

ISSUE 556

MAY 2020



**POOL & PAVILION
COMING SOON**



HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY



Photo: "Designed by prosodati / Freepik"

NEWS & EVENTS

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Start Spreading The News...

BEST OF THE BRONX

**Pending
resumption
of MLB
schedule**

5/28/20

Cost: \$45 I.A.C.C. Members / \$55 Non-Members

Location: The Italian American Community Center

Time: 8:00am (Depart From Albany) / 12:35 pm (Game)

Call (518) 456-4222 To Reserve Your Spot Today!

NY Yankees vs. Minnesota Twins - 12:35 pm
* Post Game Dinner Stop At Little Italy On Arthur Ave. *

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



May means spring and rebirth and usually a month full of great activity here at the IACC. Clearly, this year is so much different. How do we go forward as we reopen business and get back to normal as safely as possible? The guidelines currently are such that our operations are shuttered until May 15. What we anticipate is a gradual easing back into full operations like the way business were shut down. What does that mean for activities such as the Yankee Stadium trip, bocce leagues, Friday Nights at the Pavilion, the Monday Night Grand Buffet, Sunday Brunch and the pool? I anticipate we shall be getting some guidance on how to proceed with re-opening the restaurant and pool within the next few weeks. As the guidelines are given to us, we shall explain them to our membership and we will implicitly adhere to those guidelines. The key to disseminating updated information is making sure we have current email addresses for each of you and, if you are a Facebook user, please like our page (Italian American Community Center) and follow us to stay informed. If you do not receive our e-newsletter or your email has changed, please send an email to iaccoffice@italianamerican.com, with your new email address so we can update our records. That will enable us to share information with you in real time as opposed to waiting a month until the next newsletter arrives.

Among many things sacrificed during this time of lockdown has been the inability to properly mourn the passing of loved ones with family and friends. In the last month, the IACC has lost some dear friends such as Micky Zeoli, the father of Frank Zeoli, our Foundation President. Micky was not a member for a long time but, when in good health, contributed greatly and was hard to miss. He was one of those bigger than life characters that was always fun to be around at the pavilion, playing cards or at an event. Our deepest condolences to his wife, Linda, daughter, Maggie Hunt, and her husband, Jeff, and Frank and Nancy Zeoli.

Our deepest condolences also to Pat Manzella and the Manzella family on the passing of Maryellen Manzella. Pat and Maryellen were often regulars at Friday Nights at the Pavilion, Maryellen fought a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Constantino Di Giulio was a dear friend of Roger Fucilli and the IACC. He was a WW2 and Korean War veteran and, although not a member, was sometimes a guest at bocce and at the pool. Cos was playing bocce last year, was sharp as a tack and would have been 104 if he had lived to his birthday in May.

Jane Rizzo was the mother of John Rizzo and mother-in-law to board member, Anne Marie Lizzi. Although not from the area, when in town she enjoyed her time here at the IACC.

Tony Carioto also passed away. Tony was a longtime charter member, past board member and his company, Carioto and Sons, for decades was the provider of produce for the IACC.

God bless them all for their contributions to our organization and our deepest condolences to their respective families.

Stay home, stay safe and soon we will all be together again!

JIM SANO
ITALIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER - PRESIDENT



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WOMEN'S LEAGUE

*H*ello everyone,

I hope that everyone had a Happy Easter with their families even though the day may have been quieter with the social distancing.

This year, we are experiencing a spring in the Northeast and across the country that we have never experienced before. I hope that everyone is safe and healthy. Unfortunately, due to this pandemic, we have had to cancel some of our events including the Women's League meetings for April, May and June.

I contacted Jim Sano to see if we should continue to plan to have our events in July and August (bbq's at the pool and water aerobics.) He said that we should plan to hold these events and that we could always postpone them if needed as any events would be dependent on the CDC required guidelines.

We had been planning to have Steve Caporizzo come and join us to talk about Pet Connection in June but, due to the pandemic, that will not be possible. I have emailed him to let him know that we had to cancel and I asked if there might be another date when he could join us, possibly at our meeting out by the pool in August.

Since we will not be having our meetings in May or June, our next Women's League meeting will be on July 8, 2020 with a bbq and water aerobics. I will be contacting Michele Sano to see if she will be available to lead us in water aerobics. Please think about what you might like to bring to share for our barbecue in July.

I hope that everyone will be following the required guidelines to stay safe and healthy during this month.

Stay Safe, Stay Well.

We will make it through this.

