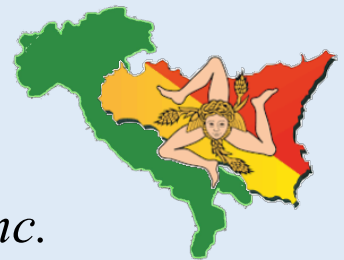




Il Notiziario

[The Newsletter]
of the

Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.



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

Volume 6, Issue 2

Editor: A.A. Grillo

Summer: July 1, 2025

News from our Executive Board

by Frank "Ciccu" Bruno

Saluti a tutti,

As you now know, this year we will publish two newsletters instead of the original four, and this one is the second. The next newsletter will be distributed on January 1, 2026.

The Mayor of Monterey, Tyler Williamson, contacted Isola delle Femmine Sindaco (Mayor) Nevoloso that he was going to Isola to reconnect Monterey as a sister city. This is the first time a sitting mayor of Monterey has come to Isola on official business. Monterey Chapter Director, Vincenzo Malfitano and myself traveled to Isola a few days before Mayor Williamson and his small group arrived for the official visit. We landed at the Palermo Airport on Friday, May 30, to a cheering group of friends, Stefano Bologna & Maria Grazia Daffara, Michele Lucido & Maria Costanzo, Tonino Scala, Giuseppe Lucido, Marco Mogavero and Tonino Croce & Letizia Micali. After 14 hours of flying, it was so nice to see them. They took us to our hotel, the wonderful Saracen Sands Hotel, right on the beach.

The next day, we met with Mayor Nevoloso and some of his administration to go over the itinerary for the upcoming visit of Mayor Williamson. A jam-packed schedule was planned for them which included us. At this first meeting before Mayor Williamson's group had arrived, we discussed the deteriorating condition of the Fisherman Statue. We explained what is happening to the statue, how important this statue means to Isola's sister cities, and the countless number of visitors to Isola that take photos with the statue. The statue is the symbol of our sister city hood that binds us to each other. Vince and I discussed an idea for a family brick program that would help refurbish the statue. Nevoloso said it would be better to have ceramic tiles instead of clay bricks with the tiles placed on the pond walls. We all agreed. It was also agreed to find a local business that can make ceramic tiles such as La Musa factory, which is located right in Isola. This way we will help the local business community and save on shipping costs. This, too, was agreed by all. The plan is to sell family name tiles to be placed on the pond walls and the funds will all be used for renovation of the pond and statue. Giuseppe Lucido measured the pond walls to estimate how many tiles will be required depending upon their size and our contact, Luisa Tricoli, will be researching tile manufacturers in the area. More details to follow. I informed the group that I was in contact with the Fisherman Statue sculptor, Frank Vitale, and we discussed what needed to be done to refurbish the statue. Hopefully we can find someone there to do the job, or perhaps, Frank will go there early next year to do the job. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

When Mayor Williamson arrived, he hit the carpet running. First up was the wreath laying celebration in Palermo commemorating the establishment of the Italian Republic, a visit to the unveiling of a new monument at the Via Vespucci shoreline, a meeting with mayors of surrounding cities, and a signing of the Book of Roots. Continuing, we toured the biggest employer in Isola, the Heidelberg Materials facility, then off to Palermo to meet with Regional Assessor Edy Tamajo and other high-level dignitaries, discussing commerce between Sicily and Monterey. Next, a visit to the Palazzo dei Normanni, and to the Monreale Cathedral with a private visit with Archbishop Monsignor Gualtiero Isacchi followed by a visit to the Cappella Palatina. Not finished yet, we visited the Giardino della Memoria and then back to Isola for the unveiling of the Plaque of Via Monterey with a food tasting event. The last day we visited the Teatro Massimo Opera house in Palermo.

*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. Di Maggio, Co-founder & President: F.B. Bruno,
Vice-President: M. Pappas-Coniglio, Secretary: D. Pellegrini, 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 Ph.D.

Il Notiziario
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025

Mayor Williamson and his group were overwhelmed by the hospitality, food, and love of their sister city. Vince and I will meet with the mayor in the near future to discuss what we learned in Isola and how to move forward with commerce between the two sister cities.

