



Il Notiziario

[The Newsletter]
of the

Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.



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Volume 7, Issue 2

Editor: A.A. Grillo

Summer: July 1, 2026

News from our Executive Board

by Frank "Ciccu" Bruno

Saluti a tutti,

Our membership remains at 183, just slightly below last year's. Attrition is an inevitable part of an organization's growth. The average attrition rate for organizations such as ours is about 10% and ours is 8%. Our members are loyal Sicilian folk, proprio paesani, who take pride in their ancestral heritage. To celebrate our successes, we held the Annual FOI Scholarship Picnic as a membership appreciation event that allowed members in good standing to enter free of charge.

Speaking of the FOI scholarships, we welcomed another large group of new and returning college-bound students. Ten students received \$1,000 scholarships, and 8 attended the picnic with their families. (See the attached list of winners on the next page.)

Your continued membership and attendance at our fundraisers help fund future scholarships and keep the doors open by covering our utilities. To date, FOI has awarded \$53,000 in college scholarships to our members' college-bound students.

The Isola delle Femmine mayoral race between incumbent Sindaco Orazio Nevoloso and former Sindaco Stefano Bologna was held with incumbent Nevoloso triumphant. I have congratulated Sindaco Nevoloso after the election.

Regarding future events, your FOI entertainment fundraiser committee is planning a gala event for this Fall. With the Isola delle Femmine mayoral race completed, we will have discussions soon regarding the repair of the Isola Fisherman Statue and the sale of family-named tiles. We will send a separate email broadcast on the progress.

On August 29, the city of Martinez will celebrate the 150th anniversary of becoming a city. The event will be held at the Waterfront Park area. FOI will host an information booth to inform people about the relationship between Martinez and its sister city Isola delle Femmine. Come and visit us. The Martinez Chapter of FOI will man the booth. Giuseppe Lucido, our Isola newsletter contributor, will attend this wonderful historic event and represent the sister city of Isola delle Femmine. He will be on vacation here in America and will deliver a proclamation for the 150th celebration.

*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. Malfitano 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.

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Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.



Sofia Lucido
Cal State Northridge - Educator/Teacher
Mary Lucido Grandmother

Anthony Short
Western Governor U-Computer Science
Ronald Short Grandfather
Ronnett E Pueliu Aunt

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

Nicholas Laugharn
Arizona State-Bussnes/Sports Athletic Director
Joe Cardinale Grandfather

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

Annamaria Cardinale/Crone
Emory Law School-Attorney
Philomena Cardinale Crone Mother

Sicily Bruno
LMC/Medical Nursing
Phyllis Aiello Bruno Mother

Olivia Culcasi
LMC/Medical Nursing
Vincent & Kathleen Culcasi Grandparents

Lorenzo Lorca
St. Mary's California College Law/Attorney
Maryanne Lorca Mother

Raina Crumbry
Diablo Valley College/Medical Nursing
Catherine "Cass" Vinci Gholshani Grandmother

Awards presented June 7, 2026
Old Fashioned Italian Picnic
Martinez Water Front Park
Catered Picnic
for tickets...space is limited...
No cost to members in good standing....

www.friendsofisola.org
Member Apprication Event!

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What's Happening

by Frank "Ciccu" Bruno

Although we did not host a Pittsburg High Tea this spring, we are planning a Monterey High Tea, "Winter Wonderland," Christmas in July. On July 25th, Santa and his elves will be in Monterey. We expect another full house, great food, and entertainment. Roselyn and Vincent Malfitano, along with Mary Coniglio, have planned a wonderful, fun event. (See attached flyer.) At the time of this writing, 4 tables are available. They are filling fast, so contact us NOW.

