



# Il Notiziario

[The Newsletter]  
of the

*Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.*



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Volume 2, Issue 4

Editor: A.A. Grillo

Fall: October 1, 2021

## News from our Executive Board

by Frank B. Bruno

*Salutamu!*

We are now in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2021 and it has been a bitter sweet year.

BITTER because the horrid Covid-19 virus Delta Variant is still dictating how we live, commune, and socialize, and it is lingering on. The virus has put a damper on a lot of the things we want to do to move FOI forward. Due to the upsurge in virus cases and the governments' discouragement to congregate in close quarters, the Colombo Club has decided to remain closed until at least mid-October, beyond the date for our dinner show scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the month. This has forced us to again postpone our "That's Italian" Dinner Show. We are disappointed but we WILL HAVE THIS PARTY AND IT WILL BE A PARTY THAT YOU WILL NOT EVER FORGET! See more about this on the next page.

Our beloved John Buffo has passed away. John was with us as part of our Pittsburg-Isola delle Femmine Sister City Committee in 1992 and he attended the first Isola delle Femmine sister city trip in 1994. John was a lifelong educator and administrator in Pittsburg as well as a board member and historian of the local museum. He had a deep passion for his Sicilian roots, evidenced by his participation in many service organizations to share and preserve our history. His friendship and support will be dearly missed.



John Buffo

SWEET as my daughter, Sara, will have our granddaughter – her first – in December. We are all excited.

And for FOI, we have survived the pandemic so far with increased membership, now up to 130. The numbers reserving a place for our "That's Italian" Dinner Show at the Colombo Club expanded. We provided a chance for our members to win a trip to Mexico, thanks to our member Ken Molinaro, who provided us with a great Mexico vacation at his Costa Sur Resort & Spa in Puerto Vallarta for 2 travelers including airfare, the proceeds of the raffle to be used for future FOI member scholarship awards. We awarded six scholarships to college bound students of FOI members' children, grandchildren and/or great grandchildren, their awards presented at our first Old Fashion Sicilian-American Picnic, which was attended by around 175 friends and cousins. We formulated three FOI chapters each with committees. The directors are: Pittsburg-Wolfgang Croskey, Martinez-Mike Inzerillo, Monterey-Dr. Vincent Malfitano. And in the wake of the cancellation of the Monterey Santa Rosalia Festival, we still had the opportunity to meet with the Mayor of Monterey and the Italian Consul General from San Francisco.

So, you can see that "year to date" has proven to be more Sweet than Bitter. There are more details of these events on the next page and in the What's Happening Section. But this year is not over yet. We still have a lot of time to excel.

Your board, believes we will have a great 4<sup>th</sup> quarter that will contribute to a great 2021, which will catapult us to a great and fantastic 2022. We have a lot planned for 2022 so stay tuned and connected by visiting our website often at [www.friendsofisola.org](http://www.friendsofisola.org).

**And you can help by making a tax-deductible donation this 4<sup>th</sup> quarter before year end!**

*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.*

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

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This decision to postpone our “That’s Italian” Dinner Show event has been a long and difficult one for the Board of FOI to make because the menu was set and ordered, the entertainers have been rehearsing a fantastic show, produced by them, including a few great surprises. We have over 100 paid attendees signed up, ready to go, and they are anxious to attend. All previously purchased tickets will be honored.

The rise of the Delta variant has forced many planned events, even the outdoor Santa Rosalia Festival in Monterey, to decide this is not a safe time for such affairs to be held. We are hopeful that by early next year the virus will be better controlled such that everyone will feel safe to attend and celebrate our cultural heritage at **Una Grande Festa!**

We hope you will remain committed to our event as an attendee until we confirm the new date. The Mayor of Isola delle Femmine and his entourage may be able to join us on the new date if international travel will also reopen.

We will hold the drawing for our fabulous Puerto Vallarta Resort & Spa Vacation on October 2<sup>nd</sup> as planned without the “That’s Italian” dinner show. Instead, we will hold a live streaming event on Facebook and YouTube to include the drawing for the Mexico trip, Cooking, Entertainment and lots more FOI information with our FOI Board. More information to connect to this event is available on our website.

