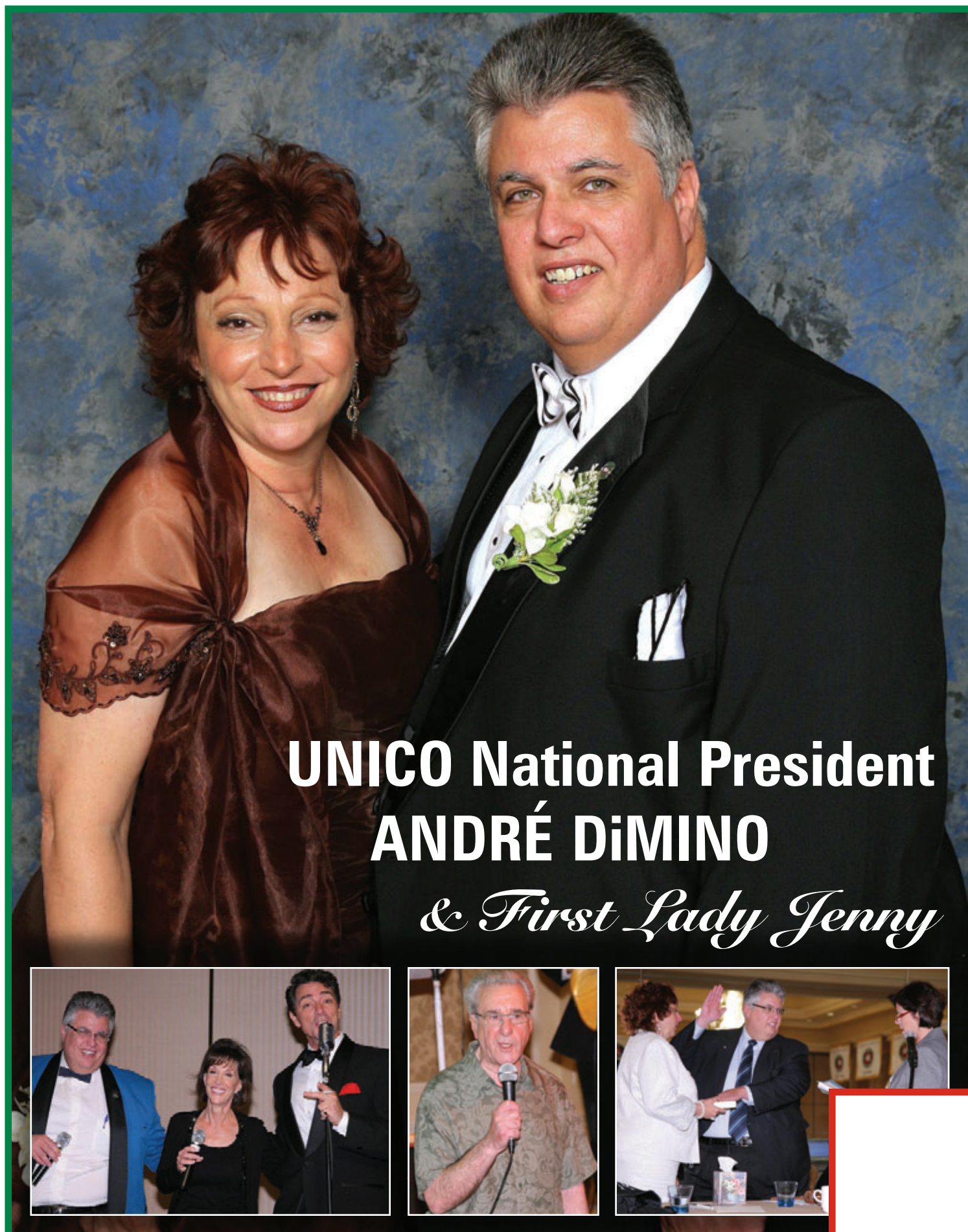


The Voice of **UNICO NATIONAL**
Com **UNICO**

SEPTEMBER 2009 • VOLUME 64 • ISSUE 06



**UNICO National President
ANDRÉ DiMINO**
& First Lady Jenny



**“Service
above *Self*”**



**ROAD TRIP WITH
TONY BENNETT**
Page 35

**2009 NATIONAL
CONVENTION RECAP**
Pages 6, 25-28 & 51-52

**UNICO NATIONAL
AWARD WINNERS**
Page 33



**DEANA MARTIN
HONORED**
Pages 6 & 26

**The largest Italian American service
organization in the United States**

2009-2010 Calendar

Eastern Regional Meeting	November 2009	Location TBD
Western Regional Meeting	January 2010	Location TBD
Mid-West Regional Meeting	March 2010	Location TBD
Mid-Year Board Meeting	March 2010	Location TBD
2010 Convention	July 28 - August 1, 2010	Hershey Lodge- Hershey PA

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK ANDRÉ DIMINO



I am so proud and honored to be your National President! And, I am very aware of the great responsibility and trust you have placed in me to direct this venerable organization over the next year. Believe me, I do not take it lightly and I assure you that I will do my best to

exceed your expectations. I am counting on each and every one of you, my dear friends, fellow members and UNICO family, to join with me in making this a great UNICO year - a year when we will build upon recent successes as well as aim for some new goals that I'm going to challenge you to achieve. And, while we do our UNICO work, let's remember to have fun and enjoy our time together!

Our National Convention in Lake Las Vegas was an incredible success and an unforgettable experience for me and my wife, Jenny. We are so glad that so many of you were there to join in the fun and to conduct our important UNICO business. We are grateful for everyone's support and good wishes for a successful UNICO year.

Before my challenges to you, I want to extend my personal thanks to someone who put his heart and soul into making our National Convention a success. For the past 3 years he worked tirelessly, literally day and night, on each and every detail of the convention. What energy, enthusiasm and expertise! Thank you, Paul Alongi, for everything! And, thanks to all of the other members of the 2009 convention committee. Your hard work and dedication gave us an outstanding convention! I would also like to thank someone who worked closely with me on assembling our great selection of entertainment at the convention - John Alati and his entertainment expertise!

Now, on to my plan for the coming year! It can be summarized in three words plus an "Essential Re-Commitment."

First, the three words - Continuity, Growth and Outreach.

• The First Word - Continuity

In their wisdom, our UNICO forefathers determined that the leadership of our National Organization should change each year with a new President. This is certainly a way to bring new ideas and a fresh perspective every 12 months. But, it can leave insufficient time for an important initiative to be fully realized. Now is one of those times.

A year ago, Kathi Strozza put forth her plan as National President which included the reorganization of UNICO National's administrative operations. I want to extend my personal thanks and the thanks of this entire organization to Kathi for her success in achieving an incredibly positive change in UNICO. She, along with the new staff members at our National Office, changed the way we do business, and it is paying dividends every day. As I said, with a change in Presidents there is the possibility of losing the advances we have made. But to continue with the improvements to our National Office, I have appointed Kathi as Presidential Advisor on Operations, and I am counting on her continued dedication in launching Phase 2 of our reorganization. That's what I mean by continuity!

• The Second Word - Growth

To keep UNICO viable and healthy we must increase our membership.

Membership and Retention Director Rick D'Arminio has been energetic in his responsibilities and I am counting on him to continue his efforts. But, we should all help Rick! There is one way we certainly can and that is with a stronger emphasis on Retention.

We do well each year in bringing in new members, both through new members joining current chapters and chartering new chapters. But as they are "coming in the front door," nearly an equal amount, "are leaving through the back door." If we can stem the tide of these departing members, UNICO will grow. To assist Rick in this effort, I am forming a "Retention Swat Team." This team will formulate a Retention Response Procedure and then implement it. I am very pleased to tell you that John DiNapoli has agreed to serve as Captain of the Retention Swat Team. If you would like to be on the Team or have suggestions for Retention, please let us know.

An important way UNICO can grow is through bringing more young people into our organization. I know, from first-hand

(See President's Message on Page 23)

EDITOR'S DESK MATTEO RISI



**ComUNICO
Ancora!**

It has been a pleasure to serve as the editor of your ComUNICO magazine during the Presidency of Kathi Strozza. I thank Kathi for the opportunity to serve UNICO.

I am truly honored to continue as editor for our new national president, André DiMino.

Please keep your chapter contributions coming! My goal is to showcase all of your good works and I am always very impressed by the achievements of all of our chapters large and small.

E-mail with digital photos are the best way to submit your news. Paper documents and photo prints that we receive in the mail require re-typesetting and scanning. As a result we may not have time to include your material into ComUNICO.

Once again, I thank our ComUNICO proof reader, Marianne- Lalli Regan of the San Diego Chapter for her expert assistance.

Matteo Risi

Send chapter news to Matteo Risi at:

e-mail: mmgsd@aol.com

or by mail to:

**Matt Risi- UNICO
c/o Minuteman Press
7525 Metropolitan Drive
Suite 303
San Diego, CA 92108
Cell: (619) 993-3913
Fax: (858) 278-9408**



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ComUNICO

Matteo Risi.....Editor

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COVER PHOTOS UNICO National President André DiMino and his wife Jenny; President André DiMino with Deana Martin (daughter of Dean Martin) and Dean Martin impersonator, Andy DiMino; PNP Paul Alongi, Convention Chairman; André DiMino is sworn in as the 2009-2010 President of UNICO National.

THE FIRST LADY OF UNICO MEET JENNY DIMINO



The 87th Annual UNICO National Convention at the Ritz Carlton in Lake Las Vegas was enchanting and magical! It was truly what I had dreamed about, ever since we began planning for it over 3 years ago. I think that it is a great beginning for a terrific year for André as National

President, and our great Organization. I want to thank everyone, from the bottom of my heart, for being there to share such an unforgettable "dream-come-true" experience.

Toni and Paul Alongi - what can I say! You made the convention an incredible experience for myself, ç and the rest of UNICO National. We couldn't have done it without your hard work and dedication. For us, it was like having André's parents, Nancy and Alfonso, by our side. I know they were looking down from Heaven proudly. Thank you for everything!

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to my Woodcliff Lake Chapter for their hard work in helping to raise funds to make our convention the best that it could be. I also extend my personal sincere thanks to each and every member of the 2009 Convention Committee. I couldn't have asked for a better committee! In addition to the years leading up to the convention, you helped by being there days before it started, working on things like, tying bows on napkins (yes, even the men tied bows - and they did a great job!!) and stuffing bags with all the goodies. I can't thank you enough!

It was great to have our family there to share such a special time in our lives. Thank you mom and dad for being with us in love and spirit.

I know how proud you are of André. Thanks to my sister Anna and brother-in law, Steve; my niece Noelle and her new fiance' Chris; my sister-in-law, MariaElena; and, my brother-in-law, Maurice.

I can't tell you how much it meant to both of us to have you share such an unforgettable time in our lives. It was also great to have so many close friends in and out of UNICO there to be part of this special time. We appreciate your being there and your help in so many ways.

It was so gratifying to hear so many nice comments from everyone about how they enjoyed the Convention - it made all of our efforts worthwhile!

Now, as André starts his year as National President, I look forward to joining with him as he travels our UNICO world, connecting with friends and making new ones, as we bring the message of UNICO throughout the country. I am particularly pleased that André is placing a greater emphasis on our rich Italian Heritage and Culture through his program called "Our Shared Heritage, Our Shared Pride." I hope

you'll join with us in this effort as we promote, preserve and celebrate our heritage.

As First Lady, I am hoping to encourage chapters that do not actively participate on the National level to get more involved. I know, from first hand experience, that once you participate on the National level, you see what great things we can accomplish and how we can make new friendships with people across the country.

So, please, join with me in encouraging your chapter to have greater participation with National.

I hope I represent you well as your new First Lady and I look forward to meeting all of you during the coming year.

Yours in UNICO,

Jenny DiMino
First Lady of UNICO

ITALIAN AMERICANS AND THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE

There is a dilemma for Italian Americans who consider learning the language of their ancestors. The formal "Italian" that is taught in colleges and universities is generally not the "Italian" with which Italian Americans are acquainted. Over eighty percent of Italian Americans are of Southern Italian origin, and the languages spoken by their families who arrived between 1880-1920 were dialects like Neapolitan and Sicilian, with perhaps some degree of influence from Standard Italian. Because the Italian of Italian Americans comes from a time just after the unification of the state, their language is in many ways anachronistic and demonstrates what the dialects of Southern Italy used to be at the time. Because of this, Italian Americans studying Italian are often learning a language that does not include all of the words and phrases they may have learned from family.

The situation is even more pronounced among Italian Americans whose ancestors came to the United States from Northern Italy. Italian Americans variously of Emilia-Romagna, Lombardian, Genoese, Marchigiano, Piedmontese, Venetian and other Northern Italian heritage are even further away linguistically from the languages of their ancestors through the contemporary standard Italian language.

Advertise in ComUNICO !!

To Advertise in ComUNICO:

Contact our Development
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CHAPTER PRESIDENTS ARE YOU IN THE LOOP?

Are your members all receiving their copy of the ComUNICO Magazine? ComUNICO Magazines go out every other month. Our most recent mailing was May 2009.

Our office receives several undeliverable notifications on a DAILY basis!! This means that our members are not getting their magazines and not getting informed of all the great things your fellow members and chapters are up to.

Sometimes the post office provides us with a forwarding address which we update so that your members will receive future copies. However, more often than not we do not get a forwarding address.

What can you do as Chapter President? Please take a moment at your next meeting and go over the member report that you will be receiving shortly. The report lists member's address, phone numbers and email information. If there are any changes or updates, please let us know.

If you would like to update your personal information, please contact Patrizia Trento at the UNICO National Office: by phone: 973-808-0035 or by email: pctrento@verizon.net.

YOUR UNICO NATIONAL OFFICE TEAM

The staff of the national office is
dedicated to serving our UNICO
membership and our chapters!

**Sal Benvenuti is our
Executive Administrator**

**Barbara Peirano serves as our
Development Executive**

**Pat Pelonero is our
Office Manager**

Joyce O'Hara is our Bookkeeper

**Patrizia Trento serves as an
Administrative Assistant**

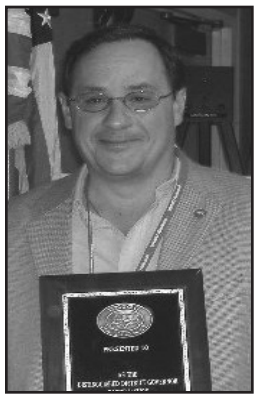
**Clelia Alfano serves as an
Administrative Assistant**

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MEMBERSHIP AND RETENTION



As I begin my second term as your Membership & Retention Director, I want to begin by informing you where we stand in terms of membership by category. PNP Anthony Fornelli asked this question at our Board meeting at the Lake Las Vegas Convention and I think we should inform you of where we are in each issue so that we can really strive to reach a realistic goal by next years convention. I had a goal of 12,000 since I truly believed it was attainable, but realistically if we look at the past years our goal should be to try and reach 7500 by July 25, 2010 before the start of the July 28 convention in Hershey Park, PA.

We were very close to this number in 1984 under PNP, Antonio Gaglioti so this should be our GOAL at a minimum! With approximately 135 chapters in 18 states this breaks down to only 9-10 new members per chapter for the entire year! Now- lets face it. This is easy. So- we obviously have to concentrate more on RETENTION as we move forward.

Our National President André DiMino issued a challenge to our Expansion Committee under the great leadership of Gerry Heytink. That is to expand to 26 states or at least 8 new ones. Although he did not issue a challenge to me and my committee, President DiMino is asking our UNICO Foundation President John DiNapoli to work closely with me this year and find out why we lose 5-600 members annually. We need to have a system in place with all chapter Presidents and District Governors to assist us in this regard so that we can try and save as many members as possible from leaving.

I would like to challenge all chapters to email me a report once each month, and give me a membership/retention report update. If any member did not renew- please tell us the reason. We will do our best to work with you monthly by updating our numbers Nationally with the home office, but we must all monitor this together for it to be successful. First, I would ask all the Chapter Presidents and DG'S to take a survey now and ask your members why they joined initially. Then make sure you are matching their interests to a particular charity and/or committee that we assist. If you can call some members back who may have left in the past please ask them why they left and send me an email or call.

Now, lets finish this initial report with some numbers. We have approximately 5225 regular members, 193 new from Expansion, 28 National, 85 Clergy, 321 exempt life, 70 life paid, 255 youth members, 48 honorary members, 11 Associate, for a total of 6235. We also have about 50 Aces. I found a report from March 2002 that showed 4691 regular members, 526 new, 87 youth, 93 Clergy, 26 Honorary, 2 Associate, 125 life paid, 275 exempt life, and 35 National for

a total of 5860. I would like to see if the home office can break down the number of members by sex, age, etc and see if I can compare 2002 to the present to analyze where we have grown by these various categories. I will confirm the current numbers for year ending July 31 for the next issue.

One of our goals is to bring in more youth members too. I began my membership in UNICO at the age of 22 right out of college. To assist me in spreading the word to our youth I asked our National President André DiMino to appoint Marissa Gynn of the Point Pleasant Beach, NJ Chapter as our Youth Chairwoman for the year 2009-2010. She has great credentials and I hope you read her articles too. While we do see an increase from 2002 by 168, I believe that this appointment will now give us the opportunity to at least double to 500 or more by July, 2010. All of your Brian Piccolo award recipients should be members. We should all be going to more schools and libraries in our town and drop off issues of ComUNICO, and spread the message! The youth are the future of this great organization.

It would be a good idea too if we look into starting more ACES. Many of these young students ages 13-17 look to get involved with local community projects.

The National Convention was great. I look forward to the challenge with all of you in the new year. Our next issue will breakdown all of our membership classes with an explanation of each one so that we are all on the same TEAM.

Remember that TEAM = Together Everyone Achieves More. This will be our motto.

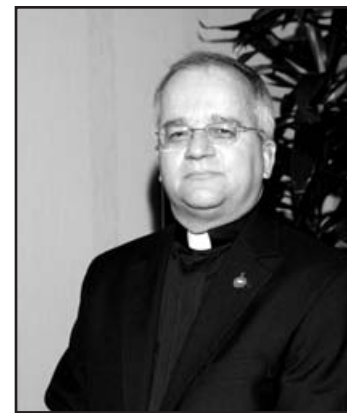
Richard L D'Arminio
201-704-1146
rldconsultant@aol.com
rdarminio@allstate.com

Since the inception of UNICO National in 1947, thousands of people and individual charities have been the recipients of UNICO's charity. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised for national and international disasters. Typical of this generosity was the gift of \$500,000 to create 10 buildings in Italy to house those suffering from the ravages of an earthquake disaster.

Each year, UNICO Foundation and UNICO National Chapters donate approximately \$1 million to various charities. Scholarships continue to be the primary focus, as roughly one-third of all monies raised goes to deserving students nominated by individual chapters across the country.

UNICO National has funded major research in Cooley's Anemia and Mental Health. Through its association with the Jimmy Valvano Foundation it has funded several \$50,000 grants to help find a cure for Cancer. These worthy areas continue to receive generous support from the chapters and its members for these worthy causes.

CHAPLAIN'S MESSAGE FATHER BOB WOLFE



The book Children's Letters to God" reveals how at ease children are when they converse with God. For example, Jane asks God, "Instead of letting people die or having to make

new ones, why don't you keep the ones you got?" Larry suggests, "Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other ... if they had their own rooms. It works with my brother." Mickey confides to God, "If you watch in church on Sunday, I will show you my new shoes." There is something to be learned here about how we should approach God.

God provides for us in many ways. He wants to share his guidance with all of us. All we have to do is ask for it. Children know how to accept help because they realize that they are dependent on others. However, at times, we adults become so accustomed to doing things on our own that we can lull ourselves into believing that we can do everything on our own. One thing we certainly cannot accomplish on our own is to save ourselves. We must acknowledge that Jesus is our Savior.

We need to rely on God for many other things and in many other circumstances. We have to trust in him the way children trust in their parents and other adults. When Jesus welcomed the little children and blessed them, he advised the people to be childlike in their faith so they too would be welcomed into the kingdom. What is childlike faith? It is faith that freely gives love without conditions or restrictions. It is to trust in God who has so much good in store for us. It is reliance on God's providence and guidance when difficulties arise. It is persistence when we pray and determination to try harder when we fall short of God's expectations or our expectations for ourselves.

Do we all have such faith? Probably not, but each day we can make it a habit to pray for an increase in faith. Hopefully, one day God will welcome us as his children into the heavenly kingdom.

God Bless,

Fr. Bob Wolfe
UNICO National Chaplain

UNICO YOUTH

NEW YOUTH CHAIRPERSON



Hi UNICO !

My name is Marissa Gynn, I am your new Youth Chairperson. I was appointed by our new National President André DiMino at the National Convention in Lake Las Vegas. I hope to see more young members at the

2010 Convention in Hershey Park so all local chapters start enlisting young people now. I am very grateful for the opportunity to get more young Italian Americans informed and involved in the Service of UNICO National. A special thanks to Membership Chair Rick D'Arminio for nominating me to this position.