Our 6th Annual FOI Scholarship Picnic was another huge success. It was a packed event with 150 in attendance, including 8 of the 10 scholarship winners and their family members, as well as non-members. The weather was perfect at 77 degrees with a light breeze. There were plenty of desserts and appetizers to go around. They enjoyed music, great food from Zandonella's Catering, and a tasty Italian sausage BBQ donated by Danny Pellegrini with plenty of french bread donated by Danielle Pellegrini. The traditional food service was provided by the Martinez Mayor, Brianne Zorn, and city council members; Vice Mayor Satinder S. Malhi; Debbie McKillop; Jay Howard; and Greg Young, who all served pasta, sausage, and salad. This successful picnic was made possible by the FOI Martinez Chapter members, led by Mike Inzerillo and Danielle Pellegrini. If you want to be part of the fundraising crew for the Martinez, Pittsburg, or Monterey Chapter, please contact us at Friendsofisola@gmail.com.

The FOI Scholarship Winners attending the picnic and receiving their awards were: Sofia Lucido, Emily Bruno, Sicily Bruno, Olivia Culcasi, Annamaria Crone, Anthony Short, Lorenzo Lorca, and Raina Crumbry. Joe Cardinale and Peter Cardinale picked up their grandchildren's certificates and checks for Nicholas Laugharn and Natalia Muniz, respectively. (See the attached list of winners on the previous page.)

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL.



Danielle Pellegrini
Donation of French Bread



Danny Pellegrini
Donation of Sausage & BBQ



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Adam Betta, Realtors*

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Student Awards 2026



*Not all 10 students
are pictured!*

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Some of our CREW 2026



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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.

SAVE THE DATE! **Christmas** in July

“Winter Wonderland High Tea”
Saturday
July 25, 2026
Monterey Moose Lodge

555 Canyon Del Rey Oaks 93940
1:30 pm to 4:30 pm **ENTERTAINMENT**

Full High Tea Menu “Italian Style”
Men & Teens are welcome

SAVE THE DATE!

by email or call Roselyn 925-519-4301.....
or to Volunteer.....
You can email us at friendsofisola@gmail.com

FOI Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.
ALL FUNDS BENEFIT OUR SCHOLSHIP PROGRAM....

No tickets sold at the door.... All sales are final ... Alcohol is NOT included



News from Isola

by Giuseppe Lucido

American Visitors at Isola delle Femmine

On April 21st an amazing group of American people came to Isola delle Femmine. It consisted of Carol Tacconi from Martinez, Elisa Tacconi from Monterey, Janice Tacconi from Ashland (Oregon) and Sienna Tacconi Stevenson from San Francisco. Carol, Elisa and Janice are siblings, while Sienna is Elisa's daughter. Even though they come from America, their origins are strictly related to Isola delle Femmine. In fact, the Tacconi sisters' paternal grandparents Costantino John Tacconi and Rosa Maria Billeci were born in Isola delle Femmine at the end of the 1800s and later moved to America. Thanks to the communication and the relationship with the FOI member Salvatore Coniglio, I got in touch with them, and we met in Isola delle Femmine.

When American visitors come to Isola delle Femmine, it is always best practice to show them the best



The Fisherman Statue in Piazza Pittsburg.
From left: Giuseppe Lucido, Janice Tacconi, Sienna Tacconi Stevenson, Elisa Tacconi & Carol Tacconi

side of our city with a

particular focus to the symbols and places which represent a strong bond with our sister cities. That is why we enjoyed an interesting tour of the city, looking at the Fisherman statue in Piazza Pittsburg (Figure above), the "Sea of Roots" sculpture in the new seafront (See *Il Notiziario* of July 2025.), the plaques on the City Hall wall and in Via Monterey, the port, Piazza Umberto I (See *Il Notiziario* of July 2025.), Piano Ponente (See *Il Notiziario* of April 2024.) and the Church. The day after, thanks to the help of Deputy Mayor Luisa Tricoli, we went to the City Hall registry office in order to ask for some information about their ancestors' birth certificates in Isola delle Femmine. Later we had an institutional meeting with Mayor Orazio Nevoloso at the City Hall (Figure at left), where Mayor Orazio Nevoloso met them in his office and gifted them with an interesting book talking about the history and traditions of Isola delle Femmine. They presented him and the Deputy Mayors with two bottles of



At the City Hall
From Left: Carol Tacconi, Sienna Tacconi Stevenson, Mayor Orazio Nevoloso, Janice Tacconi & Elisa Tacconi

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typical local wine. This meeting was a great opportunity to strengthen the relationship between Isola delle Femmine and the American cities where they currently live, and also to remember how great and important is the relationship with our sister cities. Since the Tacconi's trip included also the visit to other cities, they also enjoyed their journey around the Sicily, but I am sure their visit to Isola delle Femmine will never be forgotten since their roots come from our small city.