We were able to keep our meeting with Monterey’s Mayor Clyde Roberson and their Sister City Program Liaison Laurie Huelga. Also, the Monterey Italian Heritage Society, president Ann Marie Stanton, hosted a meeting for us with the Italian Consul General Sergio Strozzi, Deputy Consul Fabio Massimo Ballerini and Secretary of Public Relations and Community Outreach Sharon Tarantino Meaghen. We informed them of the history of forming the three sister cities with Isola, FOI’s history, its purpose, our scholarship program and our future events & programs. The Consul General was very happy to see such active participation in the Sister Cities programs with a well-established Friends of Isola delle Femmine nonprofit corporation to facilitate this work. Highlighting the meeting was a discussion of the possibility of generating commerce between Monterey, Pittsburg, & Martinez and Isola delle Femmine. The Consulate General welcomed the proposal and is willing to help facilitate it. Dr. Vincent Malfitano & Gaspare Cardinale will head a committee to explore the possibilities.



**Consul General Sergio Strozzi  
& Doctor Vincent Malfitano**

Thank you for your understanding and your support. Please go to our website, [www.friendsofisola.org](http://www.friendsofisola.org), for updated information. If you have any inquiries, please email us at [friendsofisola@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofisola@gmail.com).

*Ciao!*

*Cu havi a bona saluti è riccu.* [He who has good health is rich.]

The Executive Board-Friends of Isola delle Femmine

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# *Il Notiziano*

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## **What's Happening**

by Frank B. Bruno

Well, it was HOT! at our first Old Fashion Sicilian-American Pic Nic. We fed 175 cousins and want to be cousins. It was held at the Waterfront Park in Martinez, July 10<sup>th</sup>. It turned out to be a great event. Thanks to our committee: Mary Pappas Coniglio, Vincent DiMaggio, Vincent Ferrante, Mike Inzerillo, Danny Pellegrini, Mary Goodman, Vincent Malfitano, Cindi Erickson, and Michael J. DiMaggio. And a big thank you to our volunteers: Midge DiMaggio, Aisle Inzerillo, Roselyn Malfitano, Nicole Ferrante, Liz Ferrante, Linda Haynes, Cass Golshani, Cynthia Cardinale, Albert Seeno, Susan DiMaggio, Cyril Bonanno, and all of Danny's cook crew. I hope I didn't forget anyone. As you can see it was a huge production.



**Albert Seeno Prepares Melons for Desert**

cut up the sweet water melon for dessert. Speaking of dessert, many attendees brought contributions to the dessert table that was overflowing with sweet Sicilian-Italian confections. Visit our website [www.friendsofisola.org](http://www.friendsofisola.org) for more photos.

The huge gift basket door prize was won by Roselyn Malfitano and Liz Ferrante won the 50/50 raffle of \$500.

An important part of our picnic celebration was to present our FOI scholarship winners with their certificate and \$1,000 check. In attendance were 4 of the 6 recipients: Giovanni Ferrante, Antonia Cardinale, Francisco Cardinale, Anna Lucido. Not able to attend were Angelina Shipe and Anna Maria Crone, who received their certificate and check by the mail. With the scholarship recipients all gathered around the podium area, FOI Treasurer Doctor Vincent Malfitano gave the scholarship recipients words of wisdom, hope, and inspiration. Inspiring.



**Doctor Malfitano Talks to Our Scholarship Recipients**

Some played bocce ball, most mingled and met cousins, some for the first time. There was a companata contest with entries from 4 members and FOI member Anna Curella won the best tasting companata contest according to 6 judges. Anna was crowned Queen for the day. The sausage and pasta were cooked to perfection by Danny and his crew. The pasta sauce was fabulous, prepared by *Cooking with Mary's Village Style* along with her great salad. Albert Seeno's crew



**A Greeting from President Bruno at the Buffet Line**



**Queen Anna Curella**

There was music, singing, conversation, laughter heard everywhere, hugs and kisses, the smell of sausage cooking and an overall great time. Special guests in attendance were the Mayor of Martinez, Robert Shroder, Councilmembers Debbie McKillop, Lara Delaney, Breanne Zorn, and Veronica Sepulveda from the Martinez Park & Recreation Department.