After our visit, we received the following message from Sindaco Nevoloso:

The sea is the connecting bond between Isola delle Femmine and its emigrants of the sister cities of Monterey, Pittsburg, and Martinez (California, USA). But not only that.

There exists an indelible and permanent mark, and autograph that certifies, with those men and women, that the maritime culture, the craft of fishing and its most ancestral secrets have started from this remote part of the world. And in this new world our families worked hard in order to make their fortune, without definitively forgetting their homeland.

Isola delle Femmine welcomes and will always welcome with heart the twinned communities of Monterey, Pittsburg and Martinez, because these places are part of our identity. My Public Local Administration and I want to leave a tangible and indelible mark in order to preserve the strong bond that holds us together.

Orazio Nevoloso
Mayor of Isola delle Femmine.

Another important project in which FOI takes great pride is our scholarship program. This year we were able to award eleven scholarships to offspring of our members. They were award at our June 8th picnic details of which are included in our What's Happening section below. We are happy to announce the following awards:

Katherine Compagno

Villanova: PreMed
John Compagno: Father
Catherine Compagno: Grandmother

Sabella Singh

Cal Poly SLO:
Industrial Tech/Product Design
Mary Manguerro: Grandmother

Sofia Lucido

Cal State Northridge:
Educator/Teacher
Mary Lucido: Grandmother

Savannah Nicholas

California State Davis:
Pre-Med/Veterinarian
Phyllis Nicholas: Mother

Nicholas Laugharn

Arizona State:
Business/Sports Athletic Director
Joe Cardinal: Grandfather

Emily Bruno

Los Medanos/S.F. State:
Publisher/Media
Phyllis Aiello Bruno: Mother

Annamaria Cardinale/Crone

Emory Law School: Attorney
Philomena Cardinal Crone:
Grandmother

John Rios

University of Oregon: Sports
Leonard & Mary Gianno:
Grandparents

Anthony Short

Western Governor U:
Computer Science
Ronald Short: Grandfather

Georgia Compagno

Tulane University:
Education/Teacher
John Compagno: Father
Catherin Compagno: Grandmother

Natalia Muniz

Sierra College:
Pre-med/Medical Dosemetry
Pete & Cynthia Cardianle:
Grandparents

Il Notiziario
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025

*Scholarship Awards
for 2025!*



Presenting the Scholarships:
Treasurer Vincenzo Malfitano
with President Frank Bruno



This Year's Scholarship Winners and the Presenters

Pictured L to R: Frank Bruno, Natalia Muniz, Sofia Lucido, Nicholas Laugharn, Annamaria Cardinale/Crone,
Savannah Nicholas, Authony Short, Emily Bruno, Vincenzo Malfitano

Not pictured: John Rios, Sabella Singh, Katherine Compagno, Georgia Compagno

Il Notiziario
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025

What's Happening

by Frank "Ciccu" Bruno

As in past years, FOI put on three major events to raise funds for administrative purposes and scholarships as well as enjoying the company of our members as we share elements of our heritage. We also signed several new members at the three events.

On March 1, Roselyn & Vincenzo Malfitano put on the FOI Monterey Chapter "Speak Easy" High Tea to a sold-out event at the Monterey Moose Lodge. It was so much fun. The entertainment by the James Coniglio troupe was spectacular. Many of the guests were dressed in Roaring Twenty's attire and most of the attendees were completely surprised at the quality of the decorations by Roselyn, the food created and orchestrated by Mary Coniglio, and the entertainment. A very successful event, thank you FOI Monterey Chapter.

Next up was the highly anticipated FOI Pittsburg High Tea but not the same High Tea but a "Speak Easy" High Tea. This was the brainchild of Mary Coniglio who in my book is extremely talented and most creative in coming up with wonderful ideas for fundraisers. Again, the entertainment and food were fantastic, and again the guests were pleasantly surprised. Both High Teas were totally successful.

FOI is known for spectacular high-level, academy award productions. Thank you all who volunteer for these events. Without our volunteers, and there is an army of them, we could not put on such successful productions. Thank you so very much.