As way of introduction, I graduated from East Stroudsburg University and have worked as a special education teacher in Paramus and Bloomfield. I went on to earn my Master's Degree from Caldwell College last fall and am now a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. I am currently working with children and young adults with autism at Bergen County Special Services School District. This year I will begin a new academic challenge by enrolling in Caldwell College's new Ph.D program in Applied Behavior Analysis. It is my goal to educate people about developmental disabilities and the benefits of science-based treatment. I am happy to be a part of an organization that supports mental health issues and encourages young people to get involved in serving the community.

My UNICO goal for this year is to get our current youth members actively involved in their chapters and to encourage all local chapters to develop ACES programs whereby all young people have a voice in the future of UNICO National. I will be creating a Facebook group where all teenagers, youth, and regular members can communicate about upcoming events and share advice and information about getting young members involved in this great organization.

At the Point Pleasant Beach Chapter we have 18 teenagers and 21 youth members who hold their own meetings and have elected their own officers to work in conjunction with the regular chapter membership. Young people want to be involved and want to discover their Italian heritage, so please give them the chance by inviting all young Italian Americans to actively participate in your events. We are proud to be Italian Americans and proud to be the future of UNICO National. I look forward to hearing about your chapter's youth membership and working with all UNICO members to promote our motto of "Service above Self." marissagynn@hotmail.com

LAKE LAS VEGAS CONVENTION WRAP UP

Well it is all over! It came and went with a loud bang. We are not going to brag about the convention but we were very pleased that most of the attendees have stated that it was surely a great convention.

There were about 340 attendees who participated in the social side and about 250 of those attended the business meetings.

Each conventioneer for a meal and entertainment package cost of \$250 received the following:

- Free transportation to the hotel and back to the airport (average cost of cab ride each way was \$55)
- Three continental breakfasts
- Wednesday Night Ice Breaker, dinner and cocktail hour
- Thursday's trip to the strip (about 225 people took advantage of that event) Additionally, we booked three shows at discounted prices for about 100 people
- Friday Awards Luncheon – this was an outstanding program featuring Vince Ferragamo, famous Super Bowl Los Angeles Rams Quarterback, Joey Hathaway, Amateur Athlete Awardee from Yale and speaker Rich Ruffalo, Olympics Gold Medal winner. These speakers excited the house with their very fine messages.
- Friday night hospitality for the whole convention hosted by André and Jenny DiMino. The entertainment was great featuring a professional Dean Martin look a like with his style and songs. Deana Martin (Dean's daughter) and her husband John Griffeth also attended the convention. Deana also entertained Friday and Saturday nights. The conventioners enjoyed a Martini bar, wine and soda and desserts etc.
- The Saturday Night Gala – it was an exquisite event featuring a cocktail hour and dinner. Three hundred forty three attended this event and enjoyed the presentation of awards to Marine Captain Jarrod DePasquale for the Basilone Freedom Award, Buddy Fortunato, Publisher of the Italian Tribune for the Rizzuto Award, Dr. Joseph Scelsa, Founder of the Italian American Museum, Cianci Award, Alan Krutchkoff, founder of Adopt a Soldier Platoon, Americanism Award and Paul Alongi, Past National President, The Vastola Award. PNP Anthony Fornelli did a masterful job as emcee for the program
- Saturday morning featured the inauguration of André DiMino as National President and First Lady Jenny. André set forth his programs for the upcoming year and asked the membership to focus on Italian American Heritage among other facets of UNICO. Kathi Strozza, outgoing President addressed the body and explained the successful achievements of her administration, notably the reorganization of the National office and all its various computer programs.
- Wine and soda were provided free to the attendees throughout the whole convention.

(See Convention Wrap Up on Page 12)

MENTAL HEALTH GRANTS UNICO YEAR 2008-2009



Vantage Health Systems of Englewood, New Jersey receives a Grant Award from the UNICO Mental Health program in the amount of \$3,000.

(L-R Standing) UNICO National Executive Vice President André DiMino, UNICO National President Kathi Strozza, Director of the LEAP Program Nancy Deren, CEO, Vantage Health Systems Victoria Sidrow, UNICO Mental Health Committee Chair Barbara Lipari Laborim, Director of Development Deanna M. Dawicki, (L-R Seated) Joan Tidona, Geri Lipari and Celeste Pandolfi, Mental Health Committee members.



Johns Hopkins University Alzheimer's Disease Research Center in Baltimore, Maryland accepts a UNICO Grant Award in the amount of \$10,000.

(L-R) UNICO Foundation President John DiNapoli, UNICO National President Kathi Strozza, Juan C. Troncoso, M.D., Diego Iacono, M.D. Ph.D., UNICO National Executive Vice President Andre DiMino, Donald L. Price, M.D., and UNICO National Mental Health Chair Barbara Lipari Laborim.



Pathways to Independence, Inc. in Kearny, New Jersey receives a Grant Award in the amount of \$2,500 from the UNICO National Mental health Program.

(L-R) UNICO Mental Health Committee member Joan Tidona, Executive Director of Pathways Alvin Cox, UNICO National President Kathi Strozza, Development Director of Pathways Si Mano, UNICO Mental Health Committee member Geri Lipari, UNICO Mental Health Committee Chair Barbara Lipari Laborim, UNICO National Executive Vice President Andre DiMino and UNICO Mental Health Committee member Celeste Pandolfi.

Charitable donations to UNICO charities are tax deductible!

Send your contributions to the UNICO Foundation at: 271 US Highway 46, Suite A-108, Fairfield, NJ 07004.

EXPANSION



To my fellow UNICANS, I would like to thank you for your continued support. I am beginning my third year as your Expansion Director. I could not continue to do this job without the help

of my committee. Presently I am fortunate to have the help of three Past National Presidents on our committee. They are Alfred Dante Jr., Michael D'Arminio and Joseph Agresti. This year I am proud to add the names of two more Past National Presidents. They are Kathleen Strozza, our newest PNP and Frank Cannata. I would like to thank them for joining our Expansion committee.

During our Sports Award Luncheon at this year's convention, I presented four Coltivare Awards. This award is given for work in the area of expansion. The four winners all exemplified our motto of "Service Above Self". The award winners were Joseph Triano, Frank DeMaio, Damian Andrisano and Jo Ann Gallo. Jo Ann has also agreed to join our expansion committee.

Our new President, Andre' DiMino has challenged me to start chapters in eight new states. His reason is that he would like to see UNICO represented in more than fifty percent of the United States. Unfortunately, we lost Hilton Head, South Carolina this year, so that means that I need to start a new chapter in South Carolina as well.

This past week Past National President, Joe Agresti and I went for a road trip for Expansion in the east. On Tuesday we drove to Perry Hall, Maryland where we met with Don Piccolo, Brian Piccolo's brother, and several other Italian Americans. Rick D'Arminio, our Membership and Retention Director, made this possible. Don was the guest speaker this year at NJ District IX's Brian Piccolo Awards Dinner. Don and his friends were all excited about starting a chapter in their area. On Wednesday, we traveled to Colombia, South Carolina to meet with Gerry DiStefano, a former member of Joe Agresti's chapter, Passaic Valley. We met with Gerry and six others. The meeting went well and they all promised to get their applications to Gerry this week. On Thursday, we continued our road trip to Greenville, South Carolina. Joe and I met with Paul Abeanete. Paul is involved with Italian Studies students at Clemson University. Joe Coccia, Past National President, was the one who originally spoke to Paul about starting a UNICO chapter in Greenville. We answered all his questions, after which he told us that there were more than enough Italians to start a chapter in Greenville.

This past June 24 I had a first night for Missoula, Montana. This was thanks to Melanie Noto Brock, Peter Noto's daughter. Peter is

a Past District Governor of PA II. I met with Melanie and nine others at John and Jenny Passuccio home. I would like to thank them for the outstanding food and opening their home to help us start a UNICO chapter. I flew home the next day with nine applications. I spoke to Melanie this week and she told me to expect more applications in the near future.

On June 30, we chartered our fifth chapter for the year. The name of the new chapter is the North Shore chapter of UNICO NATIONAL. They chartered with fifteen members. I have to thank Lou DiRico, PDG of NY II, Steven Bonventre, DG of NY II, and Jason Nappi the charter president of the new North Shore, NY chapter. This chapter is located in Long Island. Due to the death of a friend, I asked Rick D'Arminio to run the charter night and from all the comments I received from those that were in attendance I understand Rick did an outstanding job. I want to welcome the North Shore chapter into our UNICO family.

At our recent Board of Directors meeting I requested the approval of the charter for the new Hillsborough Chapter of UNICO NATIONAL. It was approved unanimously and the charter night will be held in the near future.

With five charters in the east, we will have increased our membership by 193 members this past year.

Please remember what I say at the end of all my articles and make sure, if one of your members moves to another state or area that does not have a UNICO chapter that you make them a National Member. Perhaps your chapter could help sponsor the new chapter in his or her area.

I am placing the chapter locations that we are working on at the bottom of this article. If you have any friends, family, business associates or especially former Unicans who have moved to one of these areas, please ask them to call our National office or me. We will contact them to see if they have an interest in becoming a part of one of these new chapters.

Gerry Heytink
UNICO National Expansion Chairman
(201) 666-9226
e-mail: gerry.heyntink@gmail.com

HELP UNICO START A NEW CHAPTER IN ONE OF THESE CITIES!

EAST

Darien, CT
Wilmington, DE
The Villages, FL
Weymouth, MA
Hillsborough, NJ
Morristown Area
Old Tappan, NJ
West Milford, NJ
Loudonville, NY
Staten Island, NY
Pittsburg, PA
Cranston, RI
Colombia, SC
Greenville, SC
Burington, VT
San Juan, PR

MIDWEST

Chicago, IL
Hudson, OH
Tiffin, OH
Nashville, TN
Austin, TX
Houston, TX
State of Kansas

WEST

Bullhead City, AZ
Phoenix, AZ
Tucson, AZ
Sacramento, CA
San Pedro, CA
Santa Clarita, CA
Walnut Creek, CA
Albuquerque, NM
Missoula, MT

BOOK REVIEW



Life: Its Problems and Some of Its Unanswerable Questions

Reviewed by Dr. Tony Arabia

LIFE Magazine, years ago, was one of those large, weekly pictorial publications that opened minds with dramatic images. We grew up with it. And in the photographs of wartimes, assassinations, moon landings, medical advancements and celebrity features, we learned how America and the world was changing.

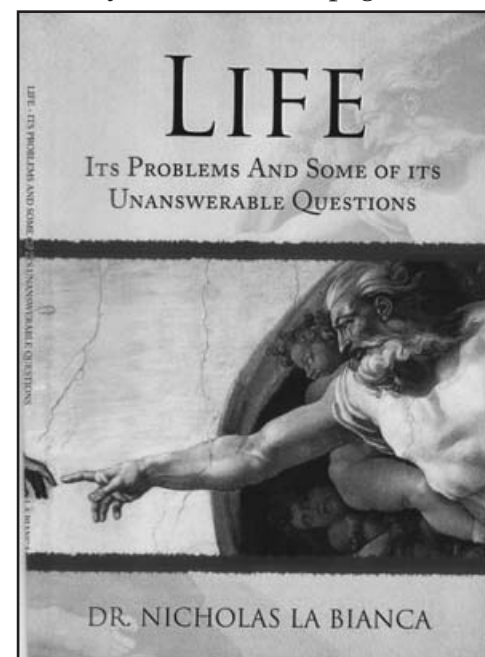
A book review of "Life: Its Problems" cannot do justice to the many issues and themes that Dr. LaBianca presents to us. Its range and depth are quite extensive. It has been said that the book may be small, but it covers many large matters.

He carefully explores questions such as, "Who are we? Why are we here?" Essentially text with some pictures, the book gives us a compact view of contemporary life and serves it to us with the author's worldwide point of view. The content is an historical, philosophical, educational journey that at times is moderate, conservative and liberal. On topics such as war and peace, pro-life and pro-choice, God and religion, our government and its leadership, education, technology, medicine, and our place in world history, the author states his views.

Realizing that many extremely difficult issues exist, the author very ably confronts them, giving his best assessment of possible solutions. To some people, his ideas may be too simple and to others, his views may be too complex, but he writes with conviction, hope, and great devotion to humanity and America and its promise to achieve real progress and happiness.

Look for it and read it. "Life" will surely broaden your perspectives!

Published by XLibris, 105 pages, \$22.99



SAN DIEGO



James Pieri Jr. (L) takes the oath of office for president of the San Diego Chapter, The ceremony was conducted by PNP Frank Caperino.



The new San Diego Chapter Board of Directors was sworn in at the Brian Piccolo Scholarship Dinner. (L-R Back Row) Frank Turlo, Roger Maury, Steve Codrero, James Pieri Jr., Barry Masci, Michael Monaco and Anthony Napoli. (L-R Seated) Janelle Riella and Marianne Nolan.

VERONA, NJ

NEW OFFICERS

At the June Business Meeting 2009-2010 officers were installed.



(L-R) Treasurer Tom Cocchiola, Chaplin Nancy Magrans, Executive Vice President Linda Gail Alati, President Lydia Bashwiner, Past President Lisa Adubato, 1st Vice President Bruce Snogans and Secretary Bonnie Sharkey.

CHICAGO

DOUBLE CELEBRATION FOR CHICAGO UNICO !

The Illinois Supreme Court admission ceremony in Chicago on May 7th 2009 turned out to be a cause for double celebration for UNICO members from Chicago. The bar admittees included Catherine Locallo, the daughter of Illinois District Governor Richard Caifano and Joseph Locallo, III, the son of Chicago West Suburban chapter member, Joseph Locallo, Jr.

Two days later, the new lawyers were married at the Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii in the Little Italy neighborhood of Chicago. The bride and groom are members of the Chicago-Amerital Chapter of UNICO and were present as delegates at the national convention held at Lake Las Vegas. The young Locallo has joined his father in the practice of law at the firm of Amari & Locallo. Catherine is an associate at the Chicago firm of Robbins, Schwartz, Nicholas, Lifton & Taylor.



(L-R) Joseph Locallo, Jr., Catherine Locallo, Joseph Locallo III, Len Amari (Compari to the family/past president of the Illinois State Bar Association) and Richard Caifano.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

We had a fabulous response to our initial requests for e-mail addresses! Although some are still trickling in, we still only have the e-mail addresses for one-third of our members. E-mail is now many people's first choice when communicating with others please contact us to include you in our database. Our database will never be sold or disseminated in any way at all, it is intended only as a way to communicate faster with our members.

e-mail:
uniconational@unico.org

WEST SPRINGFIELD MA

36TH ANNUAL AWARDS

UNICO of West Springfield, Massachusetts had their West Springfield High School Scholarship Awards Dinner on Thursday, June 25 at Dante Club. Members of West Springfield UNICO cooked and served the dinner. Eight scholarships were awarded.



Pictured above are scholarship winners on top row from left are Chelsea O'Brien, Katherine Marino, Bailey McDonnell, Ann Bergeron, Carlee Santaniello, Monica Acevedo and Paul Lefebvre. Missing from picture is Katelyn Sullivan. Pictured on bottom row are UNICO members from left are Mike Vezzola, Neil Ferrero, Joe Breda, Lida Powell, Ron Lodi, Christina Francoeur, Jane Martone, Club President Mauro DiClementi, Skip Rousseau, Anne Marie Belden, Club Treasurer Jean Robinson, Stew Robinson, Club Secretary Betty McCabe-Pandolfi and Carm Santaniello.

NJ DISTRICT I



Marissa Gynn, our new UNICO National Youth Chairperson, enjoys the national convention in Las Vegas with her parents Bob Gynn and Grace Gynn. Grace is the new District Governor for NJ I.

ST. LOUIS METRO

CHALLENGER BASEBALL

The St. Louis Metro Chapter of UNICO National adopted Challenger Baseball as their organization's charity for the third consecutive year. This year, The Metro Chapter donated \$1,750 towards the cause. Challenger Baseball affords youngsters and adults with developmental disabilities the ability to participate in the all American sport of baseball! The charity is in its 16th season, giving everyone who participates a chance to play by two basic rules: Every player bats each inning, and every player plays the field. Strikes don't count and outs don't count. Everybody scores and everybody wins.

In addition to cheering the players, members of the St. Louis Metro Chapter of UNICO National served food and beverages to all of the players and their families. St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay was on hand to give out medals to every player and Missouri Governor Jay Nixon threw out the first pitch.

The day proved to be another memorable occasion and the St. Louis Metro Chapter of UNICO National is proud to be a part of such a wonderful children's charity.



UNICO enjoyed serving all of the hungry Challenger Baseball All Star Players!



(L-R) Marisa Gandolfo, Tony Gandolfo, Lisa Gandolfo, Anthony Gandolfo, Vince Passanisi, Sally Passanisi, Sandy Passanisi, Umberto Passanisi, Hon. Francis Slay, Major of St. Louis, Emma Gandolfo, Joe Gandolfo and Tony Lombardo.



(L-R) PNP Angelo Sita, Buck Smith from Challenger Baseball, Joe Gandolfo, President St. Louis Metro Chapter.

MEMPHIS, TN

2009 SCHOLARSHIP



Alicia McKenzie (UNICO Memphis Scholarship Chair Person) and Augustine (Augie) Donati (2009 Scholarship Winner).

UNICO Memphis proudly announces the 2009 Scholarship winner as Augustine (Augie) Donati!! Augie, the son of Anthony and Paula Donati, is a recent graduate of CBHS here in Memphis. He lives in Bartlett, TN with his parents and his two brothers, Angelo and Anthony. Augie, who plans to have a career in medicine, will begin at Tulane this fall. He is a very active volunteer in many community organizations and plans to continue volunteering in some capacity when he is at Tulane. Augie told us at the June UNICO meeting when he received his \$2,500 scholarship money, that this money will greatly help his family. I believe that his family would make sacrifices to enable him to go to Tulane. After all, it is an honor to be among those selected to attend this prestigious university!! Memphis UNICO salutes our winner, Augustine Donati!!

CARBONDALE

CONVENTION



Kneeling - Terri Pettinato, PA II District Governor Chip Calabro. Standing - (l to r) Tom Gatto, Yvonne Gatto, Foundation Secretary Dr. Peter Pettinato, Maggie Pettinato, 1st National Vice President Glenn Pettinato and Pat Calabro.

UNICO FOUNDATION

MEMORIAL CARDS SUPPORT UNICO FOUNDATION

All chapters received samples of the newly designed UNICO Foundation Memorial cards; if you haven't had an opportunity to see them yet and would like to make use of them, simply contact me at the National Office and I'll send a supply to you.

Secondly, an Honor card is also available. These gift cards are ideal for those individuals who are difficult to buy for and can be used for any happy event.

Donations using either card benefit the UNICO Foundation charity of your choice.

Again, if you'd like to receive either, or both, of these cards, simply call me at 973-808-0035 or e-mail me at development@unico.org.

Wishing all of our chapters a successful year.

Barbara Peirano
Development Executive

SCRANTON

HELEN KELLER DAY

At the 80th Annual Helen Keller Day/Fashion Show for the Lackawanna Branch, PA Association for the Blind, members of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Scranton Chapter of UNICO National and their guests were on hand to support and or model in this major fundraiser. Among those present are these pictured with the following captions.



Members and their friends who attended the 80th Annual Helen Keller Day Fashion Show are pictured, standing from left to right are Marci McDade Barnansky, Karen Bocchino Tigie, Michele McDade, Janet Bocchino Tigie and Marie Schumacher. Seated from left to right are: Kristen Krowiak, Paula Keenan, Cathy Caterino Gerard and Margaret Caterino.

SOLANO CA

SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

The Solano Chapter held its scholarship awards luncheon on June 27th. Eight very deserving students each received a \$1,000 scholarship. Through yearly fund raisers the chapter was again able to award eight scholarships for the second year in a row.



From left to right: Caitlin Calvert, Talia Valeriote, Jennifer Fabian, Oliva Castro, Emily Iannarelli, and Jessica Glaspey.

POINT PLEASANT BEACH



Members of Point Pleasant Beach UNICO at Lake Las Vegas congratulate new DG Grace Gynn and Chapter President Tony Scardaville

The name UNICO was selected as best representing the nature and the character of a new Italian American service club. The name is the Italian word for unique, one of a kind. The founders believed that UNICO would be the only one of its kind because it placed service to the community before and above fraternity. At the same time they hoped that the rest of society would come to know and understand the real contributions of Italian Americans to our way of life. Its sole purpose was to unite all Italian Americans and motivate them to become more civic minded. In order to accomplish this, members would have to understand that they would have to make sacrifices, not for personal gain, but for service to others. In the ensuing years UNICO became an acronym that stood for Unity, Neighborliness, Integrity, Charity, and Opportunity.

ORANGE/WEST ORANGE NJ

AWARDS DINNER

The Orange/West Orange Chapter of UNICO National held its 2009 Scholarship and Awards Dinner on June 17, 2009 at Mayfair Farms, in West Orange, NJ. Seven local area high school students were awarded individual local memorial scholarships. Two UNICO National Scholarships were also awarded as well as Italian Language Awards.

