges to work for a constitutional reform to make the premiership directly chosen by voters, in hopes of producing more stable governments. Currently, Italy's president gives someone, likely able to command a parliamentary majority, the task of forming a government. Since 1946, Italy's governments have lasted an average of 361 days.

IL PREMIER ITALIANO MELONI SFIDA PAURE DI DANNEGGIARE LA DEMOCRAZIA E DI SCONTRO CON L'UE

BRUSSELS- October 4-Quando Giorgia Meloni si insediò un anno fa come primo premier di destra nella storia italiana del dopoguerra, molti in Europa erano preoccupati per la prospettiva di un arretramento democratico del Paese e di una resistenza alle regole dell'Unione Europea. Il presidente

della Commissione europea ha lanciato un avvertimento decisamente poco diplomatico secondo cui l'Europa ha "gli strumenti" per trattare con qualsiasi membro, inclusa l'Italia, se le cose fossero andate "in una direzione difficile". A Bruxelles si temeva che Roma potesse unirsi a uno stridente blocco nazionalista, in particolare Ungheria e Polonia, in uno scontro con gli standard democratici dell'UE. Ma da quando ha prestato giuramento, Meloni, il cui partito Fratelli d'Italia ha radici neofasciste, ha confuso gli scettici occidentali. Ha sostenuto fermamente il sostegno della NATO all'Ucraina, in particolare per quanto riguarda gli aiuti militari a Kiev contro l'invasione della Russia. Non è un'impresa da poco. I suoi principali partner nella coalizione di governo sono partiti la cui leadership è stata a lungo caratterizzata da simpatie filo-russe: la Lega di Matteo Salvini e Forza Italia, fondata da Silvio Berlusconi, il defunto ex premier che è stato festeggiato il suo ultimo compleanno con bottiglie di vodka inviate da Il presidente russo Vladimir Putin. Prima donna a diventare premier in Italia, la Meloni "ha vinto contro Salvini e Berlusconi. Ha dimostrato di emanciparsi contro questi due leader maschi", ha detto l'analista politico Massimo Franco. Da quando è diventata premier, la Meloni è in testa ai sondaggi sugli aventi diritto, in bilico quasi il 30% – rispetto al 26% dei voti ottenuto dal suo partito alle elezioni del 2022. "La mancanza di un'alternativa progressista e fortemente europeista manca sicuramente in Italia, e questo, ovviamente, aiuta anche la Meloni a sentirsi più stabile, ", ha detto Grossi. Per il suo secondo anno, la Meloni si impegna a lavorare per una riforma costituzionale che renda il premier scelto direttamente dagli elettori, nella speranza di produrre governi più stabili. Attualmente, il presidente italiano chiede a qualcuno probabilmente in grado di comandare una maggioranza parlamentare il compito di formazione di un governo: dal 1946 i governi italiani sono durati in media 361 giorni.

SHOOTER ATTACK IN BELGIUM DRIVES AN EU PUSH TO TOUGHEN BORDER AND DEPORTATION LAWS - SUSPENDING SCHENGEN TREATY NECESSARY SAYS MELONI

ROME, OCT 18 - Premier Giorgia Meloni said Wednesday that the international situation made it necessary for Italy to suspend the Schengen Treaty after her government decided to reintroduce controls at Italy's border with Slovenia from Saturday October 21st. "The suspension of the Schengen Treaty on free movement in Europe has become necessary due to the worsening situation in the Middle East, the increase in migratory flows along the Balkan route and, above all, due to national security issues," Meloni said on social media. "I take full responsibility for this."

L'ATTENTATO IN BELGIO SPINGE L'UE PER RAFFORZARE LE LEGGI SULLE FRONTIERE E SULL'ESPORZIONE CHE È NECESSARIA LA SOSPENSIONE DI SCHENGEN, DICE MELONI

ROMA, 18 OTT - Il premier Giorgia Meloni ha detto mercoledì che la situazione internazionale ha reso necessaria la sospensione del Trattato di Schengen da parte dell'Italia, dopo che il suo governo ha deciso di reintrodurre i controlli alla frontiera italiana con la Slovenia a partire da sabato 21 ottobre. Gli spostamenti in Europa sono diventati necessari a causa del peggioramento della situazione in Medio Oriente, dell'aumento dei flussi migratori lungo la rotta balcanica e, soprattutto, per questioni di sicurezza nazionale", ha detto Meloni sui social. "Mi assumo la piena responsabilità di questo." (ANSA).