And on June 8th we had our Annual FOI Scholarship Award Picnic to another full house. It was held at the Martinez Waterfront Park and was a catered affair by Zandonella's Catering except for the Kinder sausage cooked by Danny Pellegrini and crew. It was all delicious. The attendees brought a plethora of wonderful delicious deserts. Oh yes watermelon was served too. The picnic was not all about the food but the 11 FOI scholarship recipients who received \$1,000 each. In attendance were 8 of the 11 and their families. It was a wonderful day; the weather was fabulous. Again, we want to thank the Martinez Chapter headed up by Mike Inzerillo. It was a day to remember.

We had several guests attend which included Martinez councilmembers, Debbie Belleci McKellop, Satinder Mahli and Vice Mayor Jay Howard who served up the delicious food. Special guests were novelist Lindsay Marie Morris and her husband Matt. Lindsay has written a couple of books, one is "The Last Letter from Sicily" and her latest is "Beneath the Sicilian Stars". The story set in Isola delle Femmine during WW II and the struggles of Annalisa Aiello traveling to Pittsburg, California. The evacuation and internment of Italian Americans.

You can relive the fun memories of these activities with the pictures filling the next six pages.



*Debbi DiMaggio
Adam Betta, Realtors*

If You, or Anyone You Know Is Seeking To Buy or Sell Real in the Bay Area or Italy, Allow The DiMaggio Betta Group to Assist, or Connect You With One of Our Preferred Realtor Partners.

510.414.6777 | 510.414.1250
DiMaggioBettaGroup.CO | #01047447



*Debbi DiMaggio, Realtor,
Author, Podcast Host*

If You, or Anyone You Know Is Seeking To Buy, Sell or Lease Residential Real Estate in the Bay Area or Italy, Allow DBG to Assist, or Connect You With One of Our Preferred Realtor Partners, Regionally, Nationally, or Abroad.

510.414.6777 | DiMaggioBettaGroup.CO
Debbi.DiMaggio@CorcoranIcon.com
Corcoran Icon Properties | DBG | DRE #01047447

Il Notiziario
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025



*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.*

Il Notiziario
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025



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.

Il Notiziario
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025



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.

Il Notiziario
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025



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.

Il Notiziario
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025



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.

Il Notiziario
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025



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.

News from Isola

by Giuseppe Lucido

From June 2nd to 5th, a delegation from Monterey came to Isola delle Femmine. It consisted of the Mayor Tyller Williamson, his friend Ivan Quiroz Bautista and both their mothers. This group joined the two FOI members who had already come to Isola three days earlier, namely our President Frank Bruno and our Treasurer Vincent Malfitano. Since the arrival in Isola delle Femmine of the Mayor of one of our Sister Cities is an interesting, important, and rare event, and since it aims to strengthen the bond between Isola delle Femmine and those American Sister Cities, Tonino Scala and I supported Mayor Orazio Nevoloso by planning and executing a 4-day itinerary aimed at showing Mayor Williamson the best side of Isola delle Femmine and of the surrounding territories. We created a flyer (See its cover in Figure at right.) including all the steps of the itinerary and presented it to the Mayor of Monterey at his arrival. In this following article, I talk about the most important points of their visit to Isola.

On June 2nd, after the early morning Italian Republic Celebration at Palermo's Piazza Vittorio Veneto, a very important event took place in Isola delle Femmine. In the new pedestrian area facing the Isolotto (See *Il Notiziario* of January 2025.) during the afternoon, the Public Local Administration of Isola delle Femmine inaugurated a new sculpture (Figure below) called *Il Mare delle Radici* (*The Sea of Roots*), by the sculptor Domenico Boscia. This sculpture celebrates the sea as the deep bond between Isola delle Femmine and its American Sister Cities, referring to



Sculpture *Il Mare delle Radici*

their cultural, historical and ancestral relationship. As shown in same Figure at left, the big hole inside the sculpture has a particular meaning: on June 21st of every year, at about 8:30 pm, if one stands at a specific point indicated in the pedestrian area and looks through the hole of the sculpture, the best sunset view for the entire summer will be visible. The designs imprinted on face of the sculpture have a specific meaning: they are a replication of those images found on the hull of the of the Amerigo Vespucci sailing ship, belonging to the Italian Navy, built in the early 1930s in Castellammare di Stabia, as a training ship for the officer cadets of the normal roles of the Naval Academy of Livorno. This ship takes its name from that of the Italian navigator and explorer who participated in voyages to the new world between 1497 and 1504 and coined the name "New World" (Mundus Novus). This led cartographer Martin Waldseemüller to apply Vespucci's Latinized first name "America" to his map of the New World as the name of the new continents. At the bottom of this sculpture, two bricks have been installed, containing the handprints and the signatures of the Mayors of Isola and Monterey (Figure at right). Next to these bricks, the plan is to install the handprints of the Mayors of Pittsburg and Martinez. An invitation will soon be sent to them for that purpose to strengthen our relationship.