Our original plan was a picnic of only FOI members and we figured around 35-50 would attend. The Martinez Chapter of FOI, headed by Mike Inzerillo, responded that the Italian Sicilian descendants of their city wanted to come and celebrate our cultural heritage. Thank you all for a great successful Old Fashion Sicilian American Picnic.

## **I Ricordi d’Isola [Memories of Isola]**

by Sal Coniglio and Orazio Sansonini

Piracy, of not just goods but also of humans to feed the slave trade, existed around the Mediterranean Sea from prehistoric times. Strong governments, such as the Roman Empire, were able to maintain some control of piracy but still sanctioned slavery for their own purposes. Entering the Middle Ages with the fall of Rome, defense against pirate raids was left to whatever local resistance could be marshaled. The end of the Norman ruled Kingdom of Sicily in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and movement of head of government from Palermo to Napoli, resulted in another reduction in strong government defense of the island. During this time, Sicily was a prized target with a prosperous agriculture in grains and abundant fisheries. The special tuna traps, called tonnare, one located at what would become the city of Isola delle Femmine, harvested large quantities of blue fin tuna. There was a constant threat of raids and destruction that loomed over the farms, castles, convents, churches, the homes of the rich but also over the poor houses of the coastal villages. In addition to raiding stockpiles of grain and fish, the pirates fed the thriving slave markets of Tripoli, Tunis and Algiers.

The first defenses were “fari” [lighthouses] to send warnings with smoke by day and the light of fires by night. Short distance alarms could be sent audibly by blowing into conch type shells [brogna in Sicilian], which emitted long, deep sounds. With either type of warnings, the populace could leave their fields or houses seeking safety in fortified places or refuge in the mountains. Men at sea could attempt to escape from the immediate location threatened. As the threats became more serious, a more strategic plan for coastal defenses was needed. This initiated the construction of observation towers.

Possibly the oldest such tower is the one in what is now the city of Isola delle Femmine, which dates back to that same 13<sup>th</sup> century. Over the course of the next century, numerous such warning towers were built along the coast. Other tower locations included Mandra di Sferracavallo, and Mondello, each protecting a nearby tonnara. Custody of these towers was entrusted to the special chief of the tuna fishermen. Each tower had two or more men, alternating with the guard duty, had the task of alerting the boats that were on the horizon and communicating what they observed to the magistrates of the nearby land or city for the populace to seek safety.

Towards the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it became necessary to build new towers or update existing ones to resist enemy attacks which now had artillery available. Designs were entrusted to distinguished engineers such as the Florentine Camillo Camilliani, who carefully studied the coastline and determined the most suitable locations for new towers and ones to strengthen, this included a new tower on the small islet Isola delle Femmine, offshore of the city by the same name, which was built about 1593.

By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the strategic importance of the towers began to decline, both because the barbarian incursions were finally ending, and because the centuries-old function of warning through the lighting of the lighthouse gave way to the advent of modern telegraphic signals. The towers were slowly abandoned and largely left to decay fighting alone for survival against the wear and tear of time and the destructive work of man.



The Towers of Isola delle Femmine  
The upper on the Islet of the same name.  
The lower in the city itself.  
Isola’s harbor at the very bottom of photo

## **A Bit of History that Is Ours**

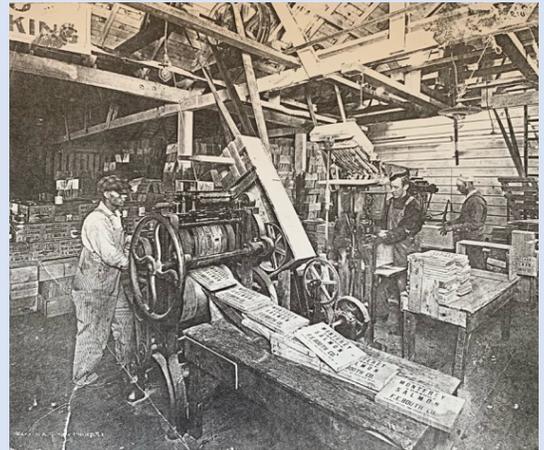
by Vince S. Ferrante

### **LOCAL FISH CANNING INDUSTRY BEGINNINGS – Part 2**

#### ***MONTEREY EARLY SARDINE CANNING HISTORY***

While fishing had been ongoing for many years in Monterey, getting the canning industry running to a sufficiently high commercial level to lay the foundation for Monterey's Cannery Row to become known as "The Sardine Capitol of The World" required the efforts of three men.