INTEL, ITALY STILL DISCUSSING FAB, NO DEAL YET, LEGISLATOR SAYS

Intel (NASDAQ:INTC) is still discussing building a fab in Italy as part of its plan to invest \$77.5B in Europe over the next decade but the long-running process is still not finalized, an

Italian legislator said. Industry Minister Adolfo Urso said on Wednesday that the European country had offered subsidies to Intel for the plant, Reuters reported. While the company has not asked for anything additional, a deal is not yet final, the news outlet added. In August 2022, it was reported that Italy was close to signing a deal that could be worth \$5B initially with the Italian government to build a packaging and assembly plant in the country. At the time, the government of former Prime Minister Mario Draghi hoped to have an agreement by the end of August, but that did not happen. One month later, it was reported that Intel (INTC) had picked the town of Vigasio in the Italian region Veneto, roughly 70 miles west of Venice, for its new multi-billion dollar chip factory in the European country.

INTEL, ITALIA ANCORA DISCUTE DI FAB, ANCORA NESSUN AFFARE, DICE IL LEGISLATORE

Intel (NASDAQ:INTC) sta ancora discutendo la costruzione di una fabbrica in Italia come parte del suo piano di investire 77,5 miliardi di dollari in Europa nel prossimo decennio, ma il lungo processo non è ancora concluso, ha affermato un legislatore italiano. Il ministro dell'Industria Adolfo Urso ha detto mercoledì che il paese europeo ha offerto sussidi a Intel per l'impianto, ha riferito Reuters. Sebbene la società non abbia chiesto nulla in più, l'accordo non è ancora definitivo, ha aggiunto il notiziario. Nell'agosto 2022, è stato riferito che l'Italia era vicina a firmare un accordo che potrebbe valere inizialmente 5 miliardi di dollari con il governo italiano per costruire uno stabilimento di imballaggio e assemblaggio nel paese. All'epoca il governo dell'ex primo ministro Mario Draghi sperava di raggiungere un accordo entro la fine di agosto, ma ciò non è avvenuto. Un mese dopo, è stato riferito che Intel (INTC) aveva scelto la città di Vigasio, nella regione italiana del Veneto, a circa 70 miglia a ovest di Venezia, per la sua nuova fabbrica multi-miliardaria di chip nel paese europeo.

GO GET THE FISH....



THE FEAST OF SEVEN FISHES

It's December 1960. It's cold and Madison Avenue sidewalks present a challenge of ice, snow and slush. Regardless, I'm charged with the mission to retrieve the baccala from Roma Importing just below St. Anthony's Church.

I was told, "Joe Joe goes get the fish." So, neither rain, nor sleet nor snow nor gloom of night will keep me from my mission (kudos to our dad who carried the mail for years). I got the fish!

Well, the years have rolled by and I'm sure there are few 12-year-olds today that are sent out to the store to "get the fish" but the fish must be bought because the "Feast of the Seven Fishes" will soon be here.

I can't remember if we had all seven fishes years ago but I'm sure we got close. Truth be told, I have never again had baccala and you can have all mine this Christmas Eve too.

Regardless, The Feast of the Seven Fishes is celebrated each year at my brother Jim's home. It's a lot of work for my sister-in-law Nancy and the family appreciates and loves her for all she does.

One of the most joyful times of the year is quickly approaching, and we can feel it in the air. Can you feel it? It's a blessed time when we gather with our family to celebrate. It's the perfect opportunity to be with the people you love, to hang out with them, create new memories, and to, of course, eat delicious food.

Why do Italian Americans celebrate Christmas Eve with a special fish feast? It's not an official holy day or celebration of the Catholic Church. Some believe that The Feast of the Seven Fishes tradition was invented in Italy. The feast grew out of politics, poverty, faith and family traditions. Before the unification of Italy in 1861, the various regions had their own governments and local traditions. The southern regions were the poorest areas in the country, yet fish were plentiful and often a diet staple. As poverty swelled in those regions the people saw America as a new hope, a new beginning.

Others believe that the tradition has more Italian-American roots. Regardless, the tradition remains alive in the Italian South and Sicily. The feast known as La Vigilia is more prevalent in most English-speaking territories where Italians celebrate their heritage. Their traditions came with them and grew in importance as a memory of the life they left behind.

This tradition also has a lot of logic behind it when you think about where it originated. In the south of Italy, as well as in Sicily, there's plenty of fish. Given an abundant selection, you can only imagine the types of fish they used for making the best seafood dinner.