As shown in same Figure at left, the big hole inside the sculpture has a particular meaning: on June 21st of every year, at about 8:30 pm, if one stands at a specific point indicated in the pedestrian area and looks through the hole of the sculpture, the best sunset view for the entire summer will be visible. The designs imprinted on face of the sculpture have a specific meaning: they are a replication of those images found on the hull of the of the Amerigo Vespucci sailing ship, belonging to the Italian Navy, built in the early 1930s in Castellammare di Stabia, as a training ship for the officer cadets of the normal roles of the Naval Academy of Livorno. This ship takes its name from that of the Italian navigator and explorer who participated in voyages to the new world between 1497 and 1504 and coined the name "New World" (Mundus Novus). This led cartographer Martin Waldseemüller to apply Vespucci's Latinized first name "America" to his map of the



Handprint and Signature of Mayor Nevoloso (left) and Mayor Williamson (right)



Sister City Program Flyer

Il Notiziario

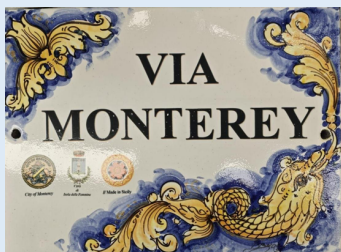
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025



Visit to Sicilian Regional Parliament.
From Left: Frank Bruno, Mayor Nevolosso's Wife, Mayor Nevolosso, Regional Assessor Edy Tamajo, Mayor Williamson, Vincent Malfitano, Mayor Williamson's Mother.



New Plaque in Via Monterey

The Public Local Administration inaugurated a new plaque designating the name of the street to be "Via Monterey" (Figure above left), at which Mayor Williamson and all the people attending the event were offered some typical local food provided by LegaCoop firm. Finally, on June 5th, the delegation visited the Teatro Massimo, an important theater located in Palermo, and had an institutional meeting with the Mayor of Palermo Roberto Lagalla (Figure lower right), where Mayor Williamson presented Mayor



At Piazza Pittsburg with Fisherman Statue
From Left: Vincent Malfitano, Giuseppe Lucido, Mayor Williamson, Frank Bruno

On June 3rd other important activities took place. In the morning, they visited the Heidelberg Materials Company, an important Sicilian cement production facility located in Isola delle Femmine, where many citizens of Isola delle Femmine work. In the early afternoon they visited the Sicilian Regional Parliament (also known as *ARS - Assemblea Regionale Siciliana*) and had a meeting with Edy Tamajo, the Regional Assessor working in the field of productivity (Figure at left). They talked about a future collaboration in order to strengthen the bond between Sicily and Monterey, in particular regarding economics and cultural relationships. Additionally, in the morning of June 4th, the delegation visited the Monreale Cathedral, a very important reference point for Catholicism in Sicily, and



Visit to Monreale Cathedral
From Left: Mayor Williamson, Archbishop Gualtiero Isacchi, Mayor Mevoloso

had a meeting with the Archbishop Gualtiero Isacchi (Figure at right above), who has been commissioned in Monreale since 2022. In the afternoon, they first visited the "Giardino della Memoria", a memorial located in Isola delle Femmine aimed to commemorate the death of Judge Giovanni Falcone, his wife and bodyguards, killed by mafia on May 23rd 1992. Later an interesting event took place in the port of Isola delle Femmine.



