



Il Notiziario

[The Newsletter]
of the

Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.



<https://friendsofisoladellefemmine.org> email: Friendsofisola@gmail.com Follow us on Facebook

Volume 1, Issue 1

Editor: A.A. Grillo

Summer: July 1, 2020

News from our Executive Board

Buongiorno Tutti,

Benvenuti! [Welcome] to the Friends of Isola delle Femmine members newsletter, Il Notiziario, Volume 1, Issue 1. This is the debut of our historical organization's quarterly communique to our members. A big thank you to Alex Grillo our editor, and contributors Vince Malfitano, Mary Coniglio, Sal Coniglio and Vincent Ferrante.

We hope this will be both informative regarding the organization and also generally interesting. The name is Il Notiziario, the Italian name for The Newsletter. Some Italian and/or Sicilian words will pop up occasionally to give the Newsletter an Italian flavor but will include the English equivalent in brackets.

A lot has happened since we became an organization. It seems as though the world came to a standstill with the advent of the Corvid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. Italy was hit the hardest mainly in the Milan region, but Isola delle Femmine was spared due to the quick response and leadership of Isola's Sindaco [Mayor] Stefano Bologna. The constant communication from Mayor Bologna to the citizens of Isola helped keep the virus to one single person.

Your Executive Board is continuing to stay in contact with our family and friends in Isola delle Femmine and we will report the information via this newsletter and on our website.

The main purpose of this newsletter is to keep our membership abreast of current events pertaining to Isola and her sister cities, with upcoming fund raisers and parties, trips, cultural events, historical and ancestral information, and let's not forget our traditional Sicilian recipes from here and abroad. Photos will fill the pages as well.

To join our organization and to be informed via this Newsletter a Sustaining Charter Membership is NOW AVAILABLE UNTIL THE END OF THIS YEAR for only \$60 a year per person - a \$15 savings off the regular membership price.

Please go to our website to check out all the benefits the FOI (Friends of Isola) membership has to offer. Its address is included in the header above or use the short form: www.friendsofisola.org.

And please support all the sponsors that have helped our cause. Without these sponsors we couldn't exist.

In the meantime, enjoy the newsletter.

Buona salute a tutti voi [Good health to you all],

Vince S. Di Maggio, Co-founder & Chairman of the Board

Frank B. Bruno, Co-founder & President

To preserve, protect, and promote the Italian-Sicilian cultural heritage among the descendants, immigrants, citizens and friends of Isola delle Femmine, Sicily and around the world.

Co-founder & Chairman of the Board: V.S. DiMaggio, Co-founder & President: F.B. Bruno,

Vice-President & Secretary: M. Pappas-Coniglio, Treasurer: V.M. Mafitano D.M.D.,

Liaison to Isola delle Femmine: S.N. Coniglio, Advisor & Business Consultant: A.D. Seeno, Jr.,

Historian: V.S. Ferrante, Historian & Researcher: A.A. Grillo, Membership Advisor: C. Bonanno

What's Happening

by Frank Bruno & Mary Pappas-Coniglio

Due the pandemic of the coronavirus, we have been forced to postpone our "That's Italian" event planned for the Columbo Club in Oakland. As indicted by the announcement at the right, we have reserved a new date of October 3 this fall, but as we all are learning, our reaction to this pandemic is still evolving and we may have to postpone the event further to the spring of 2021. Our website will continue to show the very latest planning for the event.

Sponsors for this event and other FOI work have their logos included on the last page of Il Notiziario.

Your AD Here

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925-439-9016

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New Save the Date

Friends of Isola delle Femmine Inc

presents



That's Italian!



May 9th, is now

Oct 3, 2020

Colombo Club: 5321 Claremont Avenue
Oakland, California 94618

\$75 per person

5:00 pm No Host Cocktails

FREE parking available at DMV across the street

Funds raised will support Student & Young Professional Study/
Work Exchange Programs and Cultural Events

Menu: Antipasto, Colombo Club family style dinner, garden Salad, French Bread and Butter, Meat Ravioli, Italian Swiss Steak in rich tomato and mushroom sauce, potatoes, vegetables, including dinner wine and Colombo Club Dessert and coffee. **Vegetarian entree:** Egg plant Parmesan

Entertainers

Leandra Ramm Coniglio, Nicky D

Lou Esposito II & Jim Coniglio

Josie Esposito and many more.....

Reserve your tickets, be a contributor, Join FOI.. all on our website, through Pay Pal, by mail or by contacting

Mary Pappas Coniglio: 925.439.9016 or

friendsofisola@gmail.com Visit our website:

www.friendsofisoladellefemmine.org and follow us on Facebook

6114 La Salle Avenue #315, Oakland, CA 94611-2802

No tickets sold at the door.....