The local memorial scholarships were in the amount of \$1,500 and were awarded to the students based on their academic achievement, high school extra-curricular activities, community service, and work experiences. The students were selected by a committee of members and O/WO UNICO Scholarship Chairman Frank V. Gonnella presided over the evening's events. The following students received the scholarships: Meredith Gray Wright, West Orange HS - Anthony F. & Flora Gonnella Memorial Scholarship; Gabrielle Josephine Bravoco, West Orange HS - Camille S. Vecchio Memorial Scholarship; Joseph Cosentino, West Orange HS - Lawrence & Wanda Vecchio Memorial Scholarship; James Vincent Ligot, West Orange HS - Frank Franklin Memorial Scholarship; Reginald Philip Viezel, West Orange HS - Alfred Leto Memorial Scholarship; Brian Meise - O/WO UNICO Scholarship in the memory of late Martin G. Picillo, past O/WO Chapter & UNICO National President and Anthony Casalino - O/WO UNICO Scholarship.

The following students received Italian Language Awards, as selected by their teachers for outstanding academic achievement in the Italian Language: Christopher Osnato, Seton Hall Prep and James Vincent Ligot, West Orange HS.

UNICO National annually awards four National Undergraduate scholarships in the amount of \$6,000. Two students nominated by the O/WO Chapter received two out of three scholarships. Meredith Gray Wright of West Orange High School received the William C. Davini Memorial Scholarship and Nicole Schollmeyer of Randolph High School received the Alphonse A. Miele Memorial Scholarship. UNICO National Scholarship Chairperson, Joan Tidona was present to announce the recipients.

Frank Gonnella also announced the completion of the UNICO Garden for Exceptional Child which is located at the Katz Center, at Degnan Field. The garden fully funded through a donation of \$25,000, will allow special needs children to learn the fundamentals of gardening. Additionally, a donation of \$1,000 was presented to member Dino Cerelli, for the Hemophilia Foundation of NJ.

The Chapter donated an additional \$35,000 to local and national charities and organizations. On a local level they included Seton Hall University Valenti Library, ARC

of Essex County, West Orange HS Booster Club, West Orange HS Project Graduation, First Occupational Center of NJ, West Orange Community House, West Orange First Aid Squad, Mayor's Program for Individual with Disabilities, and the West Orange Athletic League. On a national level the Chapter donated to the following: UNICO Foundation, UNICO National Mental Health, Cooley's Anemia, UNICO National Anti-Bias Committee, UNICO National Scholarship Fund, and the Jimmy V. Foundation for Cancer Research.

The Chapter serves the community by providing scholarships and supporting charities on a local and national basis. The organization also actively promotes the recognition of Italian heritage and culture and the contributions Italian Americans have made to our country.



Frank V. Gonnella - O/WO UNICO Scholarship Chairman, Nicole Schollmeyer, Randolph HS - UNICO National Alphonse A. Miele Memorial Scholarship, Meredith Gray Wright, WOHS - UNICO National William C. Davini Memorial Scholarship, Joan Tidona, UNICO National Scholarship Chairperson.



Frank V. Gonnella - O/WO UNICO Scholarship Chairman, Meredith Gray Wright, WOHS - Anthony F. & Flora Gonnella Memorial Scholarship, Gabrielle Josephine Bravoco, WOHS - Camille Vecchio Memorial Scholarship, Brian Meise, WOHS - O/WO UNICO Scholarship in the Memory of Martin G. Picillo, Reginald Philip Viezel, WOHS - Alfred Leto Memorial Scholarship, Anthony Casalino, WOHS - O/WO UNICO Scholarship, James Vincent Ligot, WOHS - Frank Franklin Memorial Scholarship & Italian Language Award, Christopher Osnato, SHP - Italian Language Award, Joseph Cosentino, WOHS - Larry & Wanda Vecchio Memorial Scholarship.

Information about the ACES Youth Program

(973) 808-0035
(973) 808-0043 FAX
unico.national@verizon.net

NUTLEY NJ

GALA EVENT AT MAYFAIR FARMS

The Nutley, NJ Chapter of UNICO National has completed an exciting 2008-09 year by awarding \$27,000 in scholarships, and celebrating its 50th anniversary. One of the local recipients, Anthony Rauco, was selected by the UNICO National Scholarship Committee to receive the Theodore Mazza Scholarship in the amount of \$6,000. The chapter also recognized two members for Outstanding Achievement Peter Scarpelli and UNICAN of the Year Sal Ferraro. Outgoing president, Tom Sposato, swore in the new president, Marie Lucarella Solimo at the June 4 chapter meeting. Marie is the first female president in the chapter's history. The new slate of officers is:

President	Marie Lucarella Solimo
1st V.P.	Anthony Malifitano
2nd V.P.	Phyllis Coldebella
3rd V.P.	Salvatore Ferraro
Sec.	Bob Montanino
Treas.	Carmella "Mel" Priolo
Sgt. At Arms	Anthony "Jr" Mascola
Member at Large	Michael Cocco
Member at Large	Micahel Italiano

The Nutley UNICO annual golf outing is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12th at the Sky View Golf Club at 226 Lafayette Road in Sparta NJ. The \$115 cost includes a BBQ lunch and full buffet dinner. Please join us!

The chapter has a variety of new activities planned for the 2009-10 year and welcomes anyone interested in becoming a member to contact any of our members for information or to write us at: Nutley UNICO, P.O. Box 43, Nutley, NJ 07110. The first dinner meeting of the coming year will be Thursday, Sept. 10th.



Nutley, NJ UNICO District VII Brian Piccolo Award winner, Anthony D'Amico is congratulated by his family and coaches.



National President Kathy Strozza is joined at the Nutley, NJ UNICO Chapter by Tom Sposato, outgoing president, and Marie Lucarella Solimo, the incoming president, and first female president in the chapters' history.

MEMPHIS, TN

2009-2010 CHAPTER OFFICERS



(L-R): Ron Giometti, President; Rose Marie Cross, Board of Directors (BOD); Danny Presley, Legal Counsel; Michael Spano, Treasurer, PNP; Paul Vescovo, BOD; Ray Ricossa, BOD; Regina Giometti, BOD; George Bond, BOD; Linda Bond, Secretary; Gerri Camurati, BOD; Kerry Krag, Sergeant at Arms; Sharon Signaigo Thompson, Vice President; Gloria Marascuilo, BOD; Mike Camurati, District Governor (not pictured).



(L-R): Ron Giometti, President; Joe Ferloni, Mike Vanelli, Ron and Kathy Poletti, Margaret Cascio, Chris Ann Schiro-Geist and Jack Conway.

PALM BEACH FL

BOCCE IN BANYAN LAKES

In a night reminiscent of evenings long ago in faraway Italy, the Palm Beach chapter of the Italian-American service organization UNICO enjoyed the traditional game of bocce and a bountiful table at the home of Michael and Marie Bianchini in Banyan Lakes on May 17.

Adding to the great evening of fun and friendship, participants were feted with a performance by Gianni Bianchini on piano and Amanda Petrozelli on violin.

Besides its social activities, UNICO exists to promote Italian culture, provide scholarships for deserving young people and assist those who are less fortunate.

The Palm Beach chapter's upcoming events include the screening of an Italian film during a potluck night and a wine and cheese tasting at a local wine shop.

The chapter is planning a weekend "Taste of Italy" with food, drink and music in the western communities in the early spring of 2010.

UNICO invites all those of Italian heritage to consider joining the chapter.

For more information, call Chapter President Giulio Panzano at (561) 670-5080.



UNICO members on the bocce court: (L-R) Rosa and John Jado, Darlene and Gabriele Finochietti, Norma and Giulio Panzano, Maria and Dr. J. Castro, and Maria, Gabriella, Alessandra, Gianni and Michael Bianchini.

MIAMI FL



COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY



FESTA DELLA REPUBBLICA

ITALIAN NATIONAL HOLIDAY WITH NEWARK'S CONSUL OF ITALY



(L-R) Manny Alfano, Barbara Pelrano, Joe Coccia, Elda Coccia, Console of NJ Newark Andrea Barbara, Antonio Gaglioto, Sal Benvenuti and Pat Pelonero.



Console Andrea Barbara of Newark, NJ.



Manny Alfano with two Miss Italians !!

HOW MANY ITALIAN AMERICANS?

In the 2000 U.S. Census, Italian Americans constituted the fifth largest ancestry group in America with about 15.6 million people (5.6% of the total U.S. population). Sicilian Americans are a subset of numerous Americans of regional Italian ancestries. As of 2006, the Italian-American population climbed to 17.8 million persons constituting 6 percent of the population. It is also important to note that eighty-percent of Italian Americans have Southern Italian ancestry, while the remaining twenty-percent come from the north.

NORTH HALEDON

GOURMET DINNER

On Tuesday, April 28th, the North Haledon Chapter hosted a gourmet dinner for their wives. This dinner was prepared and served by our members and was such a huge success that they are planning next year's feast!



CONVENTION WRAP UP

(Continued from Page 6)

What we have defined above did cost the Convention Committee about \$600 for each person. Our committee was strong and energetic. They worked very hard at the convention and doubly dedicated to raising \$90,000 to subsidize each conventioner. We were able to raise these monies through 12 Atlantic City bus trips, Karaoke nights, Bowl A Thons, Festa Frozen Ice sales, Dinner entertainment nights, sponsors and an unprecedented Ad Journal. Also many thanks to Vice Chairs John Morano and Tony Ricciardi for all the time and help expended to make our convention a success. A very special thank you to First Lady Jenny DiMino and the ladies who provided all the beautiful and creative decorations for all the social events. The decorations were "out of this world."

Finally, Dino Mantini and his staff were superb on the Ritz Carlton's behalf. Dino made sure the food was great and authentic Italian. His detailed day to day operation and coordination with our committee was truly outstanding and appreciated.

BY NOW YOU GET THE DRIFT – THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE WAS THE BEST!!

Convention Chairman,
PNP Paul Alongi

SCRANTON

SAINT JOSEPH'S FESTIVAL

The Scranton Chapter of UNICO National and its Ladies Auxiliary volunteered at Saint Joseph's Annual Festival again this year. Members of both the Chapter and the Ladies Auxiliary serviced both the Bakery Tent and the Pizza Fritta Stand.



Members and friends of the Scranton Chapter of UNICO National and its Ladies Auxiliary, who worked the Sunday Pizza Fritta Stand at Saint Joseph's Festival. Pictured from left to right are: Isabella Amity, Brittany DeLeo, Co-chair Jack DeLeo, Maria Guido, Palma and Pat Yanni, Sue Marullo, Chapter President Sam Prudente, Linda Malinoski, Carmen Brutico, Maggie Prudente, Carl Noakes and Joe Guido.

SCRANTON IN LAS VEGAS



ELIZABETH NJ

GREAT YEAR FOR ELIZABETH !

The members of the Elizabeth Chapter of UNICO are very proud of their activities. This year, the chapter has been blessed with seven new members!

At the last business meeting of the year, the club hosted thier Anthony J. DiGiovanni Scholarship recipients along with their parents. The chapter introduced their upcoming Citizen of the Year who will be honored at a formal dinner in October. Members of the chapter also presented gifts to charitable organizations. At the business meeting, new officers were installed. Guests included spouses, friends and potential members.

This year, on Wednesday, June 3rd, 2009, Elizabeth Chapter members were honored to have our very own UNICO National Executive Vice-President André DiMino in attendance! Members could not have been more proud to see a national officer attending their meeting and truly enjoyed his company. André spoke to each member and addressed the crowd. He even honored the Elizabeth Chapter by swearing in their new Chapter President. Attached are some pictures capturing these great moments.



"ELIZ UNICO NEW GUYS JUNE 2009" Joe Marretta (far right), the new chapter president, addresses and encourages the chapter's seven new members! Three of these brand new UNICANs are already participating and playing fundamental roles in the upcoming Citizen of the Year dinner.

STEREOTYPES OF ITALIAN AMERICANS

In the 1890-1920 period Italian Americans were often stereotyped as being "violent" and "controlled by the Mafia". In the 1920s, many Americans used the Sacco and Vanzetti trial, in which two Italian anarchists were sentenced to death, to denounce Italian immigrants as anarchists and criminals. During the 19th and early 20th century, Italian Americans were one of the most likely groups to be lynched. In 1891, eleven Italian immigrants in New Orleans were lynched due to their ethnicity and suspicion of being involved in the Mafia. This was the largest mass lynching in US history.

GREATER RAMSEY NJ

CHAPTER NEWS



Mr. Ken Santo, Greater Ramsey Chapter of UNICO Past President (2008-2009) received an "Achievement and Thank You" award from the Greater Ramsey Chapter of UNICO President, Mr. Ron Muzzillo.



Mr. Steve Wekar, Treasurer of the Greater Ramsey Chapter of UNICO, received the award as "UNICAN OF THE YEAR." The presentation was made by the UNICO National President, Mr. André DiMino and the Greater Ramsey Chapter of UNICO President, Mr. Ron Muzzillo.



Ms. Elizabeth Musso was inducted into the Ramsey Chapter by the UNICO National President, Mr. André DiMino and the Greater Ramsey Chapter President Mr. Ron Muzzillo.



Mr. Ken Thimmel of Ramsey, NJ, donated special baseball items which will be auctioned at the Greater Ramsey Chapter of UNICO golf outing on Aug 31st, at White Beeches Country Club, Haworth, NJ.

UNICO NATIONAL BUSINESS AT THE 2009 CONVENTION

Although it may look like it from all of the great photos in this edition of ComUNICO, the convention was not just for fun! The officers, delegates and attendees also conducted important UNICO National business.

With respect to national elections, the only contested race was for Third National Vice President which was won by Michael Veselka of Chicago.

Voting on the three proposed amendments to the UNICO National Constitution resulted in none achieving the required 2/3 majority to be passed. Therefore no changes were made.

The convention delegates also voted on the site for the 2012 national convention. The winning hotel is in Marco Island Florida.

Again, this year, the generosity of UNICO members, chapters and districts was demonstrated by the many tens of thousands of dollars in donations received or pledged for the various UNICO National initiatives and charities including Scholarships, Cooley's Anemia, Mental Health, Italian Studies Chairs, Cancer Research (Jimmy V.), Anti Bias, and others.

An exciting new project was presented and resulted in numerous sponsorships being pledged for a new Italian and Italian American Heritage and Culture Calendar. The calendar will be published for 2010. Nearly all of the required sponsorship positions were received at the Convention so the Calendar is nearly certain to be successfully published.

In addition to the business of the convention there were numerous guest speakers and presentations on numerous subjects and causes. The 2009 UNICO National Convention was an overwhelming success from the business aspects as well as the great time had by all!

The great German statesman Otto Von Bismarck said: "Laws are like sausages, it is better not to see them being made." Well, at least at UNICO Conventions we can make the legislative equivalent of delicious Italian sausage!

OBITUARIES

JOE DIGANGI: CORONADO UNICAN TOLD TALES OF YEARS AS A CATCHER IN THE YANKEE BULLPEN

By Blanca Gonzalez
STAFF WRITER- San Diego Union Tribune

He wasn't a star, and he never played in a major-league game, but Joe DiGangi had a place in baseball history as one of the last links to the days of Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.

Mr. DiGangi often told of his claim to a small bit of fame as a bullpen catcher for the New York Yankees from 1933 to 1941. He spent many summer days with players such as Ruth, Gehrig, Bill Dickey and Phil Rizzuto.

Mr. DiGangi, a Coronado resident since 1988, enjoyed sharing his memories of baseball's golden era, including the time Gehrig hit a foul ball and dislocated two of Mr. DiGangi's fingers.

Mr. DiGangi died of natural causes July 14 in Coronado. He was 94.

He took pride in showing off his gnarled fingers and telling about the 1934 batting-practice session when Gehrig's foul ball hurt his hand.

"Lou Gehrig always had a hitch (in his swing), and he tipped one," Mr. DiGangi said in a 2007 interview with The San Diego Union-Tribune. "If you look at the damn glove ... it was rawhide in those days. You couldn't catch with one hand because the ball would pop out."

Friend Joe Ditler said Mr. DiGangi was friendly and gregarious, and loved telling stories. "He used to say, 'I'm going to die talking,'" Ditler said.

"He used to walk along the Coronado Shores, and a crowd would form (around him) everywhere he went," said Ditler, editor of Coronado magazine. "He carried around Xeroxed photos of him and Joe DiMaggio and handed them out."

Mr. DiGangi reveled in the media attention he received in his later years, including a 2007 story on him in The New York Times.

Channel 4 sportscaster John Weisbarth won an Emmy in 2006 for a feature story he did on Mr. DiGangi and gave him the award.

"He didn't want to take it at first, but he was very excited about it," Weisbarth said. "He would show the Emmy to anyone who came by (his Coronado condo), whether they wanted to see it or not."

"I never met a friendlier guy. You would see him walking on the boardwalk, and he would kiss every lady, have a warm word and hello for everyone he saw. He was the sweetest guy."

Local baseball historian Bill Swank said that even though he couldn't find official references to Mr. DiGangi in his research, he had met him in recent years and knew him to be a good storyteller.

"Joe was a fascinating man," Swank said. "There's a saying among old ballplayers: 'The older they get, the better they were.' Joe was real old ..."

Mr. DiGangi's son, Joe Jr., said he heard all the stories when he was growing up. "One time we were at a spring-training game in Florida, and Phil Rizzuto walked by and said, 'Hey, Joe, how you doing?' I was staggered that he really, really did know him. He wasn't just a guy in a picture."

Joseph J. DiGangi was born in 1915 in Brooklyn, N.Y. According to the stories on him in The New York Times and the Union-Tribune, he never played in the major leagues, and he passed up a chance to work his way up through the minors because he could make more money as a bricklayer.

In interviews, Mr. DiGangi said he was given the chance to wear the Yankee pinstripes as the bullpen catcher during home games at Yankee Stadium and in spring training. Although it didn't pay much, it was "a dream job for any baseball fan, so I would have taken it for a couple of hot dogs," he said in the Times interview.

His souvenirs included a 1933 Yankee team photo and a picture of him and DiMaggio dressed for a service game during World War II. Mr. DiGangi was a Navy Seabee, and DiMaggio was with the Army Air Forces team.

After the war, Mr. DiGangi; his wife, Constance; and their two children settled in Connecticut, where he worked as a home builder. He later built condominiums in the Virgin Islands. He and his wife retired to Coronado CA in 1988.



Joe DiGangi (L) with Joe DiMaggio in 1941. Joe was a beloved member of the UNICO Chapter and loved to attend the monthly luncheons.

UNICO ART

ARE YOU ARTISTIC?

There are many talented artists in UNICO. Of course, throughout the ages Italians have been some of the most creative and talented people in the world!

Well, if you paint, sculpt, photograph, craft or have any other form of artistic expression you would like to share with your fellow UNICANS - and the world, have we got something for you.

From October 1 to October 3, 2009 we are holding our first-ever L'Arte D'UNICO - Exhibition and Open House at our National Office in Fairfield, NJ.

We want to show-off the talents of our members, and at the same time show-off our re-designed National Office. So, if you have some creative work that you would like to exhibit, this is the perfect opportunity!

We certainly do not want this to be limited to our local membership. So, please contact us from anywhere in the country and we will help to work out the logistics of getting your works on display at L'Arte D'UNICO.

Please put these dates on your calendar and come and visit this celebration of the creativity of our members!

Contact President André at andre@unico.org to participate or for more information.



LOOKING TO REDISCOVER YOUR HERITAGE?

LOOKING TO HELP YOUR COMMUNITY?

JOIN the Organization of Choice!
The Largest
Italian-American
Service Organization
in the United States!

Start a UNICO Chapter today
and become part of the UNICO Family.

Join our Nationwide ranks
supporting charitable efforts like:

- Mental Health
- Cooley's Anemia
- Scholarships
- Cancer Research
- Local Community Needs

1-800-877-1492
UNICO.national@verizon.net
Visit our website at: www.unico.org

ORANGE/WEST ORANGE

GALA EVENT AT MAYFAIR FARMS

The Orange/West Orange Chapter of UNICO National held a gala event on Saturday, June 6, 2009 at the Mayfair Farms in West Orange New Jersey. The event featured the installation of its new officers for the 2009-2010 term, the presentation of three Senior Argento Awards and honoring its UNICAN of the year. Dr. John Nunziato was installed as president of the chapter for the upcoming year. Dr. Nunziato is a graduate of Brookdale Community College and Newark College of Engineering and holds a PhD in Electrical Engineering from Lehigh University. Dr. Nunziato's oath of office was administered by UNICO National Executive Vice President André Demino.

Mr. DiMino was given the honor of presenting the Senior Argento awards to Past National President Frank Cannata, UNICO Foundation President John DiNapoli, and Past Chapter President Vincent Carano. The long-time members of the Orange-West Orange Chapter expressed their gratitude for the honor, but were more grateful for having had the honor to serve the Chapter and the community for more than 25 years.

District Governor Dr. Frank Greco also attended the event and installed the incoming elected board members. The Chapter had the honor of having three Past National Presidents at the gala including Frank Cannata, Paul Alongi and John Alati along with various members of the West Essex, Montville and Verona Chapters.

The UNICAN of the year was Carmine D. Campanile, Esq., a long time member of the Chapter who presently serves as counsel to the UNICO Foundation in addition to being a member of the Chapter's executive board. Frank Paolercio, a well known and long time member of the Chapter was master of Ceremonies and introduced Carmine as UNICAN of the year. Carmine's remarks to the attendees were well received and appropriate for the occasion.