From Left: Mayor Nevolosso, Tonino Scala, Mayor Lagalla and Mayor Williamson

Lagalla a plate representing the City of Monterey. This 4-day itinerary has been very important for the community of Isola delle Femmine since it involved many people coming from the surrounding cities, including Mayors or politicians on behalf of their mayors, to attend the celebrations discussed above in Isola. Meeting the Mayor of Monterey helped us understand how great is our relationship with our sister cities. It has been the first time for me to join and support the Sister City celebration. In the near future, I hope other events like this might take place in Isola, so that we can meet the Mayors of our Sister Cities and strengthen our long-standing relationship. I'm also planning in the future to visit the three American Sister Cities of Isola delle Femmine, since it is very important for a citizen of Isola to better know the "American sides" of our city.

I Ricordi di Isola [Memories of Isola]

by Giuseppe Lucido

Past, Present and Future of Piazza Umberto I

Piazza Umberto I is the central square of Isola delle Femmine. It is located between Piano Levante and Piano Ponente, the two biggest squares of Isola delle Femmine already discussed in some previous articles of our *Il Notiziario*, and it represents the heart-beat of our city. To better understand its location, we can refer to the figure at right, according to reference numbers which indicate some familiar locations in Isola delle Femmine. In our common speech, *Piazza Umberto I* is generally called “la piazza”, or “a chiazza” if we speak in Sicilian dialect. In



Locations: 1) Piazza Umberto I, 2) Piano Levante, 3) Piano Ponente, 4) Cove of Madonna, 5) Pizzeria Pittsburg



The Current State of Piazza Umberto I

the reason for its location already mentioned in *Il Notiziario* of October 2023. *Piazza Umberto I* also has a strategic position because, at its right, it connects Via Roma to Via Palermo, which are two of the most important streets in Isola delle Femmine with regard to road traffic.

Piazza Umberto I, we can find some points of attraction for both citizens and tourists, such as pizzerias, bars, restaurants and some small shops, which daily contribute to increase the city's economy including increased tourism in the summer. All of them are located at the edge of the streets that surround the central sidewalk (Figure at left), which sits two steps higher than the streets, where we can find some benches and trees. This central sidewalk is the favorite place for many older citizens, who spend part of the day there together. In *Piazza Umberto I*, we can also find the Church (Figure at right),



Church Viewed in the Piazza

Il Notiziario

of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025

Its name, *Umberto I*, derives from Umberto I of Savoia, the 2nd king of Italy who ruled from 1878 to 1900. We are not quite sure when this square was renamed *Piazza Umberto I*, but we can assume that it happened at the beginning of 1900s. In that historical period, in fact, the tradition dictated that streets and squares were named after illustrious Italian figures.



Ancient Fountain in Piazza Umberto I

In the last centuries, *Piazza Umberto I* has changed much and it is bound to change again in the near future. Therefore, the aim of this article is to retrace the main steps which have characterized the changes and the development of this place, while focusing on some interesting points.

Starting from the birth of Isola delle Femmine (in 1854) and at least to the first half of 1900s, *Piazza Umberto I* was a big empty space characterized by an unimproved area covered with a lot of small stones. The young fellows used to exploit the empty space to play football and volleyball by setting up the appropri-

ate nets and balls. At the left of the square, since the early 1900s, there was a tobacconist. At right, on the Via Roma side, there was a big fountain (Figure top left of this page). It provided drinking water for all the citizens and represented a precious asset for the city. Often, horse-drawn carriages passing by *Piazza Umberto I* would stop at the fountain to allow the horses to hydrate. When, during the World War II years, there was a lack of drinking water, citizens needed to go to Sferracavallo to obtain some. During the 1950s, this fountain was decommissioned. This decision made the whole citizenry angry and sad, and we currently don't know the real reason for it, but we can assume that it was necessary in order to allow for better future road traffic flow in Via Roma. However, there were other fountains in Isola delle Femmine, and the citizens were still able to get the water when needed.