Gretchen Van Valkenburg
President





Among Italians from the other 19 regions of Italy, it's fair to say Molise is considered a bit of a joke. Scores of Facebook groups poke fun at Italy's youngest and second smallest region after alpine Val d'Aosta. One such group, "Molise'n't: I don't believe in the existence of Molise", has 66,000 members. However, the low esteem in which the rest of Italy holds the region is no reflection on its fascinating traditions, stunning landscapes and wonderfully rustic gastronomy. All the kidding is because Molise is the youngest Italian region. It was established in 1963 when the region Abruzzi e Molise was split into two regions. The split did not become effective until 1970.

Molise is situated in south-central Italy bordered by Abruzzo to the north, Apulia to the east, Lazio to the west, and Campania to the south. The region is split into two provinces named after their respective capitals, Campobasso and Isernia. Campobasso also serves as the regional capital. 55 percent of the countryside of Molise is covered by mountains (the largest at 8,202 ft. is Monte Miletto) with most of the rest covered by hills that go down to the sea. It has 35 kilometers (22 miles) of sandy coastline to the northeast, lying on the Adriatic Sea. With a population of 308,493, Molise ranks 19th out of the 20 regions and with only 1714 square miles in area Molise ranks 19th out of 20 as well.

One of Italy's most rural regions, Molise is unique in that it showed virtually no change in population during the first century of its existence as an Italian state. From 1861 to 1961, its population increased approximately 1 percent mainly because the growth rate was offset by constant emigration mostly to other regions within Italy. Since the 1970's, the population of many rural towns has dropped considerably as young people have left the region for better economic opportunities in Italy's north.

Home to just 309,000, Molise is a great place to visit if you're looking to avoid the crowds. Molise's wildness and low profile have made this region a secret so well-kept that even seasoned travelers and most Italians have yet to visit. Tourists, as well as Italians, have neglected Molise but there are many sites nestled in the mountains that are worth visiting. Molise is home to beautiful abbeys, churches and castles as well as impressive ancient ruins far off the tourist track.

A Short History

Historically, Molise is the ancestral home of the Samnite civilization, a fierce warlike Italic tribe who fought (and sometimes defeated) the Roman legions over the course of several centuries. However, over time the Samnites fell victim to the Roman legions and were absorbed into Roman culture.



Sanctuary of Pietrabbondante

The area remains filled with archaeological remains memorializing the intense battle fought between them.

While the road to Roman colonization was costly to the local inhabitants of early Molise, the influence the Romans

had on the area was highly impactful. The Romans destroyed existing cities to create new city-colonies that featured theaters, spas, baths, amphitheaters and another important public spaces and buildings. The most important role the Romans played in advancing Molise and the Roman Empire, however, was the construction of new roads which would connect Rome to the Adriatic Coast. The productivity of Molise's expansion was stopped at the fall of the Roman Empire.

Molise got its name after the fall of Rome and during the period when local inhabitants, invading Lombards and adventuring Normans vied for the region. Molise was both the name of a castle as well as the name of a local warlord family. After the fall of the Roman Empire, there were a string of invasions and rulers in the region. As we see in many other regions of Italy, Molise became a land fought over for years by the Lombards, the Holy Roman Empire, the Normans, Swedish, French, Spanish, Austrians, and then Napoleon who made it part of the Kingdom of the Two Sicily's and ruled until Italian unification.

During his time as the leader of the region, Napoleon would abolish feudalism and reform the region

in a variety of ways. The economy of Molise thrived, but mainly near the coast. After World War I, fascism thrived in Molise due to the vast gap between the region's social classes. During World War II, the region was devastated by the Nazi army, who killed many of Molise's civilians and destroyed a large portion of the area. The reconstruction and rebuilding of the region was slow and the bulk of its repairs didn't occur until the '60s. Until 1963, Molise was part of the Abruzzi region. The term Abruzzi derives from the time when the

region was part of the Kingdom of the Two Sicily's. As stated earlier, in 1963 the province of Molise became an official region of Italy with the cities of Campobasso and Isernia acting as capitals for the two small provinces of Molise.

Cuisine and Wine

In Molise food is very genuine. Among the regional delicacies, the best known are olive oil and truffles, both white and black. The food of Molise has many similarities with its northern neighbor Abruzzi. However, Molise also shares some culinary traditions of Campania and Apulia blending both northern and southern Italian cooking traditions with its own local rustic ingredients.

In the mountainous interior, lamb, kid, mutton and ewe are all favorite meats and are the basis for Molisian specialties like Cacio e Uova, cooked in an earthenware pot and served with egg and sharp cheese.