**Vincenzo Malfitano
& Mayor Orazio Nevoloso**

other good friends from Isola delle Femmine, such as Stefano Bologna and wife, Michele Lucido and wife, Tonino Croce and wife. These moments spent together allow us to remember how great is the bond between our sister cities, in particular when a Friends of Isola member comes here to meet us. Despite the short time spent together, we much enjoyed having dinner together and remembering all the things done together last year for the sister city celebration with Monterey. I already informed Vincenzo Malfitano and the FOI members that I'm coming to Pittsburg at the end of August, in order to meet my cousins living there and to visit the sister cities of Isola delle Femmine. Therefore, the Friends of Isola work will continue, continuing to reduce the geographical distances that have separated us but at the same time uniting us in these years of working together.

On May 27th, we received a welcome visit from the Friend of Isola member, Vincenzo Malfitano, his wife and a group of his friends from Monterey. Vincenzo is also an officer of FOI and the head of its Monterey chapter. They came to Sicily in order to enjoy an interesting trip around the island, and only on May 27th, did they come to Isola delle Femmine in order to meet their friends living here. In the late afternoon, Vincenzo met Mayor Orazio Nevoloso. At first at Bar Valentina (Figure at left) where they enjoyed a lemon sorbet, and later they went to the City Hall where Mayor Orazio Nevoloso met him in his office and gave him an interesting book which talks about the history and traditions of Isola delle Femmine. Two more copies of the book have been given to Vincenzo to be delivered to the Friends of Isola group. Vincenzo congratulated Mayor Orazio Nevoloso for his re-election and made sure to discuss maintaining strong, solid and ongoing relationships between our sister cities. At night, we went to the Scogliera Azzurra restaurant, where we enjoyed an awesome dinner with Vincenzo Malfitano and the group from Monterey. The party included Tonino Scala and me (Figure at right), as well as many



**Giuseppe Lucido, Vincenzo Malfitano, and
Tonino Scala at Scogliera Azzurra Restaurant**

Election Day in Isola delle Femmine

In the two-way race for Mayor of May 24th - 25th, between Orazio Nevoloso and Stefano Bologna, the current Mayor Orazio Nevoloso won by 464 votes. Let us take a brief step back to better discuss this.

In a duopolistic electoral competition, we can typically identify the incumbent (the current Mayor), and the new entrant (the new candidate for Mayor). However, since the same people are facing in the Mayoral race, with roles reversed compared to the previous elections of 2020, the duopolistic model needs to be adapted to the particular situation of Isola delle Femmine. Therefore, it is more appropriate to simply talk about the competition between the current Mayor Orazio Nevoloso and the former Mayor Stefano Bologna.

Orazio Nevoloso is supported by his political group called *Cambiamo Isola*, while Stefano Bologna is supported by his political group called *Un'Altra Isola..sì*. Each group is composed of 12 people, plus the candidate for Mayor. The political group supporting Orazio Nevoloso consists of: Orazio Rubino, Giuseppe Pagano, Antonella Uva, Antonino Romeo, Napoleone Riso, Maria Grazia Bruno, Maria Grazia Puccio, Giuseppe Scarpa, Luisa Tricoli, Vincenzo