Friends of Isola delle Femmine is a non-profit organization and your donation is tax deductible: Tax ID: #84-2733322

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of the
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News from Isola

This letter was sent to Sindaco [mayor] Stefano Bologna of Isola delle Femmine from our Board of Directors. It was very well received by Sindaco Bologna, who plans to publish it in the local newspaper. The letter was translated into Italian by Alex Grillo.



**Friends of
Isola delle Femmine Inc.**
2020

Governing Board

Vincent S. DiMaggio
1992 Founder & Chairman
DiMaggio Real Estate Investments
President & Owner

Frank B. Bruno
1992 Founder & President
Certified Financial Planner (CFP)

Mary Pappas Coniglio
1992 Vice President & Secretary
Executive VP/CEO Retired
Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce

Executive Board

Vincent M. Malfitano D.M.D.
Treasurer
Doctor of Dental Medicine
President of Virginia City Gaming LLC
President of Delta Saloon, Inc.

Salvatore N. Coniglio
Liaison to Isola delle Femmine
Mechanical Inspector & Planner Shell Oil
Retired

Albert D. Seeno Jr.
Advisor & Business Consultant
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Vincent S. Ferrante
Historian & Liaison Pittsburg,
Martinez & Monterey
Former Pittsburg School Board Trustee

Associate Directors
Alexander A. Grillo Ph.D.
Historian & Researcher
Research Physicist/Adjunct Professor
Santa Cruz Institute for Particle Physics
University Santa Cruz Retired

Cyril Bonanno
Membership Advisor
Pleasanton School District Administrator
Retired
Chairman of the Board Colombo Club

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Oakland, California, 94611-2802
925-439-9016

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*Friends of Isola delle Femmine is a non-profit
organization and 100% tax deductible.*
TAX I.D. #84-2733322

5, Maggio, 2020

Caro Sindaco Bologna,

Speriamo che tutto vada bene per Lei e la Sua famiglia e che tutti siano sani.

The Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc. (Gli Amici di Isola delle Femmine) sono così orgogliosi delle Sue azioni di "presa in carico" durante questa terribile crisi di Covid-19. Sicuramente Lei ama la Sua comunità tanto quanto noi.

Il nostro consiglio di amministrazione ha messo in pratica ciò che il nostro governo si aspetta da noi; distanziamento sociale, stare a casa, indossare maschere e guanti quando usciamo e soprattutto limitare qualsiasi Interazione con le persone.

Al momento della questa scrittura, l'America si sta preparando a riaprire le nostre attività, ma su una base a strati selezionati. Comprendiamo che l'Italia farà lo stesso.

Ci sono molte sfide da affrontare per entrambi i nostri paesi, ma ci riusciremo tutti insieme soprattutto con direzione come la Sua. Gli Isolani hanno un grande dirigente in Lei, Sindaco Stefano Bologna, un leader che è trasparente attraverso comunicazioni costanti e decisive, prendendo azione rapidamente quando necessario e gestendo tutto questo senza le sfide, le controversie e i colpi politici che spesso accompagnano un tale momento di crisi.

Come forse saprai, abbiamo dovuto posticipare e spostare la data della nostra cena e programma "That's Italian" per la raccolta fondi al Colombo Club al 3 ottobre 2020. Il nostro consiglio ha deciso di attendere tra 30 e 45 giorni per vedere cosa succede con il virus prima di procedere ulteriormente con i nostri piani. Potremmo dover rimandare l'evento fino a maggio del 2021.

Siamo qui per Lei Sindaco e per l'Isola. Faccia sapere cosa possiamo fare per aiutare. Possiamo scrivere una lettera alla comunità mostrando il nostro supporto, incoraggiamento ed amore. Oppure invia un messaggio speciale a tutti tramite il nostro sito Web.

Preghiamo per Lei e la nostra meravigliosa famiglia ed amici dell'Isola delle Femmine.

Grazie per la Sua leadership e amicizia.

Cordiali saluti,

**Vincent S. DiMaggio, Frank B. Bruno, Mary Pappas Coniglio,
Vincent M. Malfitano, Salvatore N. Coniglio, Albert D. Seeno,
Vincent S. Ferrante, Alexander A. Grillo and Cyril Bonanno.**

The Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.
Consiglio di Amministrazione.

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Here is the letter as written in English.



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Tax I.D. #84-2733322*

May 5, 2020

Dear Sindaco Bologna,

We hope all is well with you and your family and that everyone is healthy.

The Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc. are so proud of your "take charge" actions during this terrible Covid-19 crisis. You surely love your community as much as we do.

Our board of directors have been practicing what our government expects of us; social distancing, staying home, wearing masks & gloves when we go out, and mostly limiting any interaction with people.

