



Il Notiziario

[The Newsletter]
of the

Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.



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Volume 1, Issue 2

Editor: A.A. Grillo

Fall: October 1, 2020

News from our Executive Board

Boungiorno Tutti,

We hope you enjoyed the first issue of our newsletter. Thank you to our Editor Alex Grillo for his guidance and perseverance in getting the first issue out. And I want to thank our contributors to our newsletter: Sal Coniglio, Vince Ferrante Jr, Mary Pappas Coniglio, and Vince Malfitano.

The Corvid-19 Virus is still with us and the country is in a state of social flux with chaos the norm of the day. We are all Americans and we will get through all this. In the meantime your Executive Board is working hard to keep you informed of what the Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc is doing,

Here on the home front we are keeping our ear to the track on when the Colombo Club will be opening so we can set another date for our "That's Italian" Dinner Show extravaganza. At the time of this writing we have reserved the Colombo Club for May 8, 2021. SAVE THE DATE! Let's hope we can keep this date. This event will be a huge celebration of our heritage, music, food, and culture. We have heard that Sindaco [Mayor] Stefano Bologna and his family may join us for the celebration. As of this writing Sindaco Bologna is in campaign mode running again for Mayor of Isola. There is no doubt he will win again.

We have been helping Sindaco Bologna with the needy of the Isola delle Femmine community with contributions to buy medicines, food and clothing for those unfortunate Isolani's.

We have developed a Friends of Isola delle Femmine (FOI) scholarship program and to date we have seeded the funds for our first scholarships in the Spring 2021. More information is on our website, www.friendsofisola.org. Check it out.

Mary Pappas Coniglio has been taping videos of her traditional Sicilian recipes that can be viewed on her Facebook page and her Instagram site: Mary's Village Style, and now on YouTube as well as on our Isola delle Femmine Facebook page. These recipes are recipes of our heritage that we can pass on to our family. Thank you, Mary.

To date we have around 85 members and we have extended the price reduction of our Sustaining Charter Memberships to \$60 a year per person, a \$15 savings off the regular membership price, to the end of this year. Your memberships help fund FOI's existence, funding scholarships, keeping our doors open, etc. Go to our website to join and donate to our cause. Sustaining Charter Members will get preferential treatment at our "That's Italian" Dinner Show and other events and services.

We are working on a Chapter membership for the Sister Cities of Monterey and Martinez. Recently your Governing Board met with Gaspare Cardinale, Sal Ferrante, and Tom DiMaggio from Monterey and we discussed the collaboration with our organization. They were excited and the board will discuss this union and vote on it soon. More news to follow.

Last but not least, our Board approved John Buffo becoming an Honorary Sustaining Charter Member. John was an original sister city committee member when we first formed the Pittsburg-Isola delle Femmine Sister City Committee back in 1992. He also traveled with us to Isola in 1994 for the unveiling of the Fisherman Statue in Piazza di Pittsburg.

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

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You can see we are busy during this terrible pandemic and social unrest. Please join us and help us achieve our objective of continuing the cultural heritage and traditions of our ancestors from Isola delle Femmine.

“If not us, then who will continue the traditions to pass on to our families.”

COME JOIN US!

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

Vincent S. DiMaggio, Co-founder & Chairman of the Board

Frank B. Bruno, Co-founder & President

- Please help us keep you informed of the things we are doing and help us gain more visitors to our website and Facebook page. Push the buttons on these pages for FOLLOWING, for LIKES and to SHARE all our posts with your “FRIENDS LISTS”. SHARE on your timeline as well as by clicking the bell on the YouTube site to be notified of all our posts.

What's Happening

by Frank Bruno & Mary Pappas-Coniglio

“That's Italian”

Thank you to everyone who has purchased tickets for our event...

Due to Covid 19 we are rescheduling our event for spring of 2021.

Your tickets are still valid and we will stay in touch with updates as soon as possible.....

Friends of Isola delle Femmine....

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Check out the new weekly Sicilian Trivia Contest on the Friends of Isola delle Femmine website:
www.friendsofisola.org. Be the first to answer all four questions correctly and win a fabulous prize.