The presentations for the evening concluded with a farewell speech from Mary Scholl, the Chapter's outgoing president and some appropriate remarks from Executive Vice President DiMino. The event's entertainment was provided by the dynamic duo Luigi and Arlette. The exit comments have been very positive featuring many accolades from the attendees.



Left to right: Barbara & Frank Paolercio, Jill & John Nunziato, John the newly installed Chapter president, guest Mya Kaplan.



NJ Distric XI Governor intalling incoming Chapter officers - Sal Anderton, Kristina Massara, Anna Marie Russo, Carmine Campanile, Tony Vecchio (for Nick), Frand DeMaio, John DiNapoli, Carol Cannata, Frank Paolercio.



Senior Argentos - John D. Napoli, Frank Cannata, Vincent Carano.

Can't you read? The score demands "con amore," and what are you doing? You are playing it like married men!

-Arturo Toscanini

I AM AN ITALIAN AMERICAN

The Italian Giovanni da Verrazzano was the first European explorer to pass New York Harbor. The first Italian to live in what is now the United States was Pietro Cesare Alberti, a Venetian sailor, who settled in New York on June 2, 1635. Other Italians played an important role in early United States history. Filippo Mazzei was an important Italian physician and a promoter of liberty, close friend of Thomas Jefferson. He acted as an agent to purchase arms for Virginia during the American Revolutionary War. Throughout the 1800s, Italians arrived in the US in small numbers. Most immigration from Italy occurred in the late 19th and 20th centuries between 1880 and 1960. Most Italian Americans came from Southern Italy: Naples at first and Sicily. Most were rural peasants with little education. Smaller but significant numbers came from the northern regions of Liguria and Veneto.

BRICK NJ

The Brick Chapter will be holding our 1st Annual Columbus Day Golf Tournament on Thursday October 1st 2009. We are doing this in conjunction with our annual Columbus Day Festivities and to commemorate the Official start of October being named "Italian American Heritage Month" in New Jersey.




Brick Chapter UNICO National 1st Annual Columbus Day Charity Golf Tournament

Thursday October 1st 2009
Woodlake Country Club
Lakewood, NJ

1:30 PM Shotgun Start
Hole in One Prize
Italian Buffet Dinner and Program
Awards and Fabulous Raffle Prizes

Individual Golfer \$150.00
Includes lunch, green fees, cart, buffet dinner, awards banquet and door and tee prizes.

Golf Foursome \$550.00
Register your team now!
Hole Sponsor \$50.00 or 3 for \$100.00
Includes prominent sign on a tee box. Maximum of 72 signs for event.

The Brick UNICO Golf Tournament raises money for
UNICO Charities.
Brian Piccolo Scholar Athlete Scholarship
Jimmy Valvano Cancer Fund
Cooley's Anemia Research
Many local charities

For information and applications call 732-779-1567
E-mail- brickunico@gmail.com

*Now we understand much more clearly.
why people from all over the world want to
come to America. It's called freedom.*
-Rudy Giuliani

**The deadline for
contributions to the November
issue of ComUNICO is
October 7th**

Send chapter news
to Matteo Risi at:
e-mail: mmpsd@aol.com

or by mail to:

Matt Risi- UNICO
c/o Minuteman Press
7525 Metropolitan Drive
Suite 303
San Diego, CA 92108
Cell: (619) 993-3913
Fax: (858) 278-9408

ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH IN NEW JERSEY



Finally!!! New Jersey has an Italian American Heritage Month

By Manny Alfano

We have accomplished the first step!

The recent passage of legislation in my home state of New Jersey designating October as Italian American Heritage month marked a brief moment of celebration - but also served as a reminder of how far we have yet to go in promoting our Italian American heritage, and fighting back against negative stereotypes that are pervasive in the mass media.

As someone who has worked for the past two decades in anti-defamation efforts as well as several decades in educational initiatives, I can tell you that while the battle against negative stereotypes is never-ending, the effort to promote positive aspects of our heritage is only in its infancy.

As of the writing of this column, I am currently aware there are still only a handful of states (Illinois, Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania come to mind) at best who have passed similar measures celebrating Italian-American heritage. And, the effort it took to pass this measure in New Jersey— (which has one of the highest ethnic concentrations of Italian Americans in the nation) —was certainly no “cakewalk.” It involved the building of many partnerships with various organizations, the lobbying of many legislators, and a major push just to get the legislation up for a vote before the final session of this year.

Here in New Jersey, the measure was shepherded through the efforts of UNICO National, its Anti Bias Committee (of which I am the chairman), the Italian and Italian American One Voice Coalition, the Order of the Sons of Italy in NJ, The NJ Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission, The Federation of Italian American Societies of NJ, The Coccia Foundation, The Center for Italian and Italian American Culture, Amici Della Lingua Italiana and many other activists.

We also built partnerships among our legislators. We are extremely thankful to the measure’s (Bill SJR-73/AJR-97) sponsors, including: NJ Senators Anthony Bucco, Joseph Vitale, Kevin O’Toole and NJ Assemblymen Frederick Scalera, Gary Chiusano and Scott Rumana. Special thanks goes to NJ Assemblyman Ralph Caputo, who worked directly with UNICO National, on a daily basis, in moving the resolution ahead.

The idea of promoting October as Italian American heritage month on a national level began in 2008 at the UNICO National annual convention. The delegates supported a resolution officially designating October as national Italian American heritage month. They also voted to support the Anti

Bias Committee’s proposal to produce an Italian and Italian American heritage calendar. UNICO National’s President Joseph Agresti, President Kathleen Strozza and Executive VP Andre DiMino supported these two projects. Mr. DiMino will be sworn in as President this July 2009 and one of his goals is to bring these two projects to fruition.

The intent was to recognize the enormous contributions made by Italians and Italian Americans to the Americas and the world, as well as to:

- Show appreciation for our culture and how it has enriched the lives of the people of this country;
- Make people aware of the many struggles Italian Americans have faced; and,
- To celebrate together as one and work to promote, protect and preserve our Italian American Heritage and Culture.

UNICO National had planned on this resolution being the first step in righting unjust treatment by the media, and to give us the chance to tell the “untold” stories of Italians and Italian Americans. However, to our chagrin, we learned that the resolution could not be achieved at the Federal level since Congress previously decided to no longer grant commemorative resolutions.

We then decided to embark on a state by state effort, and as New Jersey is home to so many Italian Americans, we began here.

The measure initially passed the Assembly months ago, and was finally voted on for final passage by the Senate last month (June), after hundreds of calls and e-mails from our network of supporters through the various organizations.

Italian Americans deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. This will be achieved if we stand up and speak with one, united voice against those that have tainted us with the worse type of negative stereotyping. We have an obligation to change this unfair image, an image that judges the majority of law-abiding people by a small minority. Now is the time to turn this around. It will not be easy. It will take time and perseverance.

This change must come about, not only for ourselves but, more importantly, for our children and grandchildren. We now need you to get signatures for petitions making October Italian American and Italian Heritage Month in your own state (if your state does not already recognize it) and with your help I am positive we will succeed! When we do, we will help to support the people in the other states that are working on a resolution in their own state. We can then ask Congress, through the Italian American delegation, to reintroduce our resolution.

If you are interested in doing so, and would like to start a movement to recognize October as Italian American Heritage Month in a state where you live, then please contact me at mannyalfano@comcast.net and we will get you started today.

UNICONational is the nation’s largest Italian American service organization with local chapters throughout the United States. It was founded in Waterbury, Connecticut in 1922. Its volunteer members work to support charitable, educational, and service projects while promoting Italian heritage and combating negative stereotyping. Those individuals who would like information on UNICO National and membership should call 973-808-0035, or visit the organization’s website at www.unico.org

YOUR UNICO FOUNDATION

The UNICO FOUNDATION INC. is a non-profit 501 (C) (3) Corporation. This classification by the IRS, allows various contributions to the FOUNDATION to be tax deductible. The FOUNDATION was incorporated in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1962.

The purpose of the FOUNDATION is to receive, accept and make gifts, donations, grants, award scholarships, fellowships and the like for charitable, educational, literary and religious purposes.

The Trustees of the FOUNDATION consist of (18) eighteen members. The three members that are automatic are the following: President, Executive Vice President and the Director of Scholarship of UNICO National. The remaining Trustees are elected for a three year term by the regular members of the FOUNDATION. The election will take place at the annual Convention. Any state with a Chapter can submit a candidate for the Board of Trustees. States having more than 500 members are allowed 2 members on the Board. At the National Convention, the Trustees will meet and elect from its membership the following officers for a one year term: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Scholarships are our number one project. Each year the FOUNDATION grants six scholarships. There is one for post graduate in medicine, and one for post graduate studies. The other four are for undergraduate studies for four years. We have made substantial grants to Cooley’s Anemia, mental health and the V Foundation. We have raised large amounts of Funds for earthquake victims in Italy, in addition to many other worthwhile causes. The FOUNDATION also has been instrumental in raising funds for various Italian Studies Chairs at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey, Cal State University, Long Beach, California and the Stony Brook University, Long Island, New York. Every member of UNICO National is also a member of the UNICO FOUNDATION.

GRANT RECIPIENTS

‘V’ Foundation
Montclair State University
Children’s Hospital of Pennsylvania
Bergen County Special Services
ECLC Foundation
Sinai School
Casa Italia – IAA Veterans Museum & Library
St Jude Hospital
Friendship House
Mt. Sinai School of Medicine – Dr. Battista
Student Scholarships

The term "America" is derived from the Italian first name Amerigo, after the Italian cartographer and explorer Amerigo Vespucci. Vespucci is credited with proving that Columbus' islands of the New World were in fact a new continent. In 1507, Martin Waldseemüller created a map naming the new continent after Amerigo Vespucci.

MERRIMACK VALLEY MA

2009 SCHOLARSHIPS

The Merrimack Valley chapter of UNICO has distributed over \$375,000 in scholarships and community service awards over the past 20 years.

Scholarships have been given to students of Italian heritage throughout the Merrimack Valley. Scholarships traditionally been given through guidance counselors of the school systems both public and private.

The mission of the Merrimack Valley Chapter is to promote and enhance the image of Italian Americans; for members to be of service to the community; to promote Italian heritage and culture; to promote, support and assist charitable, scientific, cultural, educational, and literary projects; to promote members interest in public welfare and to cooperate with others in civic, social and cultural development.

According to President Joe Giordano, "We are very proud of our scholarship winners for 2009. These young people represent our best and our brightest, our hope for the future."

Mark L. Lalli - Haverhill High
Emily F. Guadiano - Central Catholic
Lauren E. Conti - North Andover High
Kiley F. Perrone - Methuen High
Maria C. Fiore - Lawrence High
Marissa J. Orlando - Haverhill High
Nicholas W. Galat - Andover High
Sarah Angell - St. Ann's Staff

On a National Level, The Dr. Benjamin J. Cottone Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Steven Constantino of Merrimack, Massachusetts who was originally sponsored by the Merrimack Valley MA Chapter. The Cottone Scholarship is awarded to a deserving medical student. Steven is entering his second year at Tufts Medical School in Somerville, Mass.

For more information regarding UNICO of Merrimack Valley, please contact Frank Firicano, (978) 681-8686



(L-R) (front row) Marissa J. Orlando, Emily F. Guadiano, Kiley F. Perrone, Maria C. Fiore. (back row) Nick Ardagna (Scholarship Committee), Sarah Angell, Mark L. Lalli, Nicholas W. Galat, President Joe Giordano.

MEMPHIS TN IN LAS VEGAS!

Members of the Memphis TN chapter took full advantage of the opportunity to enjoy the wonderful social activities at the national convention at Lake Las Vegas!



MERRIMACK VALLEY MA



(L-R) Joe Giordano (Chapter President), Steven Constantino, Mark Marroni (Scholarship Chairman).

FAIRFIELD NJ

FOUR WEST ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GIVEN SCHOLARSHIPS

Fairfield UNICO held their annual golf outing on June 16th 2009. The event was a great success and raised enough money to sponsor four students at West Essex High School each with \$1000 scholarships. Proceeds from the golf outing were also used to make donations to various charities such as the Cheer Me Up Foundation, Cans for Cancer, and the Relay for Life. The chapter also held their annual softball game with the Bloomfield Special Needs Recreation for Young Adults. A lot of fun was had by all. Afterwards, the softball team went to St. Thomas Moore Church Carnival. The food and rides at the carnival were sponsored by the Fairfield Chapter.

The President of Fairfield UNICO, Fred Mongelli, wanted to publicly thank to thank the members of his chapter in ComUNICO for having such a very succesful year.



(L-R) Jim Gasparini, Rich Del Russo and Gerry Longo.



John Laforgia and Pete Franzi.



Joe Brango and Tony Pompei.



(L-R) Joe Catenaro, John Notte and a happy guest.



(L-R) Lenny Russo, Tony Polifonte, Pete Franzi and Tony Pompei.



(L-R) Presenter Sergeant at Arms Bruce Puleo and West Essex Students Alexandria Trovato, Joseph Gasparini and Michael Fede.



Fairfield UNICO members and the Bloomfield team.



Fairfield UNICO President, Fred Mongelli, receiving a thank you plaque from the Bloomfield team.



(L-R) Tony Romandeito, Mr. Gambichler, Rich Del Russo, Meghan Gambichler, Joe Brango and Jeff Overton who lead the Cans for Cancer campaign.



Back row: Pete Franzi, Fred Mongelli, Jeff Overton, Joe Brango, Rich Del Russo and Mr. Gambichler, Front row: Tony Romandeito, Meghan in the center with friends.

**Charitable donations
to UNICO charities
are tax deductible!**

Send your contributions to
UNICO Foundation
271 US Highway 46, Suite
A-108, Fairfield, NJ 07004.

VERONA, NJ

36TH ANNUAL AWARDS

At the 36th Annual Awards dinner held in June new members were installed and scholarships were presented to local high school students and the UNICAN of the Year was honored.

Each Student received a \$1,000 scholarship.



Standing: President Lisa Adubato, new member Larry Colombo, First Vice President Linda Gail Alati, new members Frank Di Rocco and Michael Pescatore and National Executive Vice President André DiMino.

Seated: New members Bonnie Sharkey and Barbara Di Rocco.



UNICAN of the Year Nancy Magrans and her sister-Denise Palmaro.



The Verona UNICO Scholarship Committee members:

Standing: Anthony Di Giacinto, Donna Kiel, Robert Petrocine, Committee Chair Nancy Magrans and President Lisa Adubato.

Seated-scholarship winners: Ryan Papera, Andrea Lauckner, Taylor Zebrowski and Briana Theobald.

SAN DIEGO, CA

JUNE BRUNCH AT CASTELLO MASCI

On a lazy Sunday in June, San Diego UNICO enjoyed a family brunch at the home of Barry and Diane Masci. Castello Masci was the perfect venue for the event. Members and guests enjoyed the Southern California sun and the amazing delectacies that magically appeared at the buffet table. The weather and the ambiance were perfect!



Host Barry Masci runs his mesquite wood fired grill with the authority of Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra.



Milan and Joan Floribus enjoy the afternoon.



Michael Dullea introduces his son to the Italian tradition of the great big Sunday afternoon meal!

FOLLOW PRESIDENT ANDRE ON TWITTER !

That's right - keep up to date - literally, with all of President André's activities and journeys as UNICO National President by following him on Twitter. President André has established a UNICO National President account on Twitter so that he can send regular Tweets to our members. He will be sending out Tweets about important dates, meetings he is attending, insider tips and suggestions and info that's important to UNICO members across the country, and lots of other items.

If you haven't "Twitter'ed" before - don't worry, it's not difficult and ITS FREE! Just go to:

www.twitter.com/andreUNICOPrez

and sign-up for a free Twitter account. Then "follow" André. You can get his Tweets on your Twitter account as well as set it up to receive Tweets by both email and/or your cell phone.

Remember, each Tweet is only 140 characters long so it would take just a second to read each message. André will use this new medium as a way to improve communication with all of you. If you recall, it was through Twitter that some of the most important information got out to the world about some recent international happenings. As a National organization, it is essential for us to use every means available to improve our connection with our membership.

So, please go to Twitter and follow President André!!!

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers who are known as followers. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow open access.

PARLIAMO UNICO

PNP- Past National President

DG- District Governor

ERDC- Eastern Regional District

Chair. There is also a chair for the Midwest and Western Regions.

ERDM- Eastern Regional District

Meeting. There is a Western Regional District Meeting. The Midwest District Meeting is held at the same time as our Mid-Year Executive Board Meeting and UNICO Foundation Meeting.

If you want the message of love to be heard, it has got to be sent out. To keep a lamp burning, we have to keep putting oil in it.

-Mother Teresa

ANTI-BIAS



I wish to thank President Kathleen Strozza for the honor and opportunity to serve as her national Anti-Bias Committee (ABC) Chairman.

Once again we had an extremely productive year as was reported via e-mail. This could not have been accomplished without

an active, dedicated committee, our ABC network, ABC State Chairpersons and the coverage by ComUnico and the cooperation among the other activists and groups. Unicans that wish a daily up date should subscribe to:

ABCUnicoMembers-subscribe@yahoo-groups.com.

Mille Grazie Award

This year our Eastern Region Award was presented to André DiMino at the Eastern Regional Meeting. The Midwest award was presented to Joseph Maselli at the combined Board of Directors and Midwest Regional meeting in New Orleans.

5,000 Miles From Home

The ABC and the Belleville Chapter of UNICO sponsored a viewing of the film *5,000 Miles From Home*. This documentary was about Italian Americans from Chicago who go off to fight in WWII for America. It was shown free at the library in Belleville, NJ on Monday, April 20th 2009.

Italian Heritage Month in October

We had planned on a *National Italian and Italian American Heritage Month Resolution* being the first step in righting the unjust treatment by the media and to give us the chance to tell the "untold" stories of Italians and Italian Americans. However, to our chagrin, we learned that the resolution could not be achieved at the Federal level since the United States Congress previously decided to no longer grant commemorative resolutions.

The ABC is asking that each UNICO chapter work at getting October Italian American and Italian Heritage Month in there own state. We can then ask the United States Congress, through the Italian American delegation, to re-introduce our resolution.

New Jersey Italian American Heritage Month

The legislators of New Jersey have designated October as Italian American Heritage month.

A special thank you to all the UNICANS and their friends and families. You are making a difference. We also thank the Italian and Italian American One Voice Coalition, the Order of the Sons of Italy in NJ, The NJ Italian, the

Italian American Heritage Commission, the Federation of Italian American Societies of NJ, the Coccia Foundation, the Center for Italian and Italian American Culture, Amici Della Lingua Italiana and many other activists.

Stereotyping- The Good, The Bad and the Ugly!

-Family Guy Television Cartoon

A comment was made on an episode where the main character, Peter Griffin, created a church called "The Fonz" and was recruiting members to the church and he couldn't believe how many people joined. The talking baby character, Stewie Griffin, commented, "After all who doesn't want to be Italian and stupid." Letters and e-mails were sent to Fox News Corporation to express discontent of the degrading comment about Italian-Americans.

-New York Post Article: Italian Americans- Still Fair Game for Cheap Laughs By Phil Mushnick

PNP Frank Canatta wrote to this reporter to thank him for his article:

Dear Mr. Mushnick

As an Italian-American I applaud your column, 'Yes, You Can Say That. About Them.' It is long overdue. You correctly point out many of the things we have been saying for many years. All we want people to do is apply the same standards of decency to us, that they do for every other, racial, religious and ethnic group that makeup our multi-cultural society.

It is a good to see a journalist, point not only the unfairness but the total lack of decency, exhibited by Chris Berman.

May you and your family enjoy all that is good during the Holiday Season!

-Verizon Wireless aired a TV commercial with stereotypes of Italian-Americans depicting them as ignorant mafioso types.

We thank Joe Saracino of Verizon Wireless for pulling the ad!

-Denny's Restaurants

What could easily have been a scene from the Sopranos series turns bad with a squirt or two or three of canned whipped cream. A Martin Scorsese look-a-like starts the conversation: "I've got a feeling Benny talked...."

-New York Knicks music irks Gallinari

Danilo Gallinari gave the crowd a thumbs-up for its support but he's not as excited about the music selection the Knicks are using after he scores. Gallinari scored nine points, including his first NBA dunk in a 102-98 win over the Chicago Bulls. After each of his four baskets, the Knicks' long-time public address announcer Mike Walczewski, using a thick Italian accent, said "Daneeelo Gal-lin-ar-ay" and then played the Italian songs "Volare" or "That's Amore." When asked about hearing his name, Gallinari said: "I need to talk a little bit with them about that. Because it's not so good, the pronunciation. I will talk about that. As for the music, no, not so good." Mike D'Antoni was somewhat surprised by the music selection himself and looked at the scorer's table after Gallinari's first basket. Apparently, Gallinari would prefer

to hear a more updated, age-appropriate song. Also, the Italian journalists who attend Gallinari's home games said the song stereotypes Italians.