Cacio e Uova

Pork is also popular in Molise for local prosciutto (including a smoked variety) and various types of salami. Molise shares a love for porchetta (roast suckling pig) with the other central Italian regions

and it often shows up during summer festivals. Regarding salami, the best known are sopressata, capocollo and ventricina, a sausage of lean pork, sweet pepper, red pepper and fennel.



Salami Ventricina

► *Continue on Page 8*

► *Continue from Page 7*

Calcioni di ricotta, a specialty of Campobasso, is made of fried pasta stuffed with ricotta, provolone, prosciutto and parsley and usually served with fried artichokes, cauliflower, brains, sweet-breads, potato croquette and scamorza cheese. Pezzata is made from boiled mutton traditionally cooked in a copper container along with potatoes, vegetables and spices. It requires long slow cooking to tenderize the meat, which also has a very intense flavor. Torcinelli is a simple dish for brave palettes. Torcinelli was created to use up all the normally discarded lamb scraps. Liver, tripe and intestines are cleaned and placed in the animal's gut. The torcinelli are cooked on the grill, but there are those who prefer them cooked in a stew. It's also found in the nearby region of Puglia. Baccala arracanato is cod fish cooked in a pan placed inside the fireplace, covered with ashes and then seasoned with breadcrumbs, pine nuts and walnuts, raisins, olives and cherry tomatoes.

Fusilli and cavatelli are traditionally served with vegetables and are often served with a rich tomato lamb or pork Ragu along with a generous amount of Molise's fiery diavolino red peppers. Other dishes are Cavatiegl e Patane, gnocchi served in a meat sauce of rabbit and pork, Pasta e fagioli, a pasta-and-white-bean soup cooked with pig's feet and pork rinds, Polenta d'iragn, a polenta-like dish made of wheat and potatoes, sauced with tomatoes and pecorino and Risotto alla marinara, a risotto with seafood. Additional regional specialties include Carciofi ripieni, artichokes stuffed with anchovies and capers, peeled sweet peppers stuffed with breadcrumbs, anchovies, parsley, basil and pepperoncino which are sautéed in a frying pan and cooked with chopped tomatoes, Cipollacci con pecorino, fried onions and pecorino cheese and Frittata con basilico e cipolle, an omelette with basil and onions

The ocean's bounty of fresh fish finds its way to local tables just like other regions but trout from the Biferno river is most notable for its flavor and is cooked with a simple sauce of aromatic herbs and olive oil. Zuppa di pesce, a fish stew, is a specialty of Termoli.

One interesting food fact is that a small area in Bojano is the only area outside of Campania that has official permission to produce buffalo mozzarella.

Like the other regions of Italy, sweets and desserts have an ancient tradition here and are linked to the history of the territory and to religious and family festivities. Most common Molisian desserts include various cakes such as Panettoncino di Mais, a sweet chocolate cake made with corn flour. Calciumi (also called caragnoli or cauciuni), are sweet ravioli filled with chestnuts, almonds, chocolate, vanilla, cooked wine musts and cinnamon and then fried, dipped in honey and served at Christmas.

Scarpelle is leavened batter fried and served with plenty of sugar. In appearance, the scarpelle are the typical dessert of holidays in Molise, like other fried delicacies found in Southern Italy. Other desserts include Ciambelline, ring-shaped cakes made with olive oil and red wine and Ferratelle all'anice, anise cakes made in metal molds and stamped with special patterns. Ricotta pizza is a cake pan filled with a blend of ricotta cheese, sugar, flour, butter, marschينو liqueur and chocolate chips (like what we know as a ricotta pie).

Molise boasts some of Italy's most obscure wines, such as Biferno and Pientro di Iserna, which have red, white and rosé varieties. The wines of Molise have yet to reach their full potential, as wine is still made primarily for local consumption. However, Molise's combination of sun and hilly terrain create ideal conditions for excellent wines; it will not be long before modernization will make Molise a wine powerhouse.

In Conclusion

All through the roiling centuries and into the present day, the way of life in Molise has stayed remarkably consistent. It is an area of shepherds and subsistence farmers. A place justifiably proud of its rustic traditions and fiercely interested in their preservation. The tourist industry, which has become so prevalent throughout Italy, has only begun to make inroads into Molise. Sheep farming and herding are developing even more. In fact, traditions of sheepherding are growing in modern-day Molise. Today, Molise is a developed area that preserves its agrarian and rural background as it abides the 21st Century.