As early as the 1890's, F.E. Booth, who would become "The Father of the Monterey Sardine Industry", engaged in buying salmon from Monterey fishermen. He decided in 1896 to build a small salmon cannery and packing building in town. J.P. Haller was brought to Monterey from Booth's Black Diamond (Pittsburg) cannery to manage the new enterprise. Because of supply problems from the local fishermen, Booth soon closed the cannery. On one of his frequent visits to the Monterey Peninsula, he became interested in the economic possibilities of large-scale harvesting of the sizeable schools of sardines found in the waters around the local wharf. About 1902, he undertook the first commercial sardine enterprise in the area, building a plant for packing and canning the sardines. This was the beginning of Monterey's famous sardines.



Packaged Salmon Off the Booth Line

Photo courtesy of Pittsburg Museum Archive

The early attempts of catching sardines were primitive and inefficient. The daily catch, being very erratic due to the methods implemented by local fishermen, left the cannery in an on-again-off-again inefficient unproductive rhythm as far as Booth was concerned. It wasn't until 1905 that an effective method to catch these small fish was implemented by Pietro Ferrante. He had been very successfully fishing out of Black Diamond in the Sacramento Delta and in the northwest from about 1888. Due to a chain of events, detailed in a previous issue of this newsletter, Ferrante came to Monterey searching for a new location. Surveying the fishing methods used in Monterey, he concluded that the Lampara net, which he and his fellow countrymen had used in the fertile fishing grounds of the Mediterranean Sea around Sicily, was key to improving the sardine harvest.

A well-used "lampara" net was sent to Monterey with Orazio Crivello put in charge of the net by Ferrante for experimentation and modifications. The lampara net along with Sicilian fishermen from Black Diamond, familiar with its use, proved to be the answer to catch sardines in much larger quantities, offload them with precision and reset the net for another catch. Ferrante also implemented the use of a "lighter" or small barge to hold several loads of catch in addition to his early adoption of the lampara or double ender powered boats, which he had begun to use years earlier in the Sacramento Delta waters. At that time, it was common to see primarily sailing fishing boats plying the Monterey Bay. These Ferrante innovations allowed the expansion of the fishing grounds immensely in addition to increasing the number of catch cycles per day. All told Ferrante and his team were able to deliver five tons of fish a day to Booth's Cannery, a quantity considered quite large then and one allowing an efficient commercial canning operation. Pietro

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Ferrante's seasoned and experienced team of Sicilian fishermen had surnames that we all know: "Big Tony" and "Small Tony" Aiello, Frank Bruno, Salvatore Cardinale, Orazio Crivello, Orazio Enea, Vincenzo and Arasimo Ferrante. They were soon joined by Erasimo Lucido and Salvatore Rucello. Years later, Ferrante earned the title "The Grand Old Man" of Monterey's sardine industry due to his pioneering innovative fishing practices and decades of experience.

In terms of canning in the early days, Booth settled on an oval can utilized for certain cuts of salmon in his Black Diamond plant. Four to six sardines became the standard. Through his efforts up north, Booth capitalized on byproducts of the fish that eventually made more money than the sardines themselves such as fishmeal for poultry and livestock and for fertilizer. The oil from the processed fish was utilized for vitamins, salad oil, shortening, glycerin and in making soap.