Fliers for Orazio Nevoloso and Stefano Bologna



Cambiamo Isola Group, supporting Orazio Nevoloso

Dionisi, Flavia Bruno and Pietro Rappa (Figure at left). The political group supporting Stefano Bologna consists of Stefano Triboto, Antonino Palazzolo, Benedetto Nevoloso, Rossella Puccio, Giovanna Billeci, Francesco Illiano, Giovanni Moceo, Anna Provenza, Piergiorgio Adelfio, Rachele Occhipinti, Alberto Peloso and Sharon Mannino (Figure below). Some of both groups

are well-known people to the Friends of Isola community for several reasons. In fact, some politicians of *Cambiamo Isola* took part in the Sister City Celebration with Monterey, which took place in Isola delle Femmine in June 2025. (See *Il Notiziario* of July 2025.) The same is true for *Un'Altra Isola..sì* group, because some of them took part in the Sister City celebration with Pittsburg, which took place in Isola delle Femmine in May 2018. Moreover, Stefano Bologna was the Mayor of Isola from 1993 to 2004 and from 2014 to 2020. In those years, many sister city celebrations took place in Isola delle Femmine, starting from the installation of the Statue of Fisherman in Piazza Pittsburg.

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Un Altra Isola ... sì Group, supporting Stefano Bologna

The Friends of Isola organization wants to congratulate Mayor Orazio Nevolo for his re-election, wishing him to do the best for Isola delle Femmine and to strengthen the relationship with the sister cities. There will be no shortage of opportunities to resume contacts between us, to continue the work we had already begun last year with the creation of the sculpture "The Sea of Roots", inviting the Mayors of Pittsburg and Martinez to leave their handprints and signatures, as already done by the Mayor of Monterey in June 2025. (See *Il Notiziario* of July 2025.) Further activities will also concern the tile project, already discussed with Mayor Orazio Nevolo and his political group, and mentioned in our previous newsletters. We are also sure that Stefano Bologna's support and commitment for the sister cities will persist in the next years because the strong bond with our sister cities can never be influenced by political differences.

In the late afternoon of May 25th, when the electoral counting was over, the current Mayor Orazio Nevolo won again the competition. His term as Mayor started in October 2020 and, with his new mayoral victory, he will be the Mayor of Isola delle Femmine until May 2031. He is shown the day after his election in the Figure below. In the coming days, during the first half of June, the new city council will be sworn in, and the Mayor will appoint the Deputy Mayors.



Mayor Nevolo Wearing the Tricolor Sash

I Ricordi di Isola [Memories of Isola]

by Giuseppe Lucido

The Port of Isola delle Femmine

The Port of Isola delle Femmine represents the heart beating of the fishing sector in our city. It is not a large commercial port. It represents the house of the fishermen. It is based on small-scale artisanal fishing and the processing and selling of the caught fish. 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.

Referring, then, to the numbered areas in that figure, the Port is a big area, located along the coast between Via Monterey and the end of Via dei Villini, where the new pedestrian area begins. (See *Il Notiziario* of January 2025.) The Port can mainly be divided in two areas: the fishing area (A), delimited by the fishing dock, and the tourist area (B), delimited by the tourist dock. The fishing area hosts all the fishing boats of the fishermen of Isola delle Femmine, while the tourist



Port of Isola delle Femmine

Locations: A) Fishing Area, B) Tourist Area

1) Via Monterey, 2) Piazza Pittsburg, 3) Piano Ponente, 4) Via dei Villini



**At End of 1800s, Ancient View of the Coast
along Via Monterey before the Port Was Built**

area hosts motorboats and dinghies belonging not only to citizens of Isola delle Femmine, but also to people coming from other cities to use our tourist dock. The Port area also includes the fish market, located in the area under Piazza Pittsburg, where the fishermen sell their caught fish and where the Sagra del Pesce takes place. (See *Il Notiziario* of January 2026.) For obvious reasons, it is not easy to summarize the entire history of the Port of Isola delle Femmine in a single article, as it represents the epicentre of Isola delle Femmine and the life of its fishermen and their families. Therefore, we will offer the readers a broad but not in depth view of the main events and changes that have affected

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the Port of Isola delle Femmine, also including some old and interesting pictures, in order to tell how it has changed over the years. As already mentioned in many articles covering “*Memories of Isola*”, to better discuss this topic we take a leap back in the past.