At the time of this writing America is getting prepared to re-open our businesses but on a selected - layered basis and we understand Italy will be doing the same.

There are many challenges ahead for both our countries, but we will all get through this together especially with leadership like yours. The Isolani's have a great leader in Sindaco Stefano Bologna, a leader who is transparent through constant communications and decisive, taking action quickly when needed. Someone who manages all this without the challenges, controversy, and political jabs that often accompany such a time of crisis.

As you may know we had to postpone and move the date of our "That's Italian" dinner and show fund raiser at the Colombo Club to October 3, 2020. Our board decided to wait 30-45 days from now to see what happens with the virus before

we proceed further with our plans. We may have to postpone the event until May of 2021.

We are here for you Sindaco and for Isola. Let us know what we can do to help. We can write a letter to the community showing our support, encouragement, and love. Or send a special message to everyone via our website. Let us know how we can help.

We pray for you and our wonderful family & friends of Isola delle Femmine.

Thank you for your leadership and friendship.

Sincerely,

The Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.

Board of Directors

Vincent S. DiMaggio, Frank B. Bruno, Mary Pappas Coniglio, Vincent M. Malfitano, Salvatore N. Coniglio, Albert D. Seeno, Vincent S. Ferrante, Alexander A. Grillo and Cyril Bonanno.

I Ricordi d'Isola [Memories of Isola]

by Sal Coniglio

For at least the past 100 years, our homes in the United States have included many amenities that we take for granted like indoor plumbing with potable water. That was not the case when I grew up in Isola delle Femmine. The houses were small, often including three generations, possibly four, with drinkable water only available at a few public fountains. I emigrated to the U.S. in 1964 at the age of 18.

In 1981, I took my family for a visit to Isola, my first return there since 1964. Staying with my brother in his two and a half bedroom house that normally accommodates himself, his wife, and three children, we added myself, my wife, three sons and my mother-in-law, 11 of us in total. Even in that year, there was running water in the house that could be used for cleaning, but water for drinking and cooking required a walk every morning with containers to the nearest public water fountain in the city such as the one pictured at right. Those fountains provided clear, pure water from the mountains. My wife said of our vacation, "It was a trip back in time."



The picture at left shows one of the main fountains located across from the church in the city center in 1935 and includes G.E. Seeno to the right of the fountain while on a visit from Pittsburg, CA. The locations of these fountains were very important for the citizens due to their importance for everyday services. The removal of that same main fountain to make room for a wider street in 1960 created protests from the populous and is still remembered with dismay to this day.

The picture at the lower right shows that some fountain without the people standing around it for a better view of the fountain itself.

Today, all the homes in Isola have purified running water, good for drinking and cooking. A few small picturesque fountains remain and still offer sweet clear fresh water.

FOI thanks Orazio Sansonini for providing all three of these pictures.



This section of *Il Notiziario* will be devoted to similar descriptions of earlier life in Isola delle Femmine.

A Bit of History that Is Ours

by Vince Ferrante Jr.

Our Isola Beginnings

Based on historical records in the Pittsburg Historical Society museum, the men who are credited with being the first from Isola delle Femmine to settle in Black Diamond (present day Pittsburg) were Pietro and Rosario Aiello. The brothers first emigrated to New Orleans about 1868 and found work in the oyster beds. During this period Sicily was experiencing turmoil during the Great Unification. It is also noteworthy to mention that in 1868 Louisiana was readmitted into the Union after the Civil War. At that early time, the Louisiana Bureau of Immigration was advertising for workers in Sicily to fulfill their labor needs. The Aiello brothers made their way aboard a freighter with a cargo of lemons bound for New Orleans. Sicilians would play a vital role in the development of New Orleans. Pietro and Rosario worked in the local oyster beds until a Yellow Fever epidemic broke out in 1870. Local archives indicate they became alarmed and left, making their way to Astoria, Oregon where the salmon run had begun in October on the Columbia River.

After a short period of time, the brothers became very successful fishermen there. Their next stop was San Francisco. It was there where the brothers learned of the fertile fishing grounds of the Sacramento Delta and of a fishing village that was developing at New York Landing in what would become the town of Black Diamond. So, they boarded a train bound for Black Diamond. As it approached, the train slowed down allowing the brothers to literally “jump off” to their new destination. Such was life back in the “old days”. We know that Southern Pacific built their railroad line through Black Diamond in 1878. There likely was no stop established for some time in the still developing Black Diamond requiring their jump off the train. Perhaps, then, the Aiellos arrived at or shortly after 1878. Black Diamond was the name of the predominant company of the coal mining industry that was in full swing in the local foothills.