Another key individual to this trifecta was Knut Hovden from Norway. A graduate of the Norwegian National Fisheries, a trained professional in the fish packing business and an inventive genius, he would revolutionize the canning industry. By 1914, he branched out on his own to become the second cannery owner in Monterey. Quickly, he would become known as "The King of Cannery Row". Hovden first joined Booth in 1905 and began to evaluate the canning operation. He brought a new way of thinking that revolutionized the process. With the question of an appropriate supply of fish answered by Ferrante, Hovden began putting his stamp on the cannery production side of things. A self-emptying purse bottom brailing net was one of his first applied solutions to replace the laborious task of offloading the sardines by hand from the lighters arriving at the cannery. His invention of a mechanical sealer-solderer greatly increased production from the hand soldering of cans. He continued to implement his many innovations throughout and the cannery production increased to a very profitable level laying the foundation for a sardine revolution in Monterey.



A Sunday Walk by the Monterey Booth Cannery  
Photo courtesy of SantaCruztrains.com

With the revolutionized fishing and canning methods in place and World War I fast approaching with the forced shutdown of the North Atlantic Fishery, there was great demand for sardines as a wartime ration. By wars end, Booth, Pacific Fish, and Hovden canneries would be joined by California Fisheries Company, a Japanese export firm, Bayside Cannery, Monterey Canning Company, San Xavier Canning Company and Monterey Fish Products. That would only be the early history of things, there would be much more to come as Monterey would become known as "The Sardine Capitol of The World".

Sources:

*Looking Back III: Tales of Italian Fishing Pioneers of Pittsburg, Monterey and Alaska*, by Earl Hohlmayer;  
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*Cannery Row: The History of John Steinbeck's Old Ocean View Avenue* by Michael Kenneth Hemp;  
*A History of Commercial Fishing Industry of Pittsburg California* by John R. Light;  
*The Monterey Peninsula Herald* September 7, 1975 article "The Sister Cities of Monterey and Pittsburg".  
"From Black Diamond (Pittsburg) to Monterey: 'The Beginning'", *Il Notiziaro* **vol 1** no 2, by Vince S. Ferrante

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## **Mangiate Bene Tutti [Eat Well Everyone]**

by Mary Pappas-Coniglio “Mary’s Village Style” on Facebook, Instagram & YouTube  
or on our Website: [https://friendsofisoladellefemmine.org/food\\_travel/](https://friendsofisoladellefemmine.org/food_travel/)

### *Cooking with Mary’s Village Style ... “Members Salute”*

In this issue we are featuring one of our members.

She is a Pro!

Alise Inzerillo brought this delicious Olive Oil Cake to our Old Fashioned Picnic in July. Hope you had a chance to taste it. It was **HIT!**

I thought everyone would enjoy this.

### *Alise O’Leary Inzerillo*

At the tender age of 30, Alise decided it was time for a new career and started Culinary School at DVC, enrolling in Pastry Arts. She spent about 10 years in kitchens throughout the Bay Area, building up experience from the “Mom & Pop” bakeshops, to hotels/banquets, and contracted food service, before moving into sales. She is currently still involved in the food biz as a food service sales professional and LOVES to bake in her spare time!



### *Olive Oil Cake*

Yield: two 8" cakes

- 5 Large Eggs
- 3 Cups Sugar
- 2 Cups Olive Oil
- 2 Cups Milk
- 3/4 Cup (6oz) Orange Juice
- 1 Tbsp. Zest- Orange or Lemon
- 3 Cups Flour
- 1 tsp Baking Soda
- 1 tsp Baking Powder
- 1 tsp Salt

6oz Almonds- I prefer to toast whole almonds, then pulse them in the food processor- you can use sliced almonds if you like.

Whisk together the eggs, sugar, oil, milk, juice, and zest.

Sift the dries together (Flour, Soda, Powder, and Salt).

Gradually add the dry ingredients to the liquid, in a few additions, scraping the sides of the bowl as needed to incorporate fully.

Fold in the almonds.

Pour into prepared 8" cake pan (bottom lined w/parchment and sprayed with non-stick spray)

Bake at 350 degrees for about 45 min-1 hour.

Cool and sprinkle with Powdered Sugar, Candied Orange, or whatever you'd like!



Desserts at our Old Fashioned Picnic

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

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*more to be published in future issues*

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