Piazza Umberto I in the 1950s

Starting from the 2nd half of 1900s, huge changes concerned *Piazza Umberto I*. The Public Local Administration, in fact, stated that the big empty space should change its intended use. Year by year, they built a big sidewalk in the middle of the square (Figure at right), planted some trees and built some benches. This provided a significant added value to all the citizens since they were able to better exploit this new area. The surrounding street was asphalted. Some decades later, about at the beginning of 1980s, new stores appeared in *Piazza Umberto I*. As mentioned at the beginning of the paper, some bars, pizzerias and

shops of all kinds have started their business and have settled on the other side of the street around the central sidewalk. With the increasing use of cars, *Piazza Umberto I* was opened to traffic, and cars could circulate on the asphalted street around the large central sidewalk. Over the years, the central part of *Piazza Umberto I*, corresponding to the sidewalk, has continuously been modernized with a gradual replacement of benches, bins and the occasional pruning of trees. During the 2nd half of 2010s, the Public Local Administration stated that *Piazza Umberto I* would become entirely a pedestrian area, in order to allow for better



Christmas in the Piazza: 1960s at Left, 2024 at Right

people circulation, in particular during the summer. Only the small right side corresponding to Via Roma has remained open to traffic, in order to allow the necessary circulation of cars, but often during the summer this too is closed in order to have a larger pedestrian area.

Because of the location of the Church, *Piazza Umberto I* has always been frequented by many people. In particular, on July 2nd, during the annual celebration of the Patron Saint, almost all the population goes there in front of the Church in order to attend the procession of the statue of the Madonna. Every year, at Christmas, people usually decorate *Piazza Umberto I* with Christmas items such as trees, stellar comets and other generic decorations in order to create a Christmas atmosphere (Figure top of this page). This choice is always largely appreciated by the entire population since it provides high added value to our city even in the winter, when the level of tourism is not as high as in the summer. Other Christmas decorations also accentuate the Baglio and the new fish market located under Piazza Pittsburg.



Piazza Umberto I Future Scene in the Near Future

In the near future, a big renewal project should concern *Piazza Umberto I*. As shown in the last Figure, huge changes should happen in this square. We hope to see this project realized because all the renewal actions in our territory will always increase the value of the place where we live.

A Bit of History that Is Ours

by Vincent S. Ferrante

What's In A Name? St. Peter Martyr Catholic Church, Pittsburg Part II

We left this history of the first Catholic church in Pittsburg with the 1906 fire, which consumed the first church built in Black Diamond. This must have been a terrible setback for the Catholic residents. Following this catastrophe, the Catholic church services were then based in the basement of the Savoy Hall located on 6th Street. In 1910, a new wooden Church was built, again by the local residents, this time with a steeple at the same location on West 2nd Street and Cutter. The belfry was also utilized to sound the alarm in the event of a fire. The book *Mission West: The Western Dominican Province 1850-1966*, referenced in Part I, states that this new church was named after the Dominican St. Peter Martyr, as was their common practice to name their churches after a Dominican saint or special devotion. However, at the time of this writing, all contemporary writings that can be found indicate the name as St. Peter's or the Catholic Church or a combination of the two. Still a missionary church, Father Fahey from Holy Rosary Catholic Church conducted the first services. This, however, would soon change. Manufacturing industry came to town in 1903 with the establishment of the Redwood Manufacturing Company, and the 1910 Federal census indicated that out of a population of 2,371 in Black Diamond, 1,854 or 78.2% were of Italian descent. With the establishment of Columbia Steel here in 1910, another change occurred in 1911, when the town changed its name to Pittsburg in honor of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, the cradle of the steel industry here in America. It must be noted that in that year, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania also did not contain an "h" in its spelling, but that's another story. With this population growth by 1914, St. Peter's church was given the status as a parish boasting a congregation of 3000, predominantly Italian, and received our first resident pastor, Father Fei, a priest from Florence, Italy. The church was still served the Dominican order. In 1922, Winington E. Creed, head of the Hooper Estate that owned the undeveloped lands that Pittsburg resided on, donated a considerable amount of property to the Catholic Church at the corner of East 8th Street and Black Diamond. Hence the wooden church was relocated by donkey, capstan and rollers to its new home facing West 8th Street. That same year, ground was broken for the rectory building to house the priest. One interesting note is that, while there was interest to build a rectory some years before, Father Fei in a letter to the Dominican Provincial had stated, "It will be necessary to wait until the spring of 1920 because the fishermen from Alaska returned with very little profit." Hence, a considerable amount of the financial support was clearly dependent upon the local Sicilian fisher families. The beautiful rectory building still stands on Black Diamond Street.