After establishing himself, as was the custom, Pietro returned to Isola delle Femmine to prepare his family to accompany him to Black Diamond. While in Isola he again made a concerted effort to notify his fellow villagers of the great opportunities that lie ahead in the fishing industry on the Sacramento Delta in a small village known as Black Diamond. This was to augment the letters he had been sending home while in California. His descriptions would sound very appealing during a time of economic difficulties for Sicilians, especially for the local villagers of Isola.

As we consult the 1882 *History of Contra Costa County* we learn that at that time there were 10 canneries along the banks of the Suisun Bay and Sacramento Delta. We also know that, during the decade of the 1880s, census records indicate a large influx of Southern Italians, chiefly from Isola delle Femmine, that made their way to present day Pittsburg. By 1903 the village of Black Diamond conducted a census that was filed with Contra Costa County Clerk’s Office for proposed incorporation. The data indicated that of the little more than 1100 persons that were counted approximately 85% were of Sicilian/Italian surnames. Clearly the message from Pietro Aiello was well received by his fellow paisanos who heeded the call and changed the landscape of Black Diamond and beyond...Next, our Isolani beginnings in Martinez and Monterey.

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1. “Fishing gave a boost to Pittsburg economy”, Pittsburg Post-Dispatch, ~1925.
 2. Pittsburg Historical Museum archive, Pittsburg, CA.
 3. Munro-Fraser, Ed., *History of Contra Cost County, California*, J.P. W.A. Slocum & Co., San Francisco, 1882.
 4. R.A. Chavez, *A City By Any Other Name... A History of Pittsburg, California*, self-published, 2005.
 5. “Italians in New Orleans”, *Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia*, Retrieved 31 May 2020.

Mangia Bene Tutti [Eat Well Everyone]

by Mary Pappas-Coniglio “Mary’s Village Style” (follow me on Facebook)

Egg Plant Pasta

Ingredients

- 1 L Yellow Onion (Chopped)
- 2 Tbsp Garlic Chopped (2 to 3 tablespoons)
- 2 L 28 oz each cans of Tomatoes peeled and Diced
- 1/2 Cup Sweet Basil torn into small pieces
- 3 Egg Plants cut into cubes (3-4)
- Olive oil and canola oil
- 2 lb Pasta

Directions

1. Wash & dry Egg Plant. Cut into thick disks about 1 ½ inches thick. Cut the disks into cubes.
2. In a large bowl, toss Egg Plant cubes with some olive and canola oil until lightly coated. Season with salt and pepper. Place cubes on 1 to 2 large cookie sheets spreading them out for better roasting. Roast in the oven at 400 until browned turning and tossing after a few minutes (about 30-40 minutes) for even browning as shown at right.
3. Sauté onion until lightly caramelized in some oil. Add desired amount of garlic to sauté until fragrant, about 1-2 minutes.
4. Add basil.
5. Prepare tomatoes, either canned or fresh (peel) and dice. Add to sautéed onions, garlic and basil.
6. Cook vigorously for 30 minutes on medium heat. Add a little water as needed. Season to taste with salt, pepper and a little sugar.
7. Add Roasted Egg Plant cubes and cook for a few more minutes to incorporate the flavors, about 5 to 10 minutes. Be careful not to overcook . If you over cook, the egg plant will dissolve and disappear. The finished sauce is shown at right.
8. For Pasta, use Bucatini or any other long pasta.



This recipe was given to me by my mother-in-law Maria Lucido Coniglio (1919-2011).

This section each quarter will acquaint you with a traditional family recipe to complement your life. Cooking Class videos can be found on my Facebook page requiring no special equipment or fancy culinary techniques, just simple Old World family cooking skills.

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Present Sustaining Charter Members of Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.

Mike Inzerillo	Bert & Bella Cutino*	Monica & Salvatore M. Coniglio
Marina Faconti	Mary Lucido	Vincent & Midge DiMaggio*
Linda Haynes	Joseph Virga	Debbie DiMaggio-Beta
Cyril Bonanno	Ken Molinaro*	Vincent & Roselyn Malfitano*
Vince Ferrante Jr.	Phyliss Grillo	Mary Pappas Coniglio & Sal Coniglio
Charles Enea	Jeanette Cataldo	Cynthia & Pete Cardinale
Prudy DeMonner	Paul & Joanie Orlando	Joseph & Caterina Ferrante
Paula Wherity	Russell Belleci	John Lineweaver*
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Michael Orlando*	Frank & Robin Bruno*	Albert & Sandy Seeno*
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Vincent Ferrante Sr.	Joseph J Coniglio	Leandra Ramm Coniglio*
Grace Ann Verduzco	Jim Coniglio*	Virginia & Keith Simonian*

Ambassadors

include the following plus those members listed above with an “*”:

Wolfgang Croskey	Nicky D (DePaola)	Lisa Dondero
Josie Esposito	Lou Esposito II	

more to be published in future issues

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