Caragnoli

Mangia Bene, Viva Bene

By FRANK ZEOLI

Peas & Macaroni



Growing up in an Italian American home, I was introduced to many food combinations that were described to me as “comfort food” or often referred to as “peasant food”. My grandmother was born in the U.S to immigrant parents who spoke little English. They came to this country with very little but managed to provide her with a good childhood. She used to say she never knew there was a depression in her home. She always had a roof over her head, clothes on her back and plenty to eat. She said her mother would use every part of the chicken and make a weeks’ worth of meals out of it.

The dishes she would make were simple, but they tasted

good and provided comfort to the entire family. It is amazing that the food my grandmother called “peasant food” is now sold in some of the best Italian restaurants.

Over the next few months, I am going to showcase some of the best comfort food my grandmother introduced me to.

Prep Time: 5 Minutes
Cook Time: 15 Minutes

Ingredients

- 1/2 of a medium sized onion, diced small
- 3T of olive oil
- 1lb of elbows or any small pasta
- 1lb of frozen sweet peas, thawed
- 24oz of marinara sauce
- 1/4 cup of parmesan cheese
- salt & black pepper to taste

Instructions

In a medium saucepan add the olive oil and sauté the onions until they are translucent. Add the thawed frozen peas and cook for approximately 5 minutes. Once the peas are cooked, add the marinara sauce to the pan.

In a separate pan, boil the pasta in salt water. Once the pasta is cooked, drain the pasta and return it to the pan. Add the cooked peas, marinara sauce, and parmesan cheese to the pasta. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Serve hot with a little extra parmesan cheese.

Look for more recipes in the next addition of the SIAMO Qui.

Tuber Magnatum The White Truffle



By JOE SANO

Phonies, frauds and knockoffs! The finest luxuries tend to bring out the worst in people: high-end handbags are assembled in the poorest nations, the art world is rife with frauds, and the less said about the diamond trade, the better.

The food world's most luxurious products are no different: *Tuber magnatum (Italy)* and *Tuber melanosporum (France)* — *white and black truffles*, respectively.

The focus here will be on the *Tuber magnatum* of Italy, the high-value white truffle or trifola d'Alba Madonna (Truffle of the White Madonna). It is found mainly in the Langhe and Montferrat areas in the Piedmont region in northern Italy and, most famously, in the countryside around the cities of Alba and Astin. Their harvest has spawned an ever-growing crime wave of fraud, poisonings, theft, and tax evasion.

It's no secret why. Truffles fetch thousands of dollars per pound and diners are said to experience euphoric sensations when eating them. The Catholic church banned these so-called "devil's fruits" during medieval times because of their hypnotic, aphrodisiac-like qualities. (I'll leave that statement alone.) And so, the truffle perennially tempts hustlers and cons who, lured by the promise of a quick buck, become ensnared in the ingredient's tangled history of scams, hijinks and even murder.

When the truffle season is in full swing, everything about the business is secretive. First, a truffle hunter usually searches for his prizes in the middle of the night to keep his location secret from the spying eyes of others poised to steal his harvesting spot. Secondly, truffles are taxed significantly by the Italian government. As one hunter stated, "If a hunter finds a big truffle that's worth

\$6,000, it's very rare to find anyone who wants to share that with the Italian government." So, he drives to a parking lot and meets a middleman buyer. It's like a drug deal. He hands the buyer the bag of truffles, takes the bag of cash and that's it."

Sometimes there are assets more valuable than the actual white truffles. One common theft in the truffle world, one might say an arguably more prized commodity, is the theft of the dogs that sniff them up. Italians stopped using pigs years ago because the pigs would eat more truffles than could be saved.

The dogs that hunters train for years to find and locate truffles are often stolen by others for hunts only to be returned later.

Some competitive truffle hunters are much less humane. Instead of stealing a competitor's dogs, some hunters just ... eliminate them. Rival truffle hunters have been known to poison each other's prized dogs, using tactics such as injecting meatballs with strychnine, a weed killer, and dropping the bait in the forest for the dogs to find or, the latest, dropping poison in small pools of standing water waiting for the dogs to drink.

Truffle dealers too complain about crime. Shipments of truffles from Italy after passing through customs often come up a few ounces short and others just disappear during truffle season. One of the newest tricks has some hunters mixing prized white truffles from the Alba region with those found across the Italian border in Croatia. Croatian truffle hunters operate with far fewer rules and regulations than the Italians. The crafty Croatians have been known to smuggle their own whites across the border into Italy where dealers pass them off as Italian or mix them with the Tuber Magnatum.

Given the high prices fetched for their "white gold", hunters and dealers must be ever vigilant to the threat of common thieves looking for an easy

robbery through home invasion and sometimes even murder.