Lot at Corner of Black Diamond & 8th Streets
Donated by the Hooper Estate, 1910 Church & Rectory
Visible, Corner Space Reserved for Present Church

One source publication, the 50th Anniversary Book published by St. Peter Martyr Church in 1964, it is stated that "Language was always a barrier for the resident priests of Pittsburg; therefore, a newly ordained priest was sought out and asked to come once a month. He became Pastor of the Parrish in 1927 and perhaps was the most beloved of all the Pastors, Father Louis Augustine Naselli O.P.

Now I want to take a moment to point out that we have covered a period of history of the Catholic church in Black Diamond/Pittsburg from the initial early Catholic beginnings in 1878 up to 1927, a period of nearly 40 years. Thus far in my research, which is still ongoing at the time of this writing, the local newspaper publications, namely the

Il Notiziario
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025

Antioch Ledger, the Pittsburg Post and the Pittsburg Post-Dispatch, always referred to the church specifically as the "Catholic Church" or "St. Peter's Church." I lean towards the idea that the church was initially named after St. Peter the Apostle. How did we end up with name Saint Peter Martyr Church that we have today? The story continues ...

By the late 1920s, with the growing size of the town and hence the congregation, there was a need for a newer, larger church. With the Dominicans in control of the church on a day to day bases, Father Naselli assumed the reigns and began to fundraise. A professional was hired for a six-week fundraising drive, which proved to be quite successful, netting \$50,000. The plans for a new church were underway, drawn up by Arnold Constable, a noted San Francisco architect well known for designing many Dominican structures. The Pittsburg Museum archives actually contain the original contract agreements for the construction of the new church that we all have come to know. There are a series of three 1930-documents between architect and owner in which you can follow the transition from St. Peter's Church on July 23, one addressed to St. Peter's Rectory on July 26, and finally a third contract document listing the church as St. Peter's Church, however, for the owner's signature Father Naselli signs the document with St. Peter Martyr Church on July 31. Hence, this would likely constitute the beginning of the name transition from St. Peter the Apostle to St. Peter Martyr, a Dominican Saint.

It must be said that for a period of years now since 1914, the Dominican Order were the resident parish stewards of the church and were prepared to invest considerable time and resources into the building of this new church. So it stands to reason that they may choose a Dominican name that better aligns with their mission. From this moment on, the name of the new church would begin a slow transformation, at least as the public was concerned, to St. Peter Martyr as the daily newspaper continued to reference St. Peter's Church, the Catholic church or a combination in any stories or baptismal and wedding notices.

Ground for the present church was broken on March 22, 1931, on the day of the San Giuseppe feast which was celebrated here for many decades. In November, the Spanish Mission style church was completed and St. Peter Martyr was literally cast in stone... with the image of St. Peter Martyr having been placed in the archway above the front door entrance, gracing all those that enter. On November 22, 1931, the first mass was held and presided by Reverend Humbertus H. Kelley, O.P. The first wedding also occurred on the same day with the honor going to Mr. and Mrs. Russell Belleci, who happens to be the parents of present FOI member Russ Belleci.

Unfortunately, the Dominican history book, already referenced, does not provide a source for the name of the church as Saint Peter Martyr at the earliest of times, 1884, 1910 or 1914 at least that I could uncover. The possibility does exist that name change began in 1930. Again, this research is ongoing. There was quite the write up for the grand opening of the new church in the November 30, 1931 Pittsburg Post Newspaper consisting of the history of the local Catholic church, the dedication of the new church as well as the detailed description of the church and the decor inside and out. The newspaper also published many congratulatory newspaper advertisements...all interestingly enough in the name of St. Peter. Apparently, word of the name change hadn't quite gotten to the contractors and newspaper publishers with the name St. Peter's still being published in all the public notices. More research needs to be done within the church archives in terms of when the church publications officially utilized the name of St. Peter Martyr but for a period of time, at least in secular publications the church continued to be commonly referred to as "St. Peter's Church" or "the Catholic Church". ... And now you know, "What's In A Name."