-Washington Post Kinsley: column,

A Bailout You Can't Refuse printed in the March 6th edition of the Washington Post was neither amusing nor funny. It might have been intended to be a spoof on the President's bailout program, but he only succeeded in denigrating the entire Italian American community.

-Brown University

Brown University replaced their Columbus Day Holiday with a "Fall Weekend Celebration." Ruth J. Simmons, President of Brown University, did respond to an e-mail from UNICO National President André DiMino. She stated that students and faculty voted to remove Columbus Day from the name of the holiday weekend.

-Burger King

Burger King was quick to scrap an offensive ad when bombarded with complaints!

-Curtis Sliwa's remarks about the Italian-American Museum

The founder of the Guardian Angels questioned the value of an Italian American Museum on his radio program. His tone was sarcastic. He was quick to apologize and meet with UNICO leadership.

-Red Bull Advertisement

Miller/Coors is the parent company of the Red Bull energy drink and they quickly pulled an offensive television ad off the air.

- Chris Christie stands up for Italian Americans!

Christopher J. Christie (born September 6, 1962) is a former United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey and is the Republican nominee for Governor of New Jersey in the 2009 election. Chris Christie took offence to a comment made by Steve Cohen (D-TN) who said during congressional hearings that "Christie made them an offer they couldn't refuse." This is a famous line from the Godfather movie. Christie responded that the comment Cohen made was ethnically insensitive to Italian Americans.

Cohen sarcastically replied that he did not know that Christie was of Italian descent. Chris Christie could have ignored that comment but didn't and pressed the point that Cohen's previous remarks were insensitive to Italian-Americans.

When Italian Americans are defamed, stereotyped and ridiculed by the media and the entertainment community it's called a parody and/or satire. Italian Americans that are offended are then told to lighten up!

If it's about almost any other another group such stereotyping is called bigotry.

Emanuele Alfano
(973) 429-2818
Mannyalfano@comcast.net

PLAINFIELDS, NJ

JUNE 24 MEETING AT GIOVANNA'S RISTORANTE



New Plainfields UNICO President Anthony Bengivenga (C) was sworn in by Plainfields UNICO Founder and past UNICO National President, Renato Biribin (L) and previous Plainfields UNICO President Robert Bengivenga Sr. (R).



Robert Matticola, Director of Homeland Security and Safety and Compliance Coordinator for NY Waterway (second from right, holding award) was honored by Plainfields UNICO for his efforts in ordering the ferries which responded on the scene to rescue passengers from US Airways Flight 1549 which performed a miraculously safe emergency landing in the Hudson River on January 15th. Matticola, an Italian-American is also a 1984 graduate of South Plainfield High School and a current resident in that municipality. Also pictured: (l. to r.) Plainfields UNICO member Anthony Cotoia, past Plainfields UNICO President Robert Bengivenga Sr., and Renato Biribin (far right), Plainfields UNICO founder and Past UNICO National President.

UNICO was founded on October 10, 1922 in Waterbury, Connecticut. A group of 15 men, led by Dr. Anthony P. Vastola, came together to create what has become a very special and very proud organization. It was Dr. Vastola's dream to create an Italian American service organization to engage in charitable works, support higher education, and perform patriotic deeds.



The New Plainfields UNICO officers took their oaths for their respective 2009-2010 terms led by past National President and Plainfields UNICO member Frank Licato who is holding the program booklet.



Bettina Dubas (second from left) was sworn in and welcomed as a new member by past chapter president Robert Bengivenga Jr. (far left), Immaculata Carotenuto (third from left), a Plainfields UNICO member who is also her sister, Mike Collucci, Plainfields UNICO Sergeant at Arms (fourth from left), and Renato Biribin, Plainfields UNICO founder and Past UNICO National President.

VERONA, NJ

MAY MEETING

At the May meeting donations were made to local Charities.



President Lisa Adubato and Fundraising Chair Tom Malanga present a \$1,000 check to a member of the Essex Running Club to benefit a runner seriously injured in an accident.



President Lisa Adubato presents donations to representatives of the Verona Police and Fire Departments and to the Verona Children's Fund.

GREATER RAMSEY

Charity Di Vino A Wine Tasting Event

The Greater Ramsey Chapter invites you to attend our Wine Tasting to benefit Gilda's Club Northern New Jersey and Shelter our Sisters

Thursday, September 17, 2009
Sheraton Crossroads, Mahwah, NJ
7:00 pm to 10:00 pm
\$60 in advance
\$75 pp at the door
Buy 5 tickets and get the 6th ticket free

To register or for more information, Call 201-739-2445
or visit us at:
www.unico.org/files/winetasting.pdf

HAZLETON PA

UNICO HAZLETON FESTA D'ITALIANO



**Visit our UNICO
National Website:
UNICO.ORG**

SAN DIEGO CA

BRIAN PICCOLO SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The San Diego chapter of UNICO awarded scholarships to four students of Italian-American heritage at its annual awards ceremony and dinner held on June 7. Anthony Bickett of El Cajon, Sara Frondoni of Carlsbad, Kaitlyn Quigley of Vista and Michael McGlenn of San Diego each earned a \$1,500 Anthony Furlano Scholarship Award acknowledging their accomplishments in athletic and academic achievement and community service. More than 50 high school seniors from throughout the San Diego area applied for the scholarships.

Anthony Bickett of West Hills High School in Santee will study biomedical engineering at UC Davis in preparation for a career in medicine. Bickett is a member of the National Society of High School Scholars. He played baseball and football at West Hills High and was a volunteer at Sharp Grossmont Hospital in La Mesa.

Sara Frondoni of La Costa Canyon High School in Carlsbad will pursue vocal performance and broadcast journalism at USC. She played recreational soccer and was a member of La Costa Canyon's water polo team. Frondoni participated in musical theater, opera and dance during her high school career. She sang the national anthem at the CIF high school football championship at Qualcomm Stadium in 2008 and sang at the 250th Mozart Anniversary Choir Festival in Austria in 2006.

Kaitlyn Quigley of Rancho Buena Vista High School in Vista will continue her interest in environmental film-making and broadcasting at the University of Victoria in Canada. She played volleyball, basketball and softball and was a member of the track and surf teams at Rancho Buena Vista. Her community service activities include Amnesty International, Sierra Club, Equality for All and Invisible Children.

Michael McGlenn of Saint Augustine High School in San Diego is headed to San Diego State University to study psychology after 2 years as a member of the Union Tribune Student-Athlete All-Academic Team. McGlenn participated in cross country and

track throughout his high school career. He is an Eagle Scout and contributed 135 hours of community service time on behalf of Saint Augustine High School.

"We are proud to recognize the accomplishments of these students, who reflect the commitment to community, family and education which are central to the Italian-American heritage, said James Pieri, Jr., President of the San Diego Chapter of UNICO."

The venue for the dinner was the University Club perched high above the city at the top of Symphony Towers. Members and guests enjoyed a great dinner and live musical entertainment. Young teen prodigy Brian Pado played the piano and our talented scholar Sara Frondoni did some impromptu singing!



The San Diego Chapter awarded scholarships to four students.



Frank Turlo served as our master of Ceremonies.



Scholar Sara Frondini sang as young Brian Pado played piano.



Sue and Tony Prete enjoyed the dinner and awards presentation.

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

(Continued from Page 2)

experience, that young people have a strong interest in their Italian heritage. This is our opportunity to bring UNICO to more young people and more young people into UNICO. We should expand our efforts in bringing in regular youth members as well as increasing the number of ACES groups around the country. I am pleased that my own chapter, Woodcliff Lake, is launching an ACES program this fall and I challenge all chapters to launch an ACES program this year. To help you in your youth efforts, we have an energetic and dedicated young member who has excelled on the local level with her involvement in the Point Pleasant Chapter. She has now stepped forward to bring her energy and dedication to the National level. I am pleased to tell you that my appointment as chair of our National Youth Committee is Marissa Gynn. Please work with Marissa in starting an ACES program in your chapter and at attracting more young members to join UNICO.

Of course, growth definitely comes from starting new Chapters through our Expansion efforts. This past year, our Expansion Director, Gerry Heytink, has done an outstanding job in chartering several new chapters. Bravo, Gerry! He has committed to me that he will continue his efforts this coming year. Gerry certainly can use everyone’s help in chartering new chapters. But, here’s my challenge to Gerry and everyone: We currently have chapters in 18 states. I know that Gerry has prospects in 7 more states and in Puerto Rico. My goal is for UNICO to have Chapters in a majority of the country during my term. With 50 States that means we need to charter chapters in 8 more states! With prospects in 7 already, and with Gerry’s diligent efforts and your help, I know we can meet this challenge and achieve this goal.

• The third word - Outreach

Many have commented that UNICO is the best kept secret in the country. I have heard from many of our own members that UNICO should be more well-known with higher visibility, both locally and nationally. I believe one of the reasons for this is that we have been guilty in the past of not “tooting our own horn.” I don’t think anyone would deny that if we had higher visibility and notoriety it would assist us in our charitable work and community service. Therefore, we need to significantly ramp-up our Outreach.

It was not that long ago that a National President launched an effort at building higher visibility for UNICO on the national scene. Through his efforts, UNICO achieved recognition as one of the major Italian American organizations in the country. I would like to expand on this effort and I have asked that Past National President, John Alati, to serve as Presidential Liaison for Public Affairs.

Another facet of our outreach has been through our recognition of an outstanding person from the armed services with our Basilone Award over the past several years. At a recent meeting of the Executive Committee it was determined that we should have a constitutional amendment to make this award

permanent. I believe that is a good first step. But, I would like to see even more outreach to our armed services and veterans. To help in that goal, I have asked Frank Cannata to serve as Armed Services Liaison.

The last part of my plan to expand outreach is to significantly elevate our public identity and public exposure. As a national organization we are way behind the times in this regard. We need a concerted and active effort in public relations, publicity and a wider presence in electronic media vehicles such as Twitter, Facebook, our web site and other venues – because in today’s world, if you are not there, you are nowhere. But, to do that correctly, we need someone at a National Officer level, that will concentrate their efforts on this full-time. Establishing a new National Officer requires a constitutional amendment and I am pleased that the Belleville Chapter will be putting forth such an amendment to support my goals. Between now and the establishment of this new officer position, I will be appointing someone to act as our Director of Communications and be responsible for our public exposure and public identity.

So those are my challenges to you under the three words of Continuity, Growth and Outreach. Now onto the “Essential Re-Commitment” to “Our Shared Heritage, Our Shared Pride.”

We do an outstanding job each year in all of our service activities both locally and nationally, for scholarships, charities and community service. I really don’t see the need to encourage you further in this regard - just keep doing what you have been doing! But, we do need to re-commit ourselves to promoting, preserving, celebrating and enjoying our rich and proud Italian heritage. It is time for us to launch an “Essential Re-Commitment” to “Our Shared Heritage, Our Shared Pride”.

Of course, we already do certain things for our heritage and culture and we do them well. Our efforts in launching Italian Studies chairs; our Columbus Day events around the country; our success in securing the permanent recognition of October as Italian and Italian American Heritage month in New Jersey and hopefully in other states; the diligent work of our Anti-Bias Committee and Dr. Manny Alfano in defending against negative portrayals of our heritage and culture as well as through positive initiatives such as the Mille Grazie award and through our most recent exciting project of publishing our Italian and Italian American Heritage Calendar which you will hear more about in the coming months. But, we can’t stop there!

UNICO should be the “standard-bearer” of our rich and proud Italian American heritage and culture. To that end we need to do more, and we have to find more ways to meet this goal.

So here are my challenges to you.

Last year I launched a comprehensive program for conducting a “Rediscover Your Italian Heritage” event that is available to everyone in a step-by-step PowerPoint Presentation. My own chapter, Woodcliff Lake, conducted this program and it was very successful in providing a positive community

event promoting and celebrating our heritage while serving as an excellent recruiting tool bringing motivated new members into the chapter. In fact, thanks to Linda-Gail Alati, the Verona Chapter was the first chapter to successfully replicate this event. So my challenge to you is that in the next 10 months I am expecting each and every chapter to conduct a “Rediscover Your Italian Heritage” event. Just follow the step-by-step guide and I know you will be successful. If you need help, just let me know – but please do it!

Another initiative that we will launch is what I call “L’Arte D’UNICO.” Throughout history Italians have created beautiful works of art proving that artistic expression and creativity are certainly part of our culture and heritage. In fact, I know we have some very talented people in UNICO that are painters, photographers, sculptors and crafters, expressing their creativity through many forms of artistic expression. We also have a great looking National Office that many people just don’t have the chance to see. Well, we are going to “kill two birds with one stone!” We will be inviting our talented UNICANS to exhibit their work at an Exhibition and Open House at our National Office. The first of these is scheduled for October 1 to 3. If you would like to exhibit your work please get in touch with me right away. More info on our L’Arte D’UNICO Exhibition and Open House will be coming to you soon.

Next, I have a somewhat bigger challenge - but I know that you are up to it! We are so fortunate to have many UNICO members who were born in Italy. I salute and respect all of these members as our closest connection to our proud Italian heritage. However, to foster a greater connection to our heritage I am asking each chapter to establish a connection with a city or town in Italy. I know that some of our chapters have already done so and are enjoying the benefits of this direct connection to the land of our heritage. By establishing a relationship with a “brother” or “sister” town or city, you can achieve a stronger connection with your heritage. I realize that this may be a big undertaking, but on the National level we will do our best to assist you in this regard through contact with Italian consulates and other offices that can help us achieve this goal.

In addition to these specific challenges, we must look for more ways for UNICO to be the standard-bearer of our Italian American Heritage. Look into your own Italian roots, learn to speak Italian, promote Italian cultural events, celebrate your heritage and culture! I am so proud of my Italian Heritage! I consider it to be my responsibility to promote and preserve our rich heritage. And, now I ask each and every one of you to join me in our “Essential Re-Commitment” to “Our Shared Heritage, Our Shared Pride!”

Thanks for your support and thanks for your continued commitment to our beloved UNICO!

*Do you wish to rise? Begin by descending.
You plan a tower that will pierce the clouds?
Lay first the foundation of humility.*

-Saint Augustine

PASSAIC VALLEY NJ

RELAY FOR LIFE FUNDRAISING WALK



The Passaic Valley Chapter Relay For Life Team.

Members of the Passaic Valley Chapter walked overnight in a fundraising effort to help the American Cancer Society

Held at Passaic Valley High School in Little Falls, NJ, chapter members camped out, walked, slept, and walked even more to help raise money in a joint effort with other local organizations and teams. Over \$35,000 was raised over the weekend. More pictures can

be seen on the Passaic Valley Chapter Website www.PVUNICO.com

More members walked that are shown in the picture/pictures that came with this story.



Kathy Masone, 1st VP of the Passaic Valley Chapter helping out in a Relay for Life Fundraising Walk.



Carol Verrone (Freckles the Clown) and Pat Pelonero (UNICO National Office Manager) ... Both involved and helping the Passaic Valley Chapter in an American Cancer Society Relay for Life Walk.



John Morano on the sax providing some Relay for Life entertainment.

BOOK REVIEW

“ELIZABETH STREET: A NOVEL BASED ON TRUE EVENTS”



Reviewed
by Marianne
Lalli Regan

Laurie Fabiano has written the book that we all wish we could write. She has me-

ticulously researched her great-grandmother's journey from her home in Scilla, Calabria “in the toe” of the boot, to the halls of Ellis Island, and finally, to the tenements of Little Italy in Manhattan's lower east side. Mixing factual history with historical fiction, Fabiano has created a compelling story that except for the names of the main characters, could be yours or mine.

Fabiano's great-grandmother, Giovanna Costa Pontilla Siena, meets with the very real Lieutenant Giuseppe Petrosino, Little Italy's own crusading cop. Her path crosses with “Il Lupo” fictional or factional head of one of the branches of La Mano Nero, a loosely organized group of thieves and worse, who preyed on the poor Italian immigrants. Fabiano describes

what it was like to live in the immigrant neighborhoods where one block was Italian, the next one over was Irish, the next one past that was Chinese, and perhaps the next one over from that was Jewish. How the immigrant families helped one another and, unfortunately, some who also preyed upon one another.

Delving into the history of “La Mano Nero,” Fabiano learns that it was originally formed in Spain during the Spanish Inquisition. It began as a secret society which fought the government and the church. Around 1888, a reporter who worked for the The New York Herald used the term in a story on an unsolved murder in Manhattan's Italian community and breathed new life into the mystique of La Mano Nero. Some say this was the precursor to what later became the Mafia. To be blackmailed or threatened by La Mano Nero was to be “black handed.” Fear and superstition among the newly arrived immigrants, as well as the influx of criminals who fled Italy and entered unchecked into this country, allowed the gangs to thrive and prosper. Because it was all so loosely organized, it was not uncommon for a shopkeeper to be black handed by three different crooks at the same time, all promising protection against one another!

Fabiano's grandmother, Angela, daughter of Giovanna and Rocco Siena, was kidnapped by La Mano Nero and held for ransom for three months. During all of Fabiano's life, she can remember her grandmother being reticent to talk about that time and it wasn't until recently that the entire story came out, describing a dark part of her family's history. Fabiano's forceful narrative keeps you reading far into the night until you are assured that everyone is safe and sound.

Of course, no personal story of this magnitude would be complete without a trip to the “old country” to find any living relatives. Fabiano does that, by going to Scilla and meeting up with both her Grandmother's side of the family and her Grandfather's side, and learns that not only are they cousins, but that her family tree has many such intertwined connections. She is surrounded by people who instantly love and accept her just because she is family, and who provide many of the missing links in her family's history.

A thoroughly enjoyable novel, and one you'll want to pass on to friends and family. For more information on the immigrant experience, a good companion read is “Island of Hope, Island of Tears,” by David M. and Douglas L. Brownstone, and Irene M. Franck. This book is a collection of personal interviews of actual immigrants of all nationalities and offers a glimpse of what it was like to actually go through the entire process of entering this country during those hectic years of uncontrolled migration from Europe. Fascinating reading and it makes you appreciate this great and welcoming country of ours.

Elizabeth Street:
A Novel Based On True Events
Laurie Fabiano
Fig Books, 2006
ISBN: 978-1-4421-5261-8

Island of Hope, Island of Tears
David M. Brownstone, Irene M. Franck, and
Douglass L. Brownstone
2003, Barnes & Noble
ISBN-13: 9781586635787

WELCOME TO LAKE LAS VEGAS!



This year's UNICO National Convention was wonderful. The event was the culmination of hundreds of hours of hard work by the 2009 Convention Committee led by Paul Alongi. The Ritz Carlton Hotel at Lake Las Vegas was an ideal venue. All of our meetings were productive and our social events were great fun.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT ICE BREAKER



PRE-CONVENTION GOLF



REGISTRATION



CONVENTION SATURDAY NIGHT INAUGURAL BALL



The very impressive full dais at our Saturday night Inaugural Ball. The evening was perfect!



Buddy Fortunato receives the Antonio R. Rizzuto Award presented to a non-UNICAN who contributes to the betterment of mankind.



Deana Martin is the daughter of famous Italian American singer Dean Martin. President André presented a Presidential Award of Merit to Deana.



Jenny DiMino with the Moranos. John has served for many years as the UNICO National Sergeant-At-Arms



Jenny DiMino was moved to tears during her first address to the convention crowd as the new First Lady of UNICO. Jenny expressed her sincere love for UNICO and her Italian heritage.



Marine Corps Aviator, Captain Jarrod DePasquale receives the Basilone Freedom Award.



Joseph V. Scelsa accepts the Joseph P. Cianci Humanitarian Award. He is the founder of the Italian American Museum in New York City.



The first official photograph of President André and First Lady Jenny.



Past National Presidents at the Inaugural Ball.



The Passaic Valley NJ Chapter of UNICO.



PNP Anthony Fornelli at the podium.



The new National Officers for the 2009-2010 year. Congratulations and thank you for your service!

CONVENTION SATURDAY NIGHT INAUGURAL BALL- TIME TO CELEBRATE!



Striking a pose at the Inaugural Ball! (L-R) Vince Lombardi Award winner and NFL Super Bowl quarterback Vince Ferragamo, Jodi Ferragamo, Deana Martin and John Griffeth and President André and First Lady Jenny.



OPENING SESSION ON THE CONVENTION FLOOR



UNICO is an Italian American organization and we celebrated our patriotism with the singing of the Star Spangled Banner during opening ceremonies.



An impressive military color guard from Nellis Air Force base presented the colors.



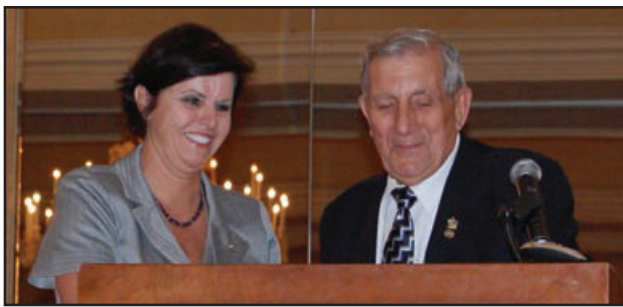
Members of UNICO reflect on their blessings as the opening prayer was delivered.



Delegates anticipate the high energy and fun of the politics of the convention floor!



President Kathi Strozza is escorted into the convention hall by several Past National Presidents.