News from Isola

by A.A. Grillo

Stefano Bologna, the mayor of Isola delle Femmine, wrote in mid-July that the summer had started with the arrival of tourist, always a good mark for the city of Isola. Italy has been able to reopen from the strict closedown due to the pandemic by following required restrictions. Nello Musumeci, President of Sicily, reminded everyone of this with an Ordinance that all indoor activities such as dances are prohibited. All outdoor activities require masks to be worn along with maintaining the prescribed safe distances and no more than 40% of normal occupancy allowed in each business. These restrictions especially applied to the important holiday Ferragosto on 15-August. With that, tourists are most welcome.



The Marina View of the Remodeled City Hall



Ribbon Cutting to Open Remodeled City Hall

Mayor Bologna also wrote of the many projects starting, in progress or completed in the city. One important completion is the remodeling of the City Hall, which is now occupied for business. It is seen in the above picture from across the marina. At left Mayor Bologna officiates at the ribbon cutting ceremony. One of the many projects is the restoration of the Church of Ss. Maria delle Grazie including the Giambecchina frescoes.



Stefano Bologna Campaign for Re-election

Mayor Bologna is also running for re-election this October. One of his campaign posters is shown at left. An article about his candidacy ran in the newspaper *Giornale di Sicilia*. The positive article gave some personal background, named his returning support group along with a few additions, all of whom will support his candidacy and his work if re-elected. It covered one of his most important accomplishments, that is, restoring the city budget since taking office, and it reviewed some

of the tasks ahead, not the least of which is continued management of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We Earthlings were treated to a celestial display in July with the passing of the comet NEOWISE. There were many pictures of it from vantage points in the U.S. The picture at the right gives you to a view from Isola.



Comet NEOWISE over Isola delle Femmine

[Pictures of Isola courtesy of Orazio Sansonini]

I Ricordi d'Isola [Memories of Isola]

by Sal Coniglio

The Place to Be

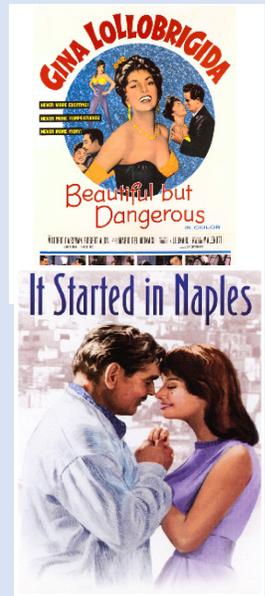
In the long hot Sicilian summer nights of the 50's and early 60's in Isola delle Femmine, the "Place to Be" was the outdoor movie theater. The theater consisted of a large tall wall onto which the films were projected with a seating area in front of the wall filled with bench seats similar to pews one finds in a church. The picture on the right is of a newer outdoor theater built in 1980 by a Cardinale family. Sunday evenings were especially popular after six working days. The open-air adventure was frequented by many kids, engaged couples on dates as well as adults. Many patrons would view the same movies over and over again.



Arena la Playa

A Cataldo family operated the earlier Arena Miramare when I lived in Isola. They would send someone to Palermo to rent the film, on several reels, and bring it back to Isola in a special case. Normally, the runner would travel by bus but occasionally by car. Sometimes mechanical problems with the car or the bus resulted in a delayed showing.

To advertise the upcoming program, a few kids were employed to carry a large poster of the coming film through the streets of Isola shouting out the name and time of the coming film. Two such posters are shown on the right. Compensation for parading the poster was a free ticket to the show. I was called on for such fun duty on occasion. Depending upon the film, this would generate a lot of excitement with the townspeople, especially with the children. The theater would show the film for 3-4 days, then pass the film onto a nearby town, often Capaci.



Many notable popular Napolitano movies were featured at the outdoor cinema. The previews and cartoons were the kids' favorites: Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Fat & Skinny (called Laurel and Hardy in the U.S.). I remember watching *Gone with the Wind* in that theater, which at that time was already an old movie, as well as many, many, musicals.

In winter months, we watched films at an indoor theater, monitored by the local priest. The movie *Cinema Paradiso*, released in 1988, gives an excellent portrayal of a similar indoor theater



including flashes over the projector lens to block kissing scenes. In that movie, a film is projected onto a wall of the piazza on a hot summer night. We had our Arena.

The Arena structure is still standing today, as shown in the two pictures at left, abandon by complicated laws of real estate property and ownership, but it reminds us of a life that seemed more simple, less complicated than today.

The Projection Screen Wall and Outer Wall of the Arena Miramare

[Pictures courtesy of Orazio Sansonini]

A Bit of History that Is Ours

by Vince Ferrante Jr.