Sources: *Antioch Ledger* Newspaper microfilm 1878, 1906;
Pittsburg Post and *Post-Dispatch* Newspapers microfilm 1931 and others
St. Peter Martyr Construction Documents from the *Pittsburg Museum Archives*;
Mission West: The Western Dominican Province 1850-1966;
Pittsburg Museum Archives and microfilm;
St. Peter Martyr 50th Anniversary Book 1964;



Present Saint Peter Martyr Church, Built 1931

Mangiate Bene Tutti [Eat Well Everyone]

by Mary Pappas-Coniglio

Recipe straight from Isola!
last year 2024 our family visited Isola.
We met with the Mayor, his family and
his Isola staff.

We enjoyed a gourmet dinner with
Chef Michele "Pietro" Lucido,
(Marine Geologist and Oceanographer) and Family
Friends of Isola delle Femmine
Speakeasy High Tea 2025 featured
his outstanding delizioso
Couscous...

Dice

2 large zucchini

1 large eggplant

1-2 Yellow bell peppers

Sauté in olive oil until very soft

Chop fine/small Mint & Basil to your taste

In a sauce pot add 4.5 cups of water

Add 1 teaspoon butter or olive oil Bring to a boil

Add the spices and stir and bring to a boil

Add the pearl couscous, stir and cook covered for 8-10 minutes, on low or simmer, stirring occasional.

When tender, to your liking, fluff with a fork, cool to room temperature.

Add sauted vegetables, small grape tomatoes, chopped dates, (cappars optional) and toss.

Add Nuts! We added pistachios, pumpkin seeds, dry cranberries, goji berries and almonds. and toss with a little honey. (add the nuts you prefer).

Serve at room temperature.

Recipe makes about 8 cups/serves 12 Enjoy!

Chef Michele Lucido's
Award Winning
Couscous!



Chef Lucido
and his daughter
open the wine
for our
gourmet meal
with his parents
Caterina & Giuseppe
and son
FOI contributor



Mayor Nevoloso family
& staff

MEMBERS ONLY!

FRIENDS OF ISOLA DELLE FEMMINE, INC.

**SUBMIT
YOUR FAMILY RECIPES**

**TO BE
PUBLISHED IN OUR
NEWSLETTER & SOCIAL MEDIA**



**HANDWRITTEN OR TYPED
INCLUDE A PICTURE OF
THE DISH THAT YOU MADE
AND PICTURE OF YOURSELF!
ALONG WITH A SHORT
BACKGROUND OF THE RECIPE
AND INCLUDE YOUR
CONTACT INFORMATION**

friendsofisola@gmail.com

CONTACT FOI BY EMAIL

**FOI RESERVES THE RIGHT OF REFUSAL AND EDIT OF ALL RECIPES
ALL RECIPES MUST BE ORIGINAL RECIPES**



Your ad could be placed here!

Isola **SICILIAN
OSTERIA**

ANGELO DALO
ANGELODALO@GMAIL.COM
Res: (925) 269-6998
Cell: (510) 912-1231
100 Railroad Ave. - Danville, CA 94526

ISOLAOSTERIA.COM

Il Notiziario
of the
Friends of Isola delle Femmine

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer: July 1, 2025

We have again new members added this past half-year:

Frank Martinez

Leslie Skegrud

Annamarie Sala-Stanton

more to be published in future issues



G & G
DUAL CITIZENSHIP SERVICES
Juanita Barbera 1-510-384-3314 | Grace Cugnetti 1-408-997-3017
ggdualcitizenship@gmail.com

Research Italian Ancestors' Vital Records.
Letter writing to the Italian Municipality to obtain Italian Records.
Letter writing or phone calls to Italian relatives
US Documents Retrieval.
Apostille Requests.
Translations English to Italian/Italian to English.



Chase DiMaggio Betta
Real Estate Advisor

510.418.3667
Chase.Betta@CorcoranIcon.com
ChaseBetta.com
02130391



Debbi DiMaggio, Realtor.
Author, Podcast Host

Mastering The Art of Real Estate, Podcast. Every Friday We Record Live on FB + YouTube on BoldBraveTV, from 11-12 PM, or listen, wherever you stream your podcasts..

Please consider donating to Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.



2025



Your donation is 100% Tax deductible

We have helped over 35 students with over \$40,000 in scholarship funds

We have held over 50 Italian Cultural Family Events and almost 100 FREE montly Family Rosary Nights by Zoom

*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.*