President Kathi Strozza and Past National President Michael D'Arminio.



2009 Convention Chairman, Paul Alongi, welcomes the UNICO delegates from across the country to Lake Las Vegas. Paul deserves great credit for organizing such a splendid convention.



Three of our past national presidents (PNPs) sitting at the PNP Table.



Our National Vice Presidents keenly watch the proceeding from the head dais.



Nina Held makes a point while Tony Fornelli waits for his turn at the microphone.



André DiMino and Kathi Strozza with Andy A. Hafen who is the Mayor of Henderson NV. The Ritz Carlton Hotel at Lake Las Vegas is actually located in Henderson, a fast growing suburb of Las Vegas.

AWARDS LUNCHEON



André DiMino with awardees Vince Ferragamo, Rich Ruffalo and Joe Hathaway.



The Verona NJ Chapter receives an award.



President Kathi Strozza presents an award to the Woodcliff Lake Chapter.



Western Regional Chair Jim DeSpensa (C) and UNICO National Treasurer Frank Greco (R) enjoy the program.



President Kathi Strozza with Portland OR president Joanne Gallo and UNICO National Expansion Chair Gerry Heytink.



Executive Vice-President, Chris DiMattio, served as the Master of Ceremonies for the Awards Luncheon.

There's a new sheriff in town...

...and he's bringin' the Mrs!



*Congratulations
and best wishes to
incoming **UNICO**
National President*

Andre' DiMino

*and
First Lady Jenny*

*From your
"hired hands" at*



ADMTronics[®]
unlimited inc.

www.admtronics.com

Service Above Self.



MEMPHIS TN

ANNUAL GOLF FUNDRAISER



The UNICO Memphis Chapter had a fun and prosperous Annual Golf Tournament at Wedgewood Country Club in Southaven, MS on June 5, 2009. As one of the chapter's largest fund raisers, the chapter raised over \$7,400 during this event. Michael Spano, chaired the golf tournament committee and many UNICO Memphis members and other volunteers assisted either with their time or donations including: Michael and Linda Spano, Ron and Regina Giometti, Giometti's grandson, Ron and Kathy Poletti, Mike and Gerri Camurati, Bobby Cross, Sharon Thompson, Ray and Lou Ricossa, Angelo Lucchesi, Frank Navarra and Gayle Ward. "Thanks" goes to all who assisted, members that enlisted golf teams, the golfers that played and the sponsors that donated.

The tournament offered a chance to win a 2009 Honda FIT car for a hole in one but unfortunately nobody won. UNICO Memphis members cooked hot dogs for lunch and we had Spaghetti catered in for the dinner at the end of the day. After the dinner, Michael Spano, announced the winners for the day and gift certificates were presented to the winners. All in all it was a successful fund raiser and fun day for everyone.



MEMPHIS TN

BRIAN PICCOLO AWARD



The Brian Piccolo Award was established in 1977 by UNICO Memphis to honor this Italian American's achievements, which have become synonymous with courage. Our recipient this year is Maria Tucci, the daughter of Gail and the late Peter Tucci. Maria just graduated from St. Benedict's High School where she maintained a 4.0 average in an honor track program. She is not only an exemplary student and citizen, but a gifted athlete. Maria played tennis for 4 years and was instrumental in helping her team advance to the play-offs and secure a winning record for the year.

She was a student Ambassador, VP of SADD, a member of the National Honor Society, and Retreat Leader. Furthermore, her winning the Bobby Russell Scholarship Essay Contest was most noteworthy. She expressed her gratitude for the faculty's great concern and prayers for her father. Her essay expressed how special a Catholic education was to her and how it should be appreciated by all fortunate enough to have one.

To paraphrase Brian Piccolo, "There are so many ups and downs along my road. You've got to believe in yourself, not to show anybody else, but just to prove it to yourself." Maria has done this. UNICO Memphis was honored to present to Maria the Brian Piccolo Award.

WHAT IS NIAF ?

The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational foundation that promotes Italian American culture and heritage. NIAF serves as a resource on the Italian American community and has educational and youth programs including scholarships, grants, heritage travel, and mentoring.

NIAF is also the voice for Italian Americans in Washington, DC and works closely with the Italian American Congressional Delegation and the White House. NIAF's mission includes advancing US - Italy business, political, and cultural relations and has a business council that promotes networking with corporate leaders.

The NIAF was founded in 1975 with offices in Washington, DC.

PT. PLEASANT NJ

SCHOLARSHIP EVENT

Each year the members of Point Pleasant Beach UNICO host a charity event to raise money for local scholarships. This year the committee hosted a Dinner Dance featuring entertainment by Andre and Cirell who are Las Vegas style singers and impersonators who provided an evening of music and comedy. A dinner buffet by Spano's at The White Sands and gift auction were also part of the evening festivities. Chairperson Debbie Vaccaro was assisted by committee members Laura Lenhart, Ann Vaccarino, Diane Grabowski, Cathy Lobosco, Donna Grassano, Marissa Gynn and Ella Cipolla.

Scholarships were presented at the Awards night at two local high schools by outgoing President Grace Gynn along with new Chapter President Tony Scardaville.

Receiving the awards from Point Beach High school were Camille Sassano with Kara Krishman receiving the Stella e Luna UNICO scholarship. From Point Boro High School Chris Mayer, Christopher Tranchito and Julie Crisculo were presented UNICO scholarships and Jake Scott received the Palombini Memorial UNICO award. Each student along with their families were invited to Point Pleasant's UNICO's Annual Scholarship Dinner, which honors all the young people in their chapter. Special guests were the 41 Junior (ACES) and Youth Members who were on hand to congratulate the new scholarship winners. Each awardee also received membership into UNICO as well as a gift bag of college supplies. All members are proud of these outstanding young Italian Americans and wish them success in the future.



Point Pleasant officers Camille Kreutzer, Dominick Fiumano, Debbie Vaccaro, Grace Gynn and Tony Scardaville with entertainers Andre and Cirell.



(L-R Scholarship Chair, Camille Kreutzer, Kara Krichman, Camille Sassano, Chris Mayer and Jake Scott and committee member Claire Durso.

UNICO NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP REPORT



The Scholarship Committee is proud to present the recipients of our 2009 UNICO National Awards:

Major Don S. Gentile Memorial Scholarship
Robert Elliot Gross
Sponsored by the Kearny NJ Chapter
Judged in New Jersey

William C. Davini Memorial Scholarship
Meredith Gray Wright
Sponsored by the Orange/W.
Orange NJ Chapter
Judged in Pennsylvania

Alphonse A. Miele Memorial Scholarship
Nicole M. Schollmeyer
Sponsored by the Orange/W.
Orange NJ Chapter
Judged in California

Theodore Mazza Memorial Scholarship
Anthony Glenn Rauco
Sponsored by the Nutley NJ Chapter
Judged in Texas

Sgt. John Basilone Memorial Scholarship
Cara Marie Murphy
Sponsored by the Marlboro NY Chapter
Judged in New Jersey

Dr. Benjamin J. Cottone Memorial Scholarship
Steven Kyriakos Constantino
Sponsored by the Merrimack Valley MA Chapter
Judged in Tennessee

The value of our scholarship program is affirmed by the increase in participation. This year we received applications from 150 students. Since most submitted for multiple scholarships, we handled well over 400 entries. There were nominations from 56 Chapters representing 25 Districts in 14 states.

Candidates demonstrated exceptional qualifications. The scholastic achievements, extra curricular activities and community service projects of these students are remarkable and worthy of recognition. Selecting the recipients was extremely difficult. We extend our thanks and congratulations to all participants. We sincerely respect their accomplishments.

It is important to acknowledge the work and effort of our chapters that submitted nominations. It requires serious commitment to review the application forms, making certain that all is in order. Thank you for your diligence in support of your candidates.

To ensure the integrity of our awards, judging is conducted as objectively as possible.

Applications are anonymously screened by the Review Committee to determine academic qualifications. Final selections are made by our judging committees. Chaired by a Scholarship Committee member, but composed of non-UNICANS, judging committees in separate locations evaluate applications using prescribed criteria.

Review Committee:

Charles Russo, Eugene Santoli, Dr. Malcolm Sturchio, Robert Tarte, Dr. M. Ann Walko

Judging Committee Chairs:

Dr. M. Ann Walko – Gentile Scholarship
Mark McDade. – Davini Scholarship
Samuel Adrignola – Miele Scholarship
Dr. Anthony J. Arabia – Mazza Scholarship
Charles Russo – Basilone Scholarship
Sharon Thompson – Cottone Scholarship

While we continue to explore ways to stabilize funding, it is apparent that the direct support of our chapters is essential. We thank all chapters who have contributed to our Scholarship Program by sponsoring candidates and providing donations. UNICO National Scholarships exist only because of your commitment.

On behalf of the Scholarship Committee, I extend our deepest sympathies to the family of Dr. Malcolm Sturchio. Dr. Sturchio, a member of the Montville NJ Chapter, was a well respected educator and committed UNICAN. He was a valued member of the Scholarship Committee serving as a Judging Committee Chair and later as a member of our Review Committee. Dr. Mal was always willing to help. He brought to the Scholarship Committee professionalism and expertise that will be truly missed. We are greatly saddened by his loss.

Joan N. Tidona
Scholarship Director

PRIDE AND HERITAGE

A TRIBUTE TO DOMENIC

by Richard Caifano
DG Illinois I

His is the story of countless immigrants whose courage has brought inspiration and meaning to our lives. Each of us can then relate to the story I tell in honor of the man who made it possible, my grandfather Domenic.

He was born on the Ides of March in the Town of Moliterno, Province of Potenza in the Region of Basilicata. He was a stone-cutter by trade. He stood a mere 5' 5" in height and full of dreams for his family. He smoked whatever was available from Camel cigarettes to Parodi cigars. He spoke halting English with that unforgettable Italian accent. And how he loved his wine!

He had a thirst for knowledge but didn't read well. I would teach him the math tables and read to him in English. In return, he taught me card games like scoppa and briscole. He revealed to me the guarded ways of wine making and gardening. We cultured a fig tree in Chi-

cago's unaccepting climate-a tree I learned to wrap and bury each fall and to unearth in the warmth of the following spring. Oh, how sweet that fruit.

Growing up in Domenic's household, I heard only the modest story he allowed of how he came to Chicago:

He and my grandmother began their life in America in the dawn of the 20th Century.

When the family grew to include three sons, they moved to Chicago, became citizens of their new country and flourished as a family in their own home.

A few years ago I became interested in family history and began to access tools to reach out for the records of family, here and abroad. I learned that my grandparents sailed on the steamship Venezia out of the port of Naples and arrived at Ellis Island on the 19th day of March, 1909. It was easy to deduce from family records that my grandmother was pregnant with their first son when they arrived in this country. Their destination, like so many other Italian immigrants was DeKoven Street in the tenement sector of New York City. Ten years later they made it to their first home in Chicago at 1080 Sangamon Street. And when they were able to buy their first home, they settled in the Tri-Taylor neighborhood of Chicago at 900 S. Leavitt Street. We knew that our grandparents became naturalized citizens after they arrived in Chicago, but the details were not remembered and the documents had been misplaced.

Further search revealed the surprising fact that Domenic first traveled to this Country on the ship Germania arriving at Ellis Island on June 30, 1906 at the age of 18 years. He stayed only a few months returning to his native Italy where he traveled to meet and eventually to marry Antonia Maria Laviola in the hill town of Pisticci, Province of Matera in the Region of Basilicata.

While courageous, Domenic also took care to learn if America was the place he would make the home of his family. We conclude that he liked what he saw on his first visit as he returned to Ellis Island with his expectant wife less than three years later. He held many jobs during his life, from stone cutter and mason to ditch digger and sewer worker to flagman on a construction site where his working days ended abruptly in the early 1950's.

Ultimately, we learn that the documents conferring citizenship upon my grandparents on April 7, 1921 are stored in the archives of the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, at Chicago, Illinois, where literally thousands of such records await discovery. In the years preceding WWII, both the State and Federal Courts were vested with the authority to confer Citizenship upon qualified applicants.

How proud Dominic would be now that his legacy includes his great grandchildren: Ricky, accountant; Donn, senior bank officer, Judy and Catherine, legal professionals; Christina, college professor, Marty, golf professional; Danielle and Marc, accomplished sales representatives; Cheryl and Scott, entrepreneurs.

Indeed. How proud we are to be the sons and daughters of a man from such humble beginnings with such remarkable courage and foresight -Domenic Caifano.

NATIONAL SCRAPBOOK WINNERS

The 2009 Convention proved to be SPECTACULAR in many ways. And speaking of spectacular, the SCRAPBOOK and DVD entries were just that – very impressive! This year's entries showed such creativity and demonstrated such diverse fundraising activities. It was evident that a lot of time, talent and thought went into every entry. The committee's task proved very challenging in choosing the winner in each category. Every entry was a sight to behold.

That being said, each entry is judged according to an established point system that has been made available to all of the Chapters through their Presidents. Judges are comprised of UNICO members from throughout the United States. They carefully score the scrapbook entries that are not in competition with their own Chapter scrapbook. This allows for fairness and objectivity.

The winner in the DVD category was the Passaic Valley Chapter. In the scrapbook category, the small chapter division was won by the Kearny Chapter; the medium size chapter winner was the Plainfield Chapter; and the Scranton Chapter won in the large size category. Winning chapters are awarded a Banner Patch and all participating chapters receive a Certificate. Congratulations to all of the winners and to all who entered the competition.

Now is the time to begin collecting material for next year's entries. You will be so pleased with the outcome and your chapter will be thrilled to see all of their accomplishments, whether in DVD or SCRAPBOOK form. So, chapter presidents, ask for volunteers or appoint members to this worthwhile task. You'll be glad you did!

The committee came up with a few suggestions to help in judging this award. If the suggestions are accepted, the news will be passed on to you. So stay tuned for a future article on this topic.

Respectfully,
Michele McDade
Scrapbook Chairperson



(L-R) The recipients of the Scrapbook Awards: Rose Gaetano, Scranton, Large Chapter Award, Celeste Pandolfi, Kearny, Small Chapter Award, Robert Bengivenga, Plainfields, Medium Chapter Award. Not pictured is Steve Pelonero, Passaic Valley, DVD Award. The awards were presented at the 2009 UNICO National Convention held at the Ritz Carlton Resort in Lake Las Vegas, Nevada.



Michele McDade, Scrapbook Committee Chairperson (2nd from left) presents certificates and patches to (l-r) Rose Gaetano, Scranton, Large Chapter Award, Celeste Pandolfi, Kearny, Small Chapter Award and Steve Pelonero, Passaic Valley, DVD Award. Not pictured is Robert Bengivenga, Plainfields, Medium Chapter Award.

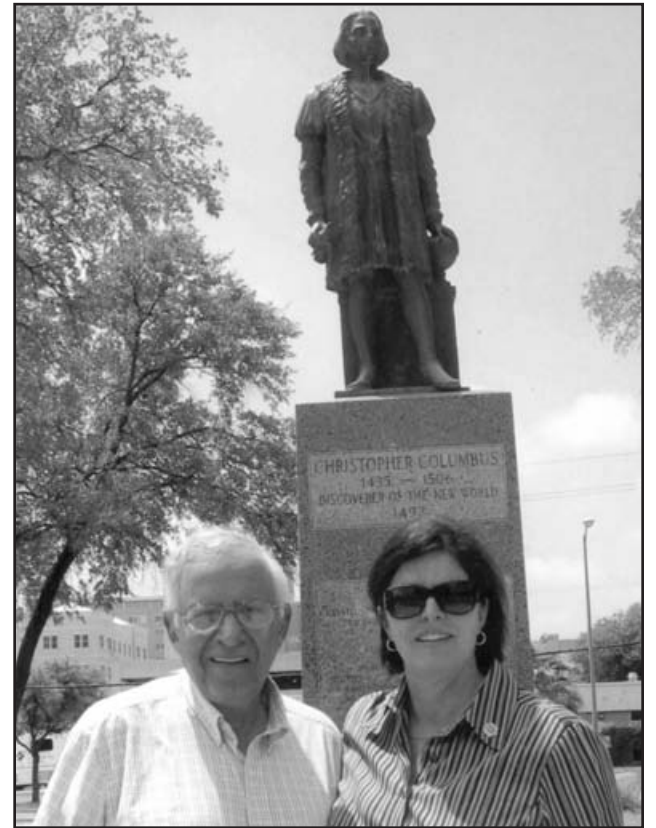


Judging this year's Scrapbook and DVD entries are seated from left to right: Rose and Frank Blasi, Sharon Thompson and Gerri Camurati. Standing from left to right are: Scrapbook Chairperson Michele McDade, Tanya Brutto, Celeste Pandolfi, Andrea Leone Kelly, Bernie Brutto, Yvonne Gatto, Jean DeSio, Theresa Tropeano and Patricia Calabro.



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SAN ANTONIO



Tony Arabia and UNICO National President Kathleen Strozza in Columbus Park at the Columbus Statue in San Antonio.



San Antonio Columbus Hall Spaghetti Dinner. (L-R): Front: Phil Merola, Joe and Patsy Monaco. Rear: Rose Marie Arabia, National President Kathi, Bill and Elizabeth Kelly.



San Antonio Chapter Walkathon. (L-R): Front: Joe and Patsy Monaco, Rose Marie Arabia. Rear: Phil Merola, Tony Arabia and Bill Kelly.

An Italian American (Italian: Italoamericano singular, Italoamericani plural) is an American of Italian ancestry, and/or may also refer to someone possessing Italian/American dual citizenship. This particular group of people maintain a sense of pride in their heritage rarely seen throughout America, and indeed, the rest of the world. Italian Americans are the fourth largest European ethnic group in the United States.

PENNSYLVANIA II IN LAS VEGAS!

At the last UNICO Convention in Lake Las Vegas during July 28 to August 2, 2009 six PA II members were elected National Officers. Christopher DiMattio of the Scranton Chapter was elected Executive Vice President while Carbondale member, Glenn Pettinato, was elected First Vice President. Attorney Frank Blasi of the Scranton Chapter was elected National Counsel and Carbondale member, Dr. Peter Pettinato, was elected a trustee and secretary of the National Foundation. Scranton member Michael Fiorelli was elected Auditor and Sayre member, Dr. Felix DeSio was elected PA II District Governor. The outgoing PA II District Governor was Chip Calabro of Carbondale who was selected as the Distinguished District Governor of 2009 by UNICO.

During the Wednesday Ice Breaker which had a theme called "Essence of Italy" where it was recommended to dress in some Italian theme, the Carbondale Chapter won best outfit for dressing up as the National Italian Soccer Team. On Friday night, members were entertained during an "Old Las Vegas Night" by a Dean Martin look-a-like and Mr. Martin's real-life daughter, Deana who received an award during the convention as did football star, Vince Ferragamo. Saturday was the night of the annual Ball and installation of our new President André DiMino.



Outgoing PA II District Governor Chip Calabro, Patricia Calabro, Thomas Gatto, Yvonne Gatto, Terri Pettinato, First Vice President Glenn Pettinato, Maggie Pettinato and Foundation Trustee Dr Peter Pettinato.



(L-R) Dr Peter Pettinato, Maggie Pettinato, Glenn Pettinato, Terri Pettinato, Chip Calabro, Pat Calabro, Tom Gatto and Yvonne Gatto.



Dr Peter Pettinato, 1st Vice President Glenn Pettinato and Dean Martin Look-A-Like.



Terri Pettinato and 1st VP Glenn Pettinato.



Terri Pettinato and professional athlete award recipient Vince Ferragamo.



Three Pennsylvania VPs- (L-R) Third National VP David Doninni who is now a member of West LA CA but is formerly of Wilkes-Barre, First National VP Glenn Pettinato and Executive VP Chris DiMattio.

UNICO NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS

Dr. Anthony P. Vastola Award: Paul Alongi, Bloomfield, NJ

UNICO's highest award bestowed upon a member of UNICO will be awarded this year to Paul Alongi, who served as the National President of UNICO in 1975, has been a member of the Bloomfield, NJ Chapter of UNICO for over 50 years. Mr. Alongi has continued to serve the National organization in numerous positions throughout his tenure.

Grand Order Filippo Mazzei Grand Patriot Alan Krutchkoff

Alan is the founder of the Adopt a Soldier Platoon. Born and raised in New Jersey, he has lived an eclectic career. He was graduate from Fairleigh Dickinson University, served in the U.S. Air Force and traveled for six months covering over 15,000 miles touring Europe and the Middle East.

Joseph P. Cianci, ESQ. Humanitarian Award: Joseph V. Scelsa

Professor Scelsa is an expert in the Italian American experience and is the founder of the Italian American Museum in New York City.

Vincent T. Lombardi Professional Athletics Memorial Award:

Vince Ferragamo,

Formerly of the LA Rams, Ferragamo was the only quarterback to take the Los Angeles Rams to the Superbowl. Since retiring, he has remained active with the Rams, doing the broadcast for pre-season games and makes community service appearances on their behalf.

Dr. D.M. Nigro Amateur Athletics Memorial Award:

Joe Hathaway of Yale University, Football.

Now a Senior, Joe registered 31 tackles (including a team-leading 13 TFL), 5 sacks, 1 forced fumble (FF), and 1 fumble recovered (FR). Was named 2nd team All-Ivy. At nose guard, Hathaway anchored a defense that gave up the fewest points per game in all of PCS (DI-AA) college football (10.5 PPG).

Basilone Freedom Award:

Marine Corps Jarrod DePasquale

Captain DePasquale served in Iraq as an attack helicopter pilot. He is scheduled to be deployed to Afghanistan in the near future. He is quick to state that "I am not a hero. I am just doing a job that many thousands have done."

Antonio R. Rizzuto Award:

A.J. 'Buddy' Fortunato, Publisher of the Italian Tribune Newspaper

Since 1933, this weekly publication covers everything Italian. Today the Italian Tribune is the largest Italian American newspaper in the United States. Plans are currently underway for a direct link from the newspaper to its readers in the Republic of Italy.

ATTENTION ALL UNICANS!

The NOVEMBER ComUNICO will be our Post-Columbus Issue

The final deadline to submit your Columbus Day photos is:

OCTOBER 14

Any photos received after October 14 will be held until the January issue.

Note: All regular news items for the November issue need to be submitted no later than October 7.

Submissions should be e-mailed to mmpsd@aol.com,
uploaded to minutemanpressSD.com or mailed to:

Matt Risi
525 Metropolitan Dr.
Suite 303
San Diego, CA 92108

Any questions, call Editor Matt Risi
at 619-993-3913.



ATTENTION ALL UNICANS!



NEWSMAKERS

by Mary Racila

Road trip!

When you tell a guy like Tony Bennett to hit the road, he takes you literally. The 82-year-old, 15-time Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter has been performing in front of live audiences for more than half a century, and he's showing no signs of slowing down.

His current 33-week tour will crisscross the country, head up to Canada and even travel to South America. The tour features a Dec. 16 performance with the Count Basie Orchestra in NYC and wraps up in 2010 with a Valentine's Day performance at the Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Conn.

When you're on the road a lot, like Bennett is, you're likely to attract the attention of a magazine or two like Travel Girl. Tony and his wife Susan graced the cover of TG's summer edition under the headline "In Perfect Harmony for a Cause."

Bennett's lifetime of service began in the Army during World War II. He not only fought, but became a hero when he liberated prisoners from concentration camps. He never forgot his wartime

(See Newsmakers on Page 48)

LOU&A Breaking in

by Louis R. Carlozo

The youthful, upbeat Alexis Babini falls into the same pop-rock vein as David Gray, Jack Johnson and John Mayer — with many pointing out that Babini, like Mayer, cut his teeth at Boston's Berklee College of Music. Yet Babini, 23, is no imitator, and the Connecticut native continues to build a following through relentless touring and an approach that makes full use of his tender, pure tenor and personal songwriting. If you haven't heard of him, stay tuned: Chances are you will, as he's already warmed up for the likes of Blues Traveler and Boz Scaggs. Fra Noi caught up with Babini amid his summer touring, even as he works on a follow-up to his self released EP, "Breaking It In."

FRA NOI — So what do you make of the comparisons you get to David Gray, James Taylor and John Mayer?

ALEXIS BABINI — As comparisons, they're all right. I get John Mayer a lot, too, and I'm not too keen on that. I'd rather try to do my own thing. As a singer/songwriter I try to keep it honest. In pop music, you have one big song with a hook, and it doesn't mean too much to the artists. It's something they sing because they hope people will like it. But when I write, I'm really trying to express myself, to say something meaningful.

FN — Your sound is very accessible and easy on the ears. What's the new record going to be like?

AB — The last record, "Breaking it in," was sort of acoustic based. I feel like the next one is going to have a more electrical feeling. I play guitar, piano, bass, mandolin, banjo — I wouldn't say I'm just an acoustic artist. I'd like to think that it shows through in my work. ... We're recording some songs in my guitarist's studio; we're in the demo stages right now. We just released a new song a few weeks ago called "My Direction." There are probably three more songs in development, and another record is on the way, I'd say by late fall 2009.

FN — How has living in Boston shaped your sound? It's a great music city, with artists such as Boston, The Cars, Aerosmith and Tracy Chapman getting their start there.

AB — I think my music connects with the younger college crowd, so that's helpful. But it's strange because every four years, the population changes. But what's great is that I can expand throughout the East

(See Babini on Page 48)

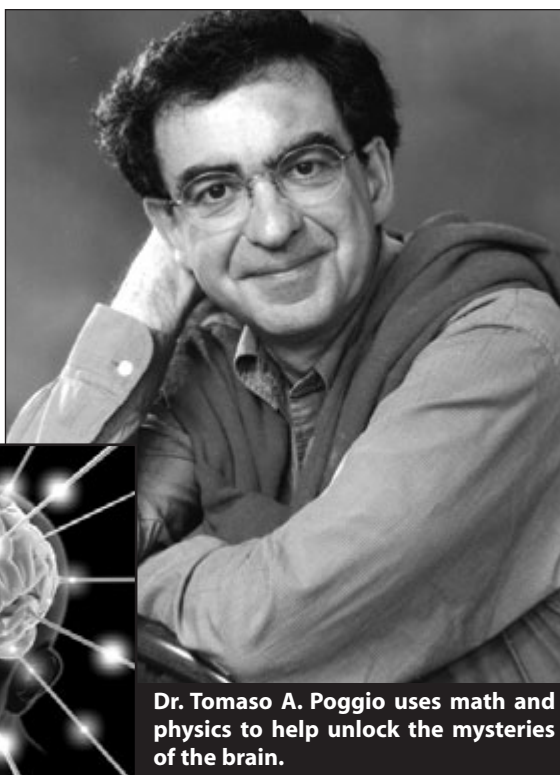


Singer/songwriter Alexis Babini has made it to the brink of stardom without the help of a major label, relying instead on a tender tenor voice and highly personal songwriting.

SCIENCE Do the math

How do we learn? How do we remember things? What is intelligence and how can it be improved?

These and many other fundamental questions about human "brain power" are the subject of intricate and never-ending scientific research. Although neurological science has achieved many advances in understanding the cognitive power of the brain, there is still an enormous amount left to be discovered and understood. There are scores of scientists involved in the biological neurosciences but there is one multidisciplinary Italian-American researcher who is combining the study of neuroscience with his knowledge of physics, mathematics and other areas of science. Tomaso A. Poggio, Ph.D., a computational neuroscientist, has been breaking



Dr. Tomaso A. Poggio uses math and physics to help unlock the mysteries of the brain.

by André DiMino

new ground with his fundamental research and discoveries into the brain and its functions.

Dr. Poggio has been conducting fundamental research into the brain and its intricacies for nearly 40 years in both Europe and the United States. He has affected our understanding of many facets of the brain and the science of neurobiology through his many seminal theories and research discoveries. In addition, his professional teachings have launched the careers of many of his doctoral and master students in the neurosciences.

Dr. Poggio has an impressive résumé, having held important posts in the world of neurological and brain research. Since 1984, he has been professor of the Department of Brain & Cognitive Sciences, Computer Science & Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and the McGovern Institute for Brain Research, as well as the director of the Center for Biological and Computational Learning at the venerable Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He start-

(See Science on Page 48)



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SPORTS Dynamic duo

by Charles P. Pecoraro

In almost every line of work, it's not uncommon for a son to follow in his father's footsteps. No exception is baseball, where Phil and Mike Rizzo are trying to excise the Washington Nationals from their curse as the worst team in the majors.

Dad Phil, 79, is a baseball lifer, a Nationals scout who for 31 years has toiled in relative obscurity, crisscrossing toll roads and back roads to unearth raw young talent. He never wavers in his mission to discover diamonds in the rough.

Son Mike, 48, appointed the team's acting general manager in February, is working hard to prove that, after 27 years in baseball and an impressive record of mining such diamonds, he deserves to have the "acting" deleted from his title.

Phil Rizzo has done his often thankless job by old-school rules. He never takes a vacation, never wears jeans and never grows weary of the lonely life on the road. Upon arriving in a one-horse town, he would check into a bargain-rate motel and ask the gas station attendant to recommend a decent place to eat.

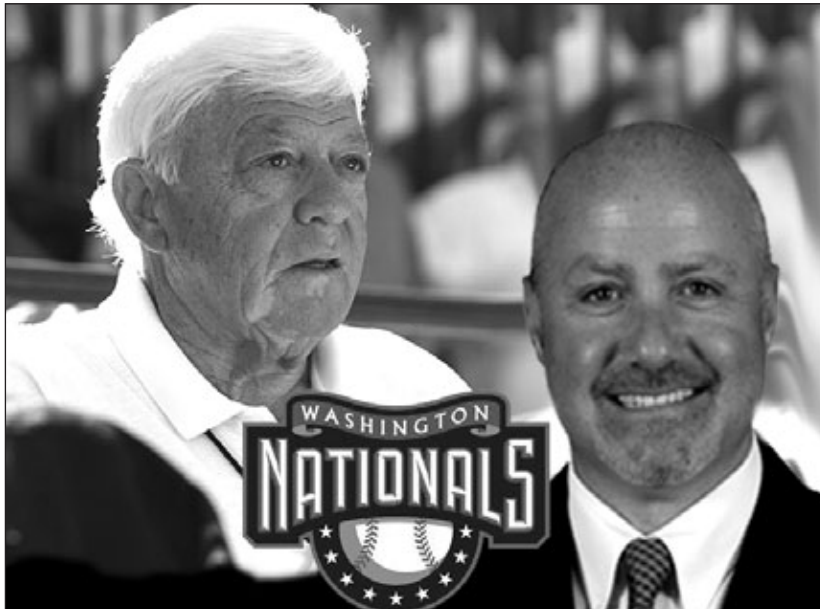
"I started scouting long before the gimmicks," he said. "No stopwatches or radar guns. You just trusted your eyes and instincts to determine if a kid has what it takes to reach the big-leagues. If he makes it, you've done a good job. If not, you're a nobody."

Even though Washington got off to a dismal 1-10 start this season, and was mired in last place in the NL East as of late June, Phil was elated when his son was appointed AGM. He said:

"I'm so happy for Mike because, with only 30 such positions, Major League GM jobs are hard to come by. The Nationals aren't bad offensively, but need to improve their pitching and defense. I hope ownership gives him enough time to fix what's wrong."

Among the players Phil had a role in signing are ace Arizona pitcher Brandon Webb, Dodgers infielder Mark Loretta, and former big-leaguers Mike Methany, Dick Schofield and Bob Wickman. Before the Nats, he scouted for the White Sox, Angels, Brewers and Diamondbacks.

His biggest pet peeve is the amount of money paid these days to unproven kids. He said there are a lot of youngsters with \$1-million-plus contracts who aren't even hitting .200 or have a winning pitching record. The answer, he maintains, is to structure contracts based on performance, not potential.



The Washington Nationals are looking to battle their way out of the cellar on the talented shoulders of the father-son tandem of Phil and Mike Rizzo.

One of the hardest things Phil had to do was tell his son that, in his judgment, he wasn't good enough to play in the majors. That happened at the kitchen table, of all places, when Mike was 25 and a minor leaguer. Mike, raised in Chicago and former resident of Rolling Meadows, accepted his father's opinion and finished his dinner and playing career at the same time that night.

Until that conversation, Mike foresaw himself as Major League material. He had risen to Class AAA in the Angels' organization, due mostly to his sure hands and productive bat. His downside was lack of speed. From the moment he was old enough, Phil would take him to the alley behind their home, draw 60-foot chalk lines and have him run sprints. But the honest evaluation was that he was too slow for big-time baseball.

Mike switched from playing to coaching, enrolling in the University of Illinois where he was an assistant baseball coach while earning a bachelor's degree in communications. Upon graduation, he retraced his father's career path, taking scouting jobs with the White Sox, Red Sox and Diamondbacks.

Arizona is where he made his mark as one of baseball's up-and-coming young executives. In seven seasons as director of scouting, eight D-back players he helped cultivate were honored with individual awards and/or All-Star status.

During his tenure, authoritative Baseball America ranked Arizona's minor league system from No. 29 when he arrived to No. 1 by the time

he departed. The long list of budding stars he signed includes Frank Thomas, Justin Upton, Carlos Quentin, Dan Uggla and Webb, who has won the esteemed Cy Young Award.

Mike Rizzo, who some contend bears a striking facial resemblance to crooner/piano man Billy Joel, was rewarded for his efforts with a promotion to vice president, with added responsibilities for trades and free-agent acquisitions. Now he was only one step away from his dream job — general manager.

In 2006, his ambition was blocked when Arizona named Josh Byrnes its new GM, brought in Peter Woodfork as assistant and promoted Bob Gebhard to special assistant. Rizzo interpreted the moves as no room for him at the top.

Meanwhile, Washington was struggling on the field, in attendance and with its front office. To clean up the mess, president/partner Stan Kasten sought a proven executive and hired Rizzo as assistant GM and vice president for baseball operations. Mike, also a finalist for the Pirates' GM opening, is highly regarded throughout the league.

When Nats GM Jim Bowden resigned over charges that he skimmed bonus money, an impropriety that resulted in an FBI investigation, Kasten replaced him with Rizzo. But the cautious owner insisted on the "acting" designation until Mike convinces him he's worthy of the position.

Though Mike has day-to-day control of operations, he doesn't have the final say on personnel. That decision belongs to Kasten, who depends on Rizzo's experience and input in scouting, drafting, signing and trading to make the right calls.

Rizzo looks for players who are good citizens on and off the field. He believes that clubhouse chemistry is critical, and you need teammates who are compatible to build a winner. He singles out Adam Dunn, Willie Harris and Austin Kearns as high-character guys.

Getting the Nationals out of the cellar and into contention seems like an insurmountable task to some baseball insiders. But the Rizzos — Mike in the front office and Phil on the trail for talent — are teaming up to make capital gains in Washington.



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LEGENDS Great player, lousy team

by Otto Bruno

How can you be an all-star outfielder, bat over .300 two times, have more lifetime walks than strikeouts, and play in a World Series all in a relatively short 10 year baseball career, and still end up virtually unknown? Easy, play more than half of your career for the old St. Louis Browns. That's just what Al Zarilla did.

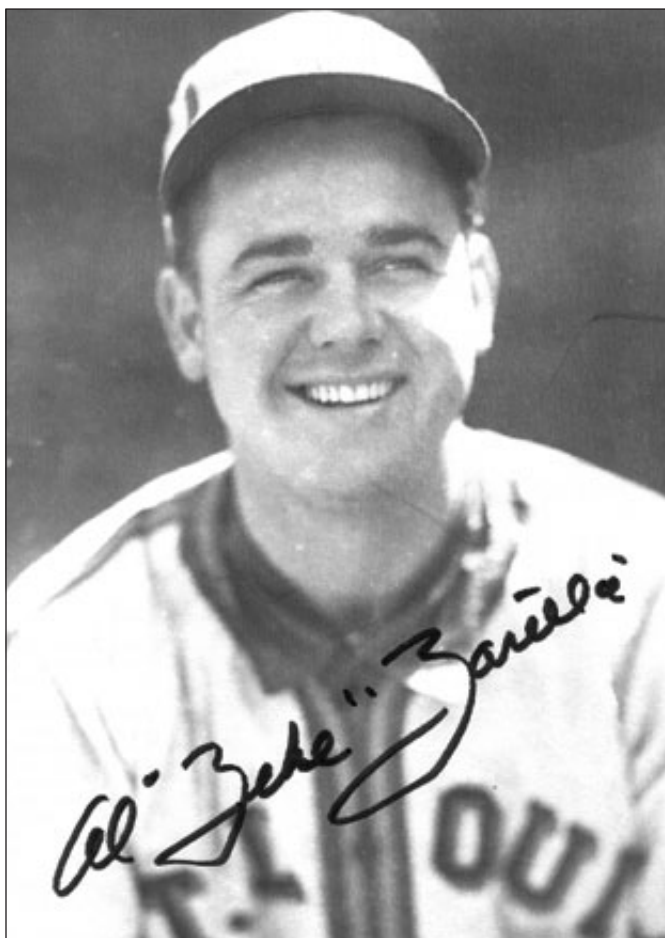
Al Zarilla began his big league career in 1943 with the St. Louis Browns. The Browns were "the other St. Louis team" in the first half of the 20th century. They were perpetually overshadowed by the better-known and more successful St. Louis Cardinals of the National League. In 1949 Zarilla was traded away to the Boston Red Sox. In Boston, he shared Fenway Park with the likes of Dom DiMaggio, Bobby Doerr and Ted Williams. It's hard to get noticed in a crowd like that. It seemed, no matter where Zarilla went or what he did, stardom was not meant to be his. One baseball magazine of the 1950s called him the "Most Under-rated Player in the Majors."

Allen Lee Zarilla was born on May 1, 1919, in Los Angeles, to an Italian father and an Irish mother. According to a 1948 Baseball Digest profile by Donald Drees, he was "nicknamed Zeke because of his West Coast heritage and his bowlegs that look like a horse just galloped through ..." When still in high school in Los Angeles, Al was spotted at a tryout camp by the Chicago Cubs. He was assigned to play with one of their teams on Catalina Island but broke his ankle sliding into a base and the Cubs lost interest. After his ankle healed, Jack Fournier, a scout for the St. Louis Browns, spotted him and sent him to San Antonio, Texas. There were five Brownie farm teams in training and all of them passed on Zarilla.

The Browns were going to release Zarilla when Fournier interceded and sent a telegram to Elmer Kerchoff, manager of a D level team in Batesville, Ark. According to the article in Baseball Digest, Fournier wrote, "I'm sending you a player who will hit .325 or I'll buy you a new suit."

Instead of .325, Zarilla hit .329 and he was off to the races. He then went to the Lafayette White Sox, another D level team but this one in the Evangeline League. There he hit .291 and moved up to a C level team in Helena, Ark., where he tore up the league with a .349 average. In both Lafayette and Helena, Zarilla became known for hitting triples, 17 and 19 respectively in 1939 and 1940.

He started off the 1941 season at B level ball in Springfield, Ill. However, after hitting .326 in



Al Zarilla might have emerged as one of the legends of baseball had he not played for the lowly St. Louis Browns.

the first 25 games, he was moved up to A ball, playing with San Antonio of the Texas League. He finished the '41 season with a respectable .278 average but he struggled in 1942 with a .211 clip. The Texas League was known to be a pitcher's league especially tough on left-handed hitters because, for whatever reason, nearly all stadiums in the league had the wind blowing in from right field.

Nevertheless, despite his poor showing in 1942, he was moved up to Toledo at the start of the 1943 campaign. He lasted only 57 games in Toledo. He was tearing up the American Association with a .373 clip when the Browns called him up to St. Louis. He finished the rest of the 1943 season with the Browns and hit .254 as a 24-year-old rookie.

Zarilla played in 100 games in 1944 and batted .299 — one more hit and he'd have hit .300 in his first full major league season. Regardless, his hustle and hitting propelled the St. Louis Browns to their first, and only, pennant in the history of the franchise but Zarilla had a disappointing series hitting only .100 (1 for 10) with an RBI and

a run scored. The overmatched Browns lost four games to two to the cross-town rival St. Louis Cardinals.

Zarilla missed the entire 1945 season in the service as World War II wound to a close. "I had been turned down four times previously," Zarilla told a reporter, "but finally late in the war they took another look and accepted me."

It took Zarilla a while to shake off the rust once he returned from his war duty. The 1946 season was a disappointing one all around as the Browns finished seventh in their eight-team division and Zarilla finished the season with a .259 average. The highlight of Zarilla's season came on July 13 when he hit two triples in one inning in an 11-4 victory over the Philadelphia Athletics. Only three other players in the past 100 years have matched the feat.

The 1947 campaign was even worse than the previous year as his average dropped to .224 for the season. It was the low point in Al Zarilla's career.

For most of his time in the big leagues, Zarilla was known to be a "streak hitter." He could go on a tear for 10 games hitting at a .450 clip and then turn cold and not be able to buy a hit, going hitless for 20 or 30 at bats. Everybody knew this about Zarilla, including opposing pitchers. Armed with that knowledge, they could make it that more difficult for him to break out of a slump.

There was a nervous energy that defined Al Zarilla. He was always moving, running, joking with teammates. He couldn't sit still. His critics mistakenly took this to mean he had a less than serious attitude toward his job. This was not true. He spent much of the latter half of the 1947 season trying to figure out how to regain his success at the plate.

One of his coaches during that 1947 season was Earle Combs, a member of the famed Murderer's Row of the 1927 New York Yankees and eventual Hall-of-Famer with a lifetime .325 average. Combs told Zarilla to "quit trying for the long ball. Just get on base; let the bigger, more natural long-ball sluggers power you around the bases."

One of Zarilla's best friends during the off-season was Pirate slugger Ralph Kiner. He noticed that Zarilla had a very quick swing, which is usually a benefit to a hitter. However, Kiner suggested to Zarilla that he try a heavier bat, suggesting that his swing was "almost too

(See Legends on Page 48)

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LIBRI Idiosyncratic sojourn

by Judith Anne Testa

You might expect a memoir by a woman traveling to and around Italy by car with her husband and two young children to be a cozy domestic chronicle of family adventures, but "The Last Supper" is anything but cozy or domestic. The unnamed children and anonymous husband rarely appear; the book is about the author and her personal encounter with Italy. Cusk aspires to something well beyond the usual travel journal prose, and although her writing is at times brilliant and offers striking insights and observations without a cliché in sight, at other times the prose seems forced — overly sensitive, snobbish and pretentious.

The family's Italian journey begins in the dreary British industrial city of Bristol, from which Cusk yearns to escape. So she and her husband decide on three months in Italy, with their return left indefinite. They make the trip by car, driving onto a ferry to cross the English Channel and then motoring through France to Italy. Along the way, Cusk muses about the oddest things. On the trip across the Channel she considers Italian verbs, as yet unspoken by her, as "a form of trousseau, a virgin's drawerful of unblemished linen." In France, the family's every overnight is a piece of theater, with surrealistically strange lodgings presided over by eccentric French hosts. Whatever happened to plain old B&Bs? When the family goes swimming at Cap Ferrat, they're observed by elderly female sunbathers "with brown wrinkled hands glittering with rings ... thin as lizards, with creased skins the color of tobacco," as fine a description as I've ever read of the consequences of excessive sun exposure.

Once in Italy, they meander down the penin-

sula to the house they've rented in the countryside near Arezzo. From there they make forays into town, allowing Cusk to muse over the paintings by Piero della Francesca in the church of S. Francesco. On another day they make a trip to Assisi. Reflecting on the pilgrims who come to Assisi to venerate the bones of St. Francis, Cusk observes: "The mania for the tangible is the predictable consequence of the intangibility of religious belief, though it has always bewildered me that it should be among the relics of the actual that the missing

link between faith and reality is sought." Um, what was that again? Sometimes the author sounds like a pompous academic.

On the other hand, Cusk can offer wonderful observations, such as her fresh and delightful description of pizza as "all around the world ... the deepest form of security known to the human palate. It is like a smiling face: it assuages the fear of complexity by showing everything on its surface." And she sends up her fellow English people for their exaggerated reverence toward Italian food: their "belief that making fresh pasta is equivalent to building your own rocket and flying it to Mars."

The family travels to Florence, where a visit to the Uffizi allows Cusk to offer more of her idiosyncratic observations about art. Raphael's Self-Portrait, which I think of as an expression of the artist's sensual, confident nature, affects Cusk differently; she sees "a frail, wistful-looking youth ... faintly ascetic, even depressive ... a portrait of Raphael's captive ego." She decides that the cardinal on the right, standing behind Leo X in Raphael's portrait of that pope, is the artist's self-portrait, although in fact it's the pope's cousin, Luigi de' Rossi. She also says Raphael died of syphilis — no idea where she came up with THAT claim. As the family goes farther south — to Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Sorrento and Positano — things get worse. The heat is stifling, the crowds terrible, and Cusk makes withering comments about tourists. What does she think SHE is? Her English snobbery is never more obvious. But despite its flaws, Cusk's book offers an unusual view of Italy through the eyes of an observant and talented writer.

THE LAST SUPPER RACHEL CUSK

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LIBRI Master storyteller

by Fred L. Gardaphe

Gioia Timpanelli might be called the "Dean of American Storytelling," but I like to think of her as the *commare* of the word. Like a wise friend, her stories and writings counsel as they console, invigorate as they entertain, and unite us all with narrative threads that bind us to ancient truths. Like a midwife, her labor with words assists in the birth of new thinking about old things.

Timpanelli has won many awards for her storytelling in television and literature. Her last novel, "Sometimes the Soul: Two Novellas of Sicily," won a 1999 American Book Award. Her new novel, "What Makes a Child Lucky," brings us to her beloved Sicily, origins of much of her art, and many of the great stories of Western civilization. Based on a Sicilian folktale of a boy who is sent by his brothers to steal an ogre's treasure, "What Makes a Child Lucky" takes off from this familiar tale and moves in new and interesting directions that renew the story for today's world.

It doesn't take a village to raise a child if you've got one good godmother, and that's what 13-year old Joseph finds after he is betrayed by jealous brothers who send him to the mayor's office one day. The mayor forces him on an errand into the hills to deal with some the very bandits who killed Joseph's best friend, Pasquale the wine carrier. Joseph knows his terrain well from finding food for his mother's cooking, but he has no idea what he's about to encounter when he meets an ancient woman and the bandits she cares for.

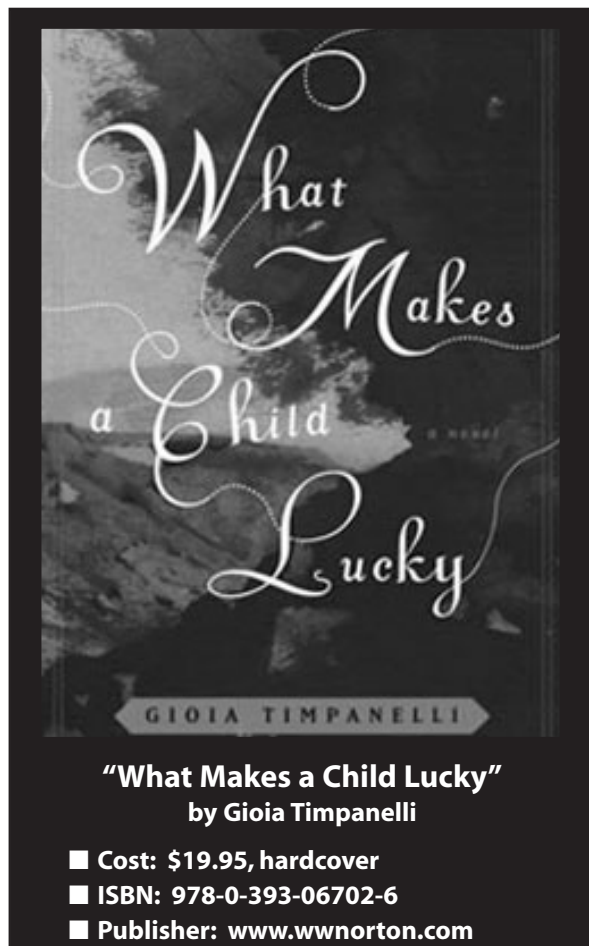
Joseph's experiences away from home are clarified one day as he listens to a shepherd pip-

ing a song: "As a child I had lived inside my own life with whatever I had found there, so I never imagined life as separate from my family, but now I saw and heard something new, something greater than my small life, something that had been created." Joseph discovers the power that comes from creat-

ing and it leads him to live a life against destruction and for art. He finds that his stories have power that he never could have imagined; they can make him visible or invisible, and through the strange experiences, mediated by Immaculata, the woman who cooks for the bandits, he learns how to prepare meals with what he finds around himself and how to live in the balance of good and evil.

It's not just Immaculata's words that teach Joseph how to handle things; it's sometimes just the way she looks at him, as when he leaves her to live with the bandits. As he turns to wave goodbye, he sees that her first look is one of indifference, "Then her face changed, and without hesitation she looked right into my eyes with the most compassionate, the most compassionate look I have ever seen in my life. ... Before this moment, I had only understood that word 'compassion' in terms of deeds and actions. Deeds and actions I understood; but a 'look' that could change you?"

Creativity and compassion are just a few of the lessons learned by Joseph in this tale of adventure and maturity. Timpanelli adapts her verbal art to meet the needs of the page and rewards the eye with rich imagery and the soul with strong sentiment. Often what she writes is pure music, and the songs she creates invite us to sing along. She maintains a sense of presence that is key to the oral tradition, and is able to meet the demands of the written word. This master storyteller has concocted a strange brew out of familiar ingredients. "What Makes a Child Lucky" deserves a place on every family's bookshelf. Brava, Maestra Timpanelli!



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CINEMA Criminal intent

by Jeannine Guilyard

Donatella began her acting career in theater but quickly moved to the big screen. Her first movie role was in the 2002

drama "Angela," in which she plays the title role, a wife who gets involved with her husband's dangerous and illegal business of selling drugs. Although many of Donatella's characters have some involvement with organized crime, a stereotype that has been tirelessly overplayed, she is able to portray the human side of it, the way that this life and its stereotypes destroy families and dreams. She is often cast in these parts because the intensity of her acting has such a huge impact on audiences and the overall effect of the movie. Her characters hurt, and that pain is

communicated through her dark penetrating eyes and her passionate performances. I recently spoke with Donatella Finocchiaro at

the Open Roads Film Festival at Lincoln Center in New York City. She was at the festival promoting her latest film, "Brave Men." In it, she takes on the complicated role of Lucia, a woman who heads a crime organization in the south of Italy. I really enjoyed talking with Donatella. She was very

articulate, and you can tell that she loves her work. She glows when she talks about her characters and the directors she's worked with. She has the same intensity and sincerity off camera that she does on camera.

As you'll read, Donatella didn't plan on becoming a professional actress. In fact, she originally chose a very different career path.

Fra Noi — When did you start acting?

Donatella Finocchiaro — I started to act later in life. In college, I studied law and actually became a lawyer. After I graduated college, I went to school for one year in Catania where I studied theater. After I took that one course, I started to get lead roles in plays that I auditioned for. I just took the acting course for a

(See Cinema on Page 49)



Donatella Finocchiaro is drawn to the complexity and contradictions of women in the underworld. (Photos courtesy of Filmitalia.)



To weather the rainy days ahead, America needs to move from a narrow Work Ethic to a more encompassing Life Ethic.

IO VAGABONDA

by Terri Maxfield

A new umbrella

Through the double pane glass of the window I watched the rain fall hard on the concrete sculpture of Washington, D.C. The bus was noisy and full of wet people that got caught out in the sudden, surprise deluge. Their mood was positive, however, as the past few days had been unbearably hot, and this downpour was a delicious diversion from sweating and grumpiness. I, too, felt a certain contentment at this unexpected break in the weather. My umpteenth trip to the Martin Luther King Memorial Library had been accomplished and my umpteenth résumé had been dropped at their Office of Human Resources. The rain was free to drench me all it wanted to, without me worrying about black make-up running down my cheeks or my hair going so wild that I resemble some weird creature created in a lab, a female hybrid of Alice Cooper and Robert Smith. Which I'm sure was just how I appeared to anyone that might have taken a peek at me in that moment, but I knew I'd be home soon, I could clean up quickly and my quest could continue online. It

(See Io Vagabonda on Page 49)

ANCIENT ROME 100 years of revolution

by Lucyann Murray

Picture this: Instead of the orderly nomination and election process that put Obama in the White House, McCain and Obama each park fully armed militia on the doorstep of Congress. After a bloody battle in the streets of Washington, Obama emerges the victor and demands he be made president. Forget voting! Uncooperative Republicans ... kill them!

Annoying laws ... gone! Term limits ... no such thing! If you can envision this, you have an idea of what the Roman Revolution looked like. Unlike other revolutions in history, it took 102 years from 133 to 31 B.C. for ancient Rome to tear its republican form of government to shreds and transition into an empire where once again, monarchs ruled. It was a time filled with political intrigue, civil wars, and mind-blowing carnage. Ambitious generals like Caesar and Pompey would emerge and leave deep footprints on history's path.

During this time, most of Italy's population was impoverished and landless as small landowners were displaced by Rome's wealthy

faction who snatched up land and used the enormous pool of slaves made available with continual warfare to run large estates called *latifundias*. Since soldiers had to be citizen landowners to qualify for the military, the displaced small farmer was no longer eligible to serve, nor did he and his family have a place to live. This situation not only weakened the army, but it also led to a flood of humanity descending on the city of Rome demanding a living from the state. Slaves, soldiers, fortune hunters, unemployed farmers and war veterans flooded the city's increasingly unsafe, crowded streets.

The stage was set for a more democratic form of government that appealed to the proletariat. Two factions representing different ideals emerged: The *populares* attracted the masses represented by the plebs, and the *optimates* embraced the conservative rule of the aristocrats and Senate. Battle lines were drawn.

Though it took decades for the Republic

(See Ancient Rome on Page 49)



Between the republic and empire, Rome descended into a century of chaos and carnage.

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VIAGGIO The Rome below Rome

by Judith Anne Testa

Everything in Rome has something buried under it, so there's a lot more to *Roma sotterranea* than just the catacombs. The sub-soil of the Eternal City harbors innumerable sites covering an astonishing range of ancient Roman life, from imperial palaces to house churches to public latrines. And those are just the ones we know about. Thousands of others remain undiscovered, lost forever beneath the modern city. *Roma in romae sepulta* — Rome buried in Rome — is particularly appealing in hot weather, as it's rather like a wine cellar — the same relatively chilly temperature all year around.

The best known of all Rome's subterranean church sites is the necropolis beneath St. Peter's. This city of the dead (not to be confused with the grottoes containing the tombs of later popes) is the original cemetery where, according to church tradition, the body of Peter was buried after his upside-down crucifixion in the nearby Circus of Nero. There is indeed a grave site there, reputed to be Peter's, surrounded by other, smaller tombs that crowd around it, as if to be as close as possible to the martyred saint's revered bones.

But the original basilica of St. Peter's, constructed in the early 300s, covered the saint's grave so thoroughly that its location was forgotten. It came to light briefly in the 1600s, during work on the present church, but nobody was sure what was down there, other than a lot of creepy graves, and so the nervous workmen quickly covered the site again. It wasn't re-excavated until the mid-20th century, when the bones found in the central



There's much more to Rome than can be seen from the street. (Pictured: The Mithraeum under the church of S. Clemente.)

tomb were declared by Pope Pius XII to be those of St. Peter. You can visit the necropolis under St. Peter's by applying in person to the Ufficio Scavi, an office located past the pair of Swiss Guards standing by the Arco della Campana, on the left side of the façade of St. Peter's. Tours are offered several times daily, except Sundays.

Most of Rome's ancient churches have *sotterranei* and many of them can be visited. An extensive and unusual one lies below the church of SS Giovanni e Paolo, located on a quiet piazza not far from the Colosseum. The present church, dating from the 11th and 12th centuries, occupies a site above the ruins of a house that belonged to two Christian martyrs, John and Paul, put to death between 361 and 363 by the last pagan emperor, Julian the Apostate. A century later several Roman buildings were incorporated into a shrine dedicated to the two martyrs. Excavations begun in the early 20th century revealed that those Roman structures formed a lavish complex that included its own baths, a library and a wine cellar. Many of the rooms still preserve their painted decorations, both Christian and pagan. The church offers regular guided tours of the site, conducted in Italian by knowledgeable guides.

The only *sotterranei* I know of where you can wander around on your own is also among the largest: the three levels beneath the church of S. Clemente. You descend via a broad, modern staircase from the beautiful 12th-century church into the shadowy, damp remains of a fifth-century church that itself was built over an earlier Roman house which in turn had been built over an even earlier house from the era of the Roman Republic (first century B.C.). When you reach the lowest

level, you're 30 feet below the modern street level. The church's good-natured Irish Dominicans charge a modest admission fee to visit their *sotterranei*, which are for the most part well-lit and provided with enough signage that nobody ever gets lost down there. Photography is forbidden, but you can find excellent postcards of the underground areas at the gift shop.

Many other Roman churches have underground sites that are sometimes open to the public, among them S. Cecilia in Trastevere, built over an early Christian house church and, according to legend, over the bathhouse where Roman authorities tried to steam St. Cecilia to death. S. Crisogono, across Viale di Trastevere from S. Cecilia, has the remains of the original fifth-century church under the present structure. The 11th-century church of S. Nicola in Carcere, at the foot of the Capitoline Hill, occupies the site of three little pagan temples whose foundations can sometimes be visited in the company of an Italian guide.

Ancient churches are, of course, far from the only subterranean sites available to visitors in Rome. The remains of Imperial Rome form a much larger proportion of the underground city. By far the largest buried site is a part of the gigantic Domus Aurea — the Golden House of Nero, a surrealistically extravagant palace built for that half-mad emperor in the mid-first century A.D. and later demolished by the emperors Vespasian and Trajan. Vespasian drained Nero's artificial lake and used the site to build the Colosseum, while Trajan buried what was left of Nero's palace and had a huge bath complex erected above it. Although the Baths of Trajan have never been excavated — their ruins are scattered across a shabby park on the Oppian Hill — an accidental discovery in the 1490s led early adventurers to explore the still-intact rooms of Nero's palace that Trajan's architect had filled with rubble and used as the foundations for the baths. Those rooms have now been excavated and restored, and various groups offer regular guided tours; reservations must be made in advance.

Another category of *sotterranei* are the dozen or so Mithraea scattered around Rome. These are rooms dedicated to worship of the

(See Viaggio on Page 50)



The largest buried site in Rome is a part of the gigantic Domus Aurea — the Golden House of Nero.

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by Charles P. Pecoraro

Arizona's Panepinto shares his recipe for Pollo Cacciatore

Walking into Saporì d'Italia in Fountain Hills, Ariz., can make the same first impression as taking an 8,000-mile step into someone's home in Sicily.

Atmosphere at the rustic ristorante-pizzeria — murals of Italian scenes, heavy wooden tables, woven-seat chairs, lamps hanging from the ceiling — looks and feels like what you might expect in a typical Sicilian household. Even more convincing, however, is the food.

Here's where Lorenzo Panepinto comes in. He's the chef and co-owner of the 9-month-old venture whose responsibility it is to recreate the dishes and flavors synonymous with southern Italy in central Arizona.

Panepinto, partner with his wife Cosimo and long-time friends Gaspare and Maria Manno, also owns another pizzeria in nearby Scottsdale. He previously had a similar eatery on the Arizona State University campus in Tempe, and before that on Long Island, N.Y.

Both families, whose sons and daughters work at the restaurant in various capacities, have roots traced to Sicily. Their heritage is reflected in the Sicilian symbol *trinacria* used on the menu, signs and other material.

At Saporì (480-816-9535), Panepinto makes his own mozzarella, used in pizza, pasta and other preparations. Maria Manno is the baker whose specialties include cheesecake, tiramisù, cannoli and pignolata cookies.

The chef is a stickler for freshness and top-notch ingredients. Flour is imported from Italy, as are olives, spices, cheeses and olive oil. "Ingredients can make or break any dish," he said. "The products I use make a big difference in quality and taste."

"Whatever Lorenzo feels like making when he arrives in the morning is what shows up on the blackboard that day," said Cosimo. "For instance, if we hear him pounding veal in the kitchen, we know that a veal dish will be one of the dinner specials."

Panepinto's signatures include pollo cacciatore, or hunter's style chicken laced with wine. His recipe:

Pollo Cacciatore

1 pound chicken breast
2 green peppers, sliced
1 red pepper, sliced
1 yellow pepper, sliced
16 dry black olives
4 ounces mushrooms, sliced
1 yellow onion, sliced
4 ounces red wine
1/2 cup chicken broth
12 ounces marinara sauce
1 tablespoon butter
1 cup flour
1 cup vegetable oil
Salt, pepper, oregano to taste

Cut chicken into chunks and dip in flour. Put vegetable oil in frying pan, add chicken and fry until golden brown. Discard oil. Add wine, let it evaporate, then add butter, salt, pepper, oregano, peppers, mushrooms, olives and onion. Add chicken broth, cook for about 4 minutes. Add marinara sauce, cook for 5 more minutes. Serves 4.

IN VINO VERITAS

What's in a name?

by Dick Rosano

Charles Krug doesn't sound the least bit Italian. But were it not for one of America's most famous Italian winemaking families, it might have slipped into oblivion.

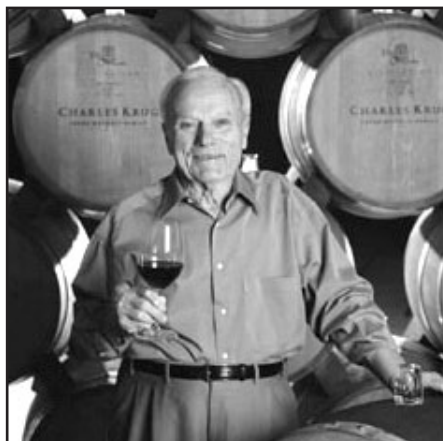
Originally named after its founder, a Prussian, Charles Krug Winery opened its doors in 1861. Placed along a trade route in St. Helena, the winery enjoyed the still-growing demand for wine among the population boom that came to California after the gold rush.

Krug held the property until 1892, adding the Redwood Cellar in 1880 and Carriage House in 1881, which are still standing and listed as federal historic landmarks.

In 1894, James Moffitt took control of the winery, retaining its then-established name.

Under Moffitt's stewardship were some lapses in the production stream — particularly during Prohibition — and the winery did not maintain the reputation known under Krug.

In 1943, after Prohibition had been put aside, the young Mondavi boys sensed an opportunity. The patriarch of the Mondavi family, Cesare, had moved his family to California from Minnesota and practiced winemaking at various locations over the years. His sons, Robert and Peter, convinced their father that this venerable winery would give them the roots they needed to build a profitable business in wine. They bought it from Moffitt for \$75,000.



To ensure they benefited from the past reputation, they kept the Charles Krug name, and it has remained so ever since. In 1965, Robert left to found his own winery, but brother Peter stayed to raise the stakes — and the quality — of Charles Krug Winery.

Over the years