From Black Diamond (Pittsburg) to Monterey “The Beginning”

This article is a stroll back in time regarding the “migration” of Sicilian fishermen who began to arrive in Black Diamond in the late 1870’s. While they established a large-scale Sicilian fishing village by the 1880’s that greatly contributed and expanded the fishing industry throughout the Sacramento Delta and Alaska, the next step of the journey takes us to Monterey, in what would become “The Sardine Capitol of the World”.

Pietro Ferrante was a leader among the fisher families, first arriving in Black Diamond about 1888. After experiencing tremendous success over many years he suffered a loss of boats due to a wharf fire in 1905. After giving it much thought Pietro decided to seek a new location to base his fishing operations. William Croxan, the Superintendent of Booth cannery in Pittsburg and a city father, learning that Pietro wanted to seek a new location, told him that Frank Booth (his brother-in-law) also had a small cannery in Monterey and encouraged Pietro to meet with him. The F.E. Booth Cannery in Pittsburg was flourishing at this time on the Sacramento Delta and Booth had many business holdings along the west coast and was attempting to make a go of it in Monterey, purchasing the only cannery there at that time. Pietro eventually took a train to San Diego. On his way back up the coast, he scouted all the fishing ports until he arrived in Monterey where he finally met with Frank Booth. Pietro surveyed the fishing activities in and about Monterey Bay. There were various groups of individuals, including Spanish, Portuguese and Italians, fishing for salmon, often trawling by hook but also utilizing gill net techniques on a small scale. There was also a sizable abalone industry dominated by Japanese immigrants that had been there since the 1890’s. At that time sardines were nothing more than a bait fish for the salmon. Pietro concluded that the sardines could actually be harvested on a large scale, and in the fall of 1905, he began working with his brother-in-law Orazio Enea, his brothers Vincenzo (my great grandfather) and Arasimo, plus a cousin or two, to make up the first crew.

Given their early success, in May of 1906, they and their families permanently moved to Monterey. Upon seeing the large schools of sardines, Pietro felt that new innovations were needed to catch them. He would soon revolutionize the local industry. He sent for the “lampara” or lightning haul or lantern net that was utilized along Sicily in the Mediterranean Sea. Booth initially had his doubts but they were soon to be dispelled. The net was placed in the charge of Orazio Crivello and with modifications it allowed the Sicilian fishermen to harvest large schools of sardines in a “purse” and to offload them faster allowing the net to get back in the water much more quickly than with a standard “gill net”. A certain technique was required to operate this net which the Sicilian fishermen had mastered in their days working in the old country which provided them with a significant competitive advantage for years to come. One set could garner from 5 to 8 tons, a very sizable catch for the day considering catches were typically measured in hundreds of pounds. Power boats were not in wide use at that early time, however, first, the powered double ender lampara boats followed by those with the Monterey Clipper bow were to become staples for the



Lampara nets spread to dry at “Ferrante’s Landing” adjacent to Fisherman’s Wharf, Monterey.

A.C. Heidrick circa 1911 [4]

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Ferrante crews, another advantage. Pietro also invented the use of a “liter” which was essentially a barge type of craft with a 15-ton hold, which would accept multiple loads of sardines. Upon a full load, the liter could be towed to the cannery and offloaded while the fishing team set the net for the next catch. These were the days before the large purse seiners, boats which came into play in the late 1920’s.

Pietro began recruiting additional crews of relatives and friends from Black Diamond, explaining the commercial possibilities of the “Silver Harvest” and of a profitable livelihood. Soon two crews were operating. One was in the command of Orazio Enea who would be a close business associate of Pietro. The other was in the command of Vincenzo Ferrante, Pietro’s youngest brother. Among the original Sicilian pioneer fishermen to migrate from Pittsburg were Frank Bruno, Orazio Crivello, Salvatore (Cavaleri) Cardinale, Pietro Buffo, Salvatore Russo, Erasimo Lucido, ‘Big Tony’ and “Small Tony” Aiello and Salvatore Rucello. Other pioneers soon to follow included Constantino Balbo, Orazio “Bambino” Cardinale, Paul Giamona, Genaro Riso, Salvatore Colletto Sr., Santo Scardina Sr., Angelo Lucido, Frank Lucido, and Salvatore Melicia. Many of these men would go on to be boat owners, and in some cases, cannery owners. Eventually Pietro began calling directly to Isola delle Femmine and the surrounding villages of the Mother Country for more men to join in.