Don't think that the dishes were simple and that they were only eating plain fish. The seafood dinners were, in fact, feasts featuring many fish dishes with fantastic preparation and delicious sides. The strictest adherents to the seven-fishes tradition will tell you that indeed there should be seven fish on the dinner table, but for the sake of simplicity, this author suggests that one consider all seafood, including shellfish, to count toward your final fish tally. Some also believe that baccala and calamari are two must haves in your 7 seafood choices. Those who practice this tradition think that the key is to cook seven different kinds of seafood by spreading out the dishes throughout the meal; instead of preparing seven whole fish for what would be an excessively large main dish spread. One could choose to offer perhaps three small appetizers, a soup, pasta, then entrée plus a side salad, each with seafood as the focus to reach your threshold of seven fishes.

Now the tradition of eating fish on Christmas Eve comes from the Orthodox and Catholic Christians practice of abstinence or not eating meat on the eve of some holidays, including Christmas. There are many theories on why the number "7" was the required number of fish dishes. Some say that it is a reminder of the seven sacraments, or possibly the seven deadly sins. Possibly the 7 days traveled by Mary and Joseph to reach Bethlehem. Could it be a remembrance of the 7 days of creation or that there are 7 days in a week? Who knows?



Why should I eat fish on Christmas Eve?

A simple answer could be because it's easy and quick to make. I think a few of our readers would argue that point. While the ease of preparation can be argued there are so many ways fish dishes can be prepared. Add the versatility of preparing and serving a fish dish as an appetizer, in a salad, as a pasta or main course and you will be very busy in the kitchen. Of course, let's not forget the health benefits of fish and shellfish, rich in vitamins, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids that are crucial for a healthy heart, strong bones, a developing brain, and a strong immune system. Couple that with fish dishes that are mouthwatering and delicious, and almost nobody can resist it. How about: fried calamari/ or in salad, baked salmon, any baked or broiled whitefish, fried cod, fried or raw shrimp, deep fried scallops, marinated eel, clams, cod fish balls, seafood salad, octopus' salad, puttanesca with anchovies, lobster, crab cakes, to name just a few choices without even mentioning putting them in a tomato base with pasta.

Since I still don't care for the baccala, I've been trying, unsuccessfully, to convince my family that sushi or a spicy tuna roll is an acceptable fish dish. I'm not successful yet but I'll keep trying.

So, why not experiment a little and do something differently? Ask your family what they think about a 7 fish seafood dinner for this year's Christmas Eve and see how they react. They might be thrilled! □



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2023 MIXED BOCCE LEAGUE- YEAR END RESULTS

Another year of our Mixed Bocce League has come to an end and a great time was had by all! Congratulations to everyone and a big “thank you” for coming out. This event continues to be a fun evening for all!

Congratulations to the **1st place** team with Andy D’Auge as the captain and his teammates, Diane Biernacki, Joyce Vine, Pina Tirino and Joe Coppola.

The **2nd place** team was Armand Marando as the captain and his teammates, Guido Quattocchi, Gail Tarantino, Maria DeNitto and Theresa Kaplan.

The **3rd place** team was Tony Fazio as the captain and his teammates, Gretchen VanValkenburg, Lynn Indelicato, Nancy Sano, Tony Vine and Gerri Kraushaar.

Congratulations to these teams and to everyone because we are all winners!!

Mixed Bocce will resume next August. If you would like to give it a try, please call me at the number listed below or call the club. We always need subs. Remember no special talent is necessary and we always have a great time!

Donna Zumbo (518-424-7463)
Mixed Bocce League Chair

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Hello ladies,
I can't believe that it's December already. How fast this year has flown by!! The holiday season is in full swing. Time to get our homes decorated and finish up that Christmas shopping. I hope that everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends. I spent the day at work with the babies and their families and then home to enjoy dinner.

On a sad note, we would like to extend our prayers and condolences to the family of Carmela DiCarlo on her recent passing. I enjoyed the time playing bocce with her. She would always make me laugh. May she rest in eternal peace.

Last month we gathered upstairs in the Caruso Room for a "Friendsgiving" celebration. We enjoyed a wonderful pot of homemade French Onion soup and so many appetizers and desserts!! As usual, there was an abundance of food.

Our last meeting of the year will take place on December 13th at 5:30 pm. We will be meeting downstairs for a sit-down dinner provided by the Shea's. Dinner choices are Tuscan Flounder or Chicken Corleone. The price will be \$10 per person. If you are planning on attending, please contact Darlene Carino at (315) 266-7726 or email her at darlenecarino27@gmail.com by Monday, December 11th.

Instead of doing a "grab bag" gift exchange this year, we have decided to honor our "local heroes" by delivering homemade treats. We are asking for all to bake at least 3 dozen cookies and bring them that evening. If you're not a baker, please bring a bag of individually wrapped candy (Hershey's



Kisses, York Peppermint Patties, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups etc.). Please bring your cookies or candy upstairs between 5:15 - 5:30. We will assemble the boxes after dinner.

As the winter months are here, we will continue to collect for the Capital City Rescue Mission. Their biggest request is for hats, gloves, sweaters and coats. So, if you're cleaning out your closets and find you have clothes that don't fit you or your family members, I'll be happy to bring them to the Mission. Please feel free to contact me and we can arrange pick up of items. These items can be new or gently used.

Remember there's only 24 days till Christmas!! Get that shopping done!!
(And only 175 days till the pool is open.)

Georgeann Greene
PRESIDENT



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December Birthdays

January

Anna Acconi
 Eugene Aiuppa
 Maurice Andreozi
 Helen Articolo
 Janice Batchelor
 Alison Burnside

John Coppola
 Nadine Cunningham
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 Gail Dillon
 Stephen Franke
 Kimberly Fredericks
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 Edward Haddad
 Cara Joyce
 Julie Massaroni
 Marcella Michel
 Frank Padula
 Barbara Palumbo
 Debra Placito
 John Relyea

John Riley
 Lynda Scalzo
 Michael Swanson
 Julie Tsai
 Andrea VanDecar



Condolences

► Condolences to the families on the passing of
Fr. Ingemie & Carmela DiCarlo

► Clara M. Ferracane

Clara and her husband, Giuseppe Ferracane, were founding members of the Italian American Community Center and shared fifty-eight (58) years of marriage. A dedicated member of the Women's League, Clara played a pivotal role in fundraising and organizing various IACC functions. Her contributions were extensive, including chairing the annual family Christmas parties, initiating the Caring and Sharing section in the Siamo Qui newsletter, being a festival volunteer, and being a consistent presence at the Thursday night Bingo for decades.

Clara, a passionate bocce player and occasional captain, also engaged in weekly card and poker games at the IACC. Additionally, she enjoyed coordinating annual bus trips to New York City for the San Genarro Feast celebrations. Her active involvement and commitment have left an indelible mark on the IACC community. We give our deepest condolences to her family.



Mangia Bene E Vivi Bene!

By FRANK ZEOLI

Shrimp & Polenta



Everyone knows if you're Italian or Italian American, Christmas is celebrated on Christmas Eve and, with it, the Feast of the Seven Fishes. Our family was no exception. We would travel from one house to the other, visiting relatives on both sides of the family, and we always started at my grandmother's house, where she

would make the most delicious seafood dishes. Even though I didn't appreciate it then, I have come to miss it. Shrimp with Polenta made an appearance on her table on Christmas Eve. I don't make it a lot anymore, but when I do, it takes me back to my childhood and the most magical night of the year.

INSTRUCTIONS

► To make the polenta:

1. Whisk together the water, cornmeal, and salt in a large sauce pot. Bring it to a boil on medium-high heat. Continue stirring, and don't let the mixture stick. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the polenta is tender and thickened.
2. Remove from the heat and cover it to keep it warm while you prepare the shrimp. The whole process should take about 40 minutes or so.

► To make the shrimp:

1. In a large sauté pan on medium heat, add the olive oil, garlic, and red pepper flakes. Sauté about 3 minutes until the garlic is softened.
2. Add the wine and simmer for about 5 minutes, then add the chicken broth and simmer for another 3 minutes.
3. Add the shrimp, lemon zest and salt. Cook until the shrimp is opaque, about 5 minutes.
4. Stir in the butter and parsley and cook for another 3 minutes, stirring the shrimp and the sauce mixture. Remove from the heat, cover and let them steam for 3-4 minutes.
5. In a large bowl, add the polenta and place the shrimp on top. Spoon the remainder of the sauce over the shrimp and polenta.

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES | COOK TIME: 60 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

Polenta

- 8 cups of water
- 2 cups of yellow cornmeal
- 1 teaspoon of salt

Shrimp

- 3 tablespoons of olive oil
- 5 cloves of garlic (minced)
- ¼ teaspoon of crushed red pepper
- ½ cup of white wine
- ¾ cup of chicken broth
- 2 lbs. of raw shrimp (peeled, deveined)
- Zest of one lemon
- ½ cup of unsalted butter
- ½ cup of flat Italian parsley (chopped)
- ½ teaspoon of salt

Serve warm and Buona Natale!

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





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