From the origins of Isola delle Femmine to the beginning of 1900s, the Port didn't exist (Figure above at left). The coast of Isola delle Femmine was characterized by many coves along the reef (See more in *Il Notiziario* of July 2023.), which provided the access point both to the sea and to the land for the fishing boats. The main fishing activity concerned the fishing of Tuna (See more in *Il Notiziario* of October 2024.), which were trapped and processed inside the Tuna



Around 1936, the Building of the Fishing Dock

Fishery, called the Tonnara. The lack of a Port and the difficulty of mooring boats obviously made it difficult for fishermen to manage their boats, especially on those days when the sea was rough and the weather was adverse. Damage could be extensive and it was almost always necessary to haul the boats into the slipways. The first building activities in the Port, and in particular concerning the fishing dock, should date back to the 1930s, as shown in the figure at right. In fact, the fishing dock had a dual purpose: to allow the fishermen's boats to moor, and to protect the boats from storm surges. Unfortunately a strong storm surge in

1940 destroyed a part of the fishing dock, and it had to be restored year by year. On the other side of the Port (Zone B), as shown in the figure at left, at least until the end of 1950s no building activities took place, and the coast was only characterized by the presence of reef.



**Port View from What Now Is Piazza Pittsburg around 1950
Tourist Dock Not Yet Built**

As we can see in figure at left, the flat area (where nowadays the fish market takes place) was used to put the boats both during the winter and when needed. Year by year the fishing dock was renewed and the tourist dock was built. Many citizens of Isola delle Femmine still remember that on October 25th 1973 another

terrible storm surge took place in Isola delle Femmine. That storm was so strong that a huge part of the Port was destroyed, many boats were damaged and also a fisherman passed away. In order to allow the fishermen to restore their fishing, the Public Local Administration asked the Sicilian Regional Government for some contributions. The damaged Port was, therefore, restored year by year. From the end of 1980s and the first half of 1990s, many restyling and improvement activities took place at the Port, especially in order to make both docks safer and more resistant to storm surges. In fact, as we can see in the figure at right, many concrete blocks have been placed next to the Docks, on the sea side. This choice was needed in order to contain the force of the waves and limit the damage they could cause to the docks. These safety improvements ended in 1996, and also included the installation of public lighting and water systems, very useful for the fishermen. Some recent administrative measures have also concerned the managing of the Port. In 2007, the Public Local Administration approved a General Regulatory Plan for the Port that allowed the precise distinction between the Fishing Area and the Tourist Area, as shown in the first figure. On 2021, instead, the Public Local Administration has started the process for the management of the fish market, which as mentioned before takes place under Piazza Pittsburg.



**Recent Aerial View of the Port
with the Isolotto in the Background**

Despite the many restyling activities that have affected the Port of Isola delle Femmine and its Docks, our Port is currently not classified as a "safe Port". In fact, in the recent years, some further damage occurred in Isola delle Femmine because of strong storms. In February 2015 and February 2019, some fishing boats were damaged and sunk, causing several problems to the fishermen and their families. As shown in the figure at left, a huge renovation will concern the Port of Isola delle Femmine with the strengthening and lengthening of the two docks which will definitively allow for the containment of strong storm surges coming from the north. This project will represent a turning point for tourism and fishing for Isola delle Femmine because it will not only allow fishermen to further protect their boats and minimize any damage caused by the waves, but it will also allow the use of other tourist boats (such as different types of dinghies and motorboats) which will help strengthen the tourism sector of Isola delle Femmine.