Booth’s cannery in Monterey and its Crescent Brand Sardines proclaimed on its roof sign. [4]

Initially, the families settled along Monterey’s Pacific St. Then Pietro purchased land and created a large compound on Van Buren St. providing housing and jobs for many, including the newcomers from Sicily. Pietro would be among those fishermen to become a cannery owner. He also made his mark in organizing the Monterey Boat Owners Association as well as the Fishermen’s Association. In 1951, he was honored by the Italian Government and awarded the Italian Congressional Star and Citation for “Great Assistance Rendered Other Italian Immigrants” in settling this country. His bust was dedicated in 1969 and can be found near the Santa Rosalia statue, gazing upon the entrance of the old Fisherman’s Wharf.

Together with the men of experience and several revolutionary innovations which were introduced, Booth’s Crescent cannery now had the production that he dreamed of and, with the advent of WWI, the demand for a protein source in the form of sardines for our soldiers overseas. The industry took off. In 1914, there were two canneries operating in Monterey, but in the aftermath of WWI, there were 30 canneries and reduction plants! Monterey would then be forever known as the “Sardine Capitol of The World” and it was the Sicilian fishermen, who created the foundation of the famed “Cannery Row”, immortalized by John Steinbeck and known the world over. And to think that at it all started due in large part to the efforts of our great and mighty ancestors, the Kings of the Sea!

Sources:

1. Angela Ferrante (daughter of Pietro Ferrante), “Pietro Ferrante Fishing History”, letter to John Wolfenden of the *Monterey Herald*, circa 1968.
2. “The Sister Cities of Monterey and Pittsburg”, *Monterey Herald*, 1975.
3. Angelo J. Ghio and Earl Hohlmayer, *The Story of the Beautiful Monterey Fishing Boats and the Story of one of the survivors: An Illustrated History*, aka *The Saga of the Montereys*, 2004.
4. Michael Kenneth Hemp, *Cannery Row: The History of John Steinbeck’s Old Ocean View Avenue and Its Connections to the Pacific Northwest*, 2009.

Mangia Bene Tutti [Eat Well Everyone]

by Mary Pappas-Coniglio "Mary's Village Style" (follow me on Facebook)



"Mary's Village Style"



Old World Family Recipes preserving our heritage and culture....

Italian Broccoli Soup

Visit us on Facebook, Instagram and now on YouTube.

Be sure to like and follow us on all our pages and sites.

Share to your timeline and with your friends list.

When visiting our YouTube channel click the bell!

So you will receive notification on all our new postings.



Italian Broccoli Soup

Ingredients

- 1 Can Chicken broth (14.5 oz. can or about 2 cups)
- 3 Pounds Fresh Broccoli flowerets (or enough to fill your pot $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to the top)
- 1 Large Yellow Onion (chopped)
- 1 Teaspoon Garlic minced (to your taste)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound long pasta (spaghetti, linguini or whatever you like, broken into small pieces)
- 2-4 Tablespoons Olive Oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Tsp. of salt and pepper (or to your taste)

Directions

1. Prepare the broccoli by cutting it into small to medium flowerets. You will need enough broccoli to eventually fill your 5-quart pot to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to the top.
2. In your 5-quart pot, add the olive oil and sauté the onion until almost browned.
3. Add the garlic and sauté for 3 minutes, just until fragrant but not browned.
4. Add the broccoli and sauté for 2-3 more minutes.
5. Add the one can of chicken broth.
6. Add water to reach the top of the broccoli.
7. Bring the broccoli & water to a boil. Cook for just a few minutes.
8. Add salt and pepper to taste.
9. Add the broken pasta. When the pasta is cooked, your soup is ready.
10. Top off your bowl of soup with grated cheese, and you're good to go.
11. I use a 5-quart pot and about 2 heaping handfuls of broken pasta. I do not measure it. This soup is also great without pasta.

Enjoy

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

Sara & Ryan Meier
Joe Malfitano

Bert Bonanno
Mary Lucido
David Billeci

Dusty & Michael Costello
Catherine Bruno DiMaggio
Bert & Bonnie Bonanno

more to be published in future issues

Ambassadors

Nicole Impagliazzo
Lisa Dondero
Ken Molinaro
Jim Coniglio
Michael Orlando
Wolfgang Croskey
Josie Esposito

Lou Esposito II
John Lineweaver
Mike & Jan Fernandes
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