Lastly, let's talk agricultural "knock offs". The Chinese white truffles might look like their European cousins, but they lack any of the flavor or aroma of the originals. The Chinese truffles grow wild throughout millions of acres of forest in the provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan. The Chinese version doesn't smell or taste remotely like its delectable Italian look-alike. Truffle aficionados say, "It tastes like a turnip or potato..no real taste"!

Chinese truffles are cheap. Wholesale, they go for as little as \$20-30 a pound which means that it's almost irresistible for unscrupulous truffle sellers to substitute Chinese truffles for the real thing or, at the very least, to adulterate a shipment of genuine white truffles in the same spirit that creative drug dealers cut their illicit drugs with by-products. Many now believe despite increased policing and internal security, substandard truffles are thought to infil-

trate 30 percent or more of white truffle exports.

Rising global temperatures are also worrying truffle hunters around the Italian town of Alba. Truffle hunting season has been pushed back from August to October in most of the Alba region. Rising temperatures have reduced the truffle size and supply driving the price even higher.

One truth remains, truffles are an appealing investment because of their whopping price. Prized white truffles (Tuber magnatum) from the Italian Piedmont region sell for upwards of \$3,000 a pound. Last year a truffle weighing 1,005 grams (2 pounds, 3.4 ounces) fetched 120,000 euros (\$133,000) — more than twice the price of gold — from a Hong Kong buyer at last year's Alba auction.



Hunting for truffles

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TO THE FAMILY OF CONSTANTINO DI GIULIO WHO WAS A DEAR FRIEND OF ROGER FUCILLI AND THE IACC



THE FAMILY OF JANE RIZZO WHO WAS THE MOTHER OF JOHN RIZZO AND MOTHER IN LAW TO BOARD MEMBER ANNE MARIE LIZZI

TO THE MANZELLA FAMILY ON THE PASSING OF MARYELLEN MANZELLA





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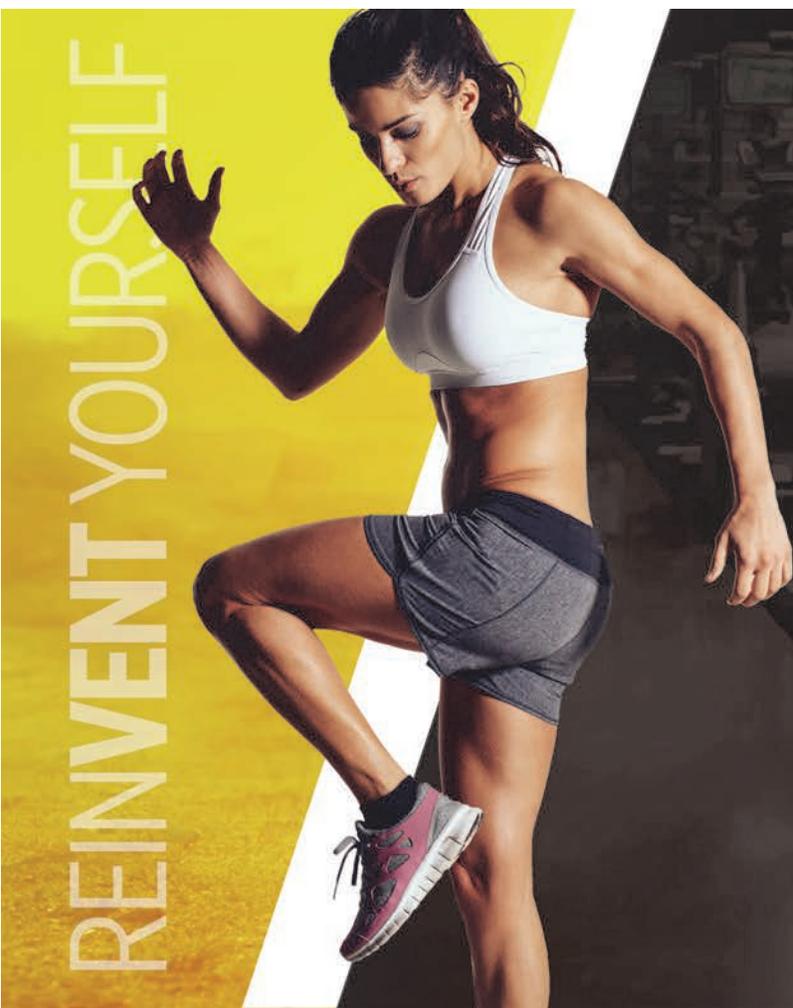


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