**Future Artist View of the Port
with a Huge Improvement of the Docks**

A Bit of History that Is Ours

by JoAnna DiSibio

Holy Cross Cemetery

Holy Cross Cemetery was established in 1862 on the north side of East 18th Street in Antioch, CA. It was operated by the Most Holy Rosary Church of Antioch, which had started as a missionary church served by the Dominican order with headquarters of their province covering much of the western United States located in Benicia, a short distance from Antioch. Holy Rosary became the first parish in eastern Contra Costa County in 1874. As Sicilian immigrants did not start to arrive in the area until the late 1860s and would continue in great numbers by the 1880s, the first internments at the cemetery were likely of the pioneer Irish and Scottish settlers of Antioch and Black Diamond. The first Catholic services were held in Pittsburg, then called Black Diamond, only in 1875. Even now, since Holy Cross Cemetery is the nearest Catholic Cemetery to Pittsburg, most Italian-American Catholics from the Parishes of St. Peter Martyr, Good Shepherd and Our Lady Queen of the World, as well as from much of eastern Contra Costa County, are buried there.

Walking through this older part of the cemetery, one may be inspired by the history within. From family mausoleums with stained glass windows, to individual graves with wooden homemade markers and everything in between, there is much to learn there about our ancestors.

When the Diocese of Oakland was created in 1962 and split off from the Archdiocese of San Francisco, it took over control of all the cemeteries in its geographic area, which had been operated by their neighboring parishes. This included Holy Cross Cemetery. The Diocese then purchased more property across the street from the cemetery's original property on the south side of East 18th in Antioch. Construction of this addition began in 1968, and on December 31, 1969, the first burials took place on the south side. By this time, cemeteries were becoming more organized with the construction of different types of property. There are sections with flat headstones, pillow headstones, and upright headstones. These sections were each given saints' names to make it easier for visitors to find their loved ones. There is also a special baby section.

In 2006, major construction began on the Mausoleum of the Risen Christ in this new south-side section, where there are crypts, niches for holding cremated remains, and an area set aside for funeral services. It took the Catholic Church some time to add niches, even though at the 2nd Ecumenical Conference in 1963, the Catholic Church approved cremation as a form of burial allowed by the Catholic Church.

The staff at Holy Cross was working out of a modular building that was quite small and not big enough for the number of staff needed. It was time to expand. In about 2009, construction started on a beautiful new chapel, reception hall, meeting rooms for customers to plan with staff, and offices where employees could work. Also, about this time, the Catholic Diocese of Oakland decided to incorporate funerals along with its cemetery burials to assist Catholics with all aspects for those who have passed. With the chapel available in the Mausoleum, funeral services started to be held at the cemetery in about 2013.

Another addition to the Catholic cemeteries in the Diocese of Oakland was the growing of grapes on land that was yet to be developed in order to make altar wine for communion in the parishes.

Holy Cross Cemetery and Funeral Home is growing all the time and has acquired enough property to expand for many years to come. It is beautiful and serene, a place of solace for end-of-life services.

Vince Ferrante, Deacon Dave Holland and John. L. Arata contributed to this article

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Mangiate Bene Tutti [Eat Well Everyone]

by Mary Pappas-Coniglio "Cooking with Mary's Village Style"

**I brought these cookies to our
2026 Old Fashioned Picnic and
several people asked for the
recipe!**

Tarralle Cookies

Ingredients

12 Cups of flour
4 Cups of Sugar
6-8 Oranges (zest and juice)
10 Eggs (Beaten)
4 Teaspoons vanilla
1 Whole small bottle of orange extract
12 Heaping tablespoons of Crisco



Method

Combine all dry ingredients and sift
Add orange zest to the dry ingredients
Add Crisco to dry ingredients and mix well with your hands
Combine eggs and vanilla add to dry ingredients
Add orange juice a little at a time to mixture as needed to form a dough
Do not over mix!
Form into a rope and twist to form cookie
Bake at 350 until golden brown
Frost with powder sugar glaze! Use Anise extract to flavor!

One of Isola delle Femmine's BEST Bakers!

Anna Coniglio Currella makes the very best cookies in Contra Costa County!

Try this traditional Sicilian cookie!



**Thank you Anna
for your generous, kind soul!**

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

Frank Martinez

Mary Weber

more to be published in future issues



G & G
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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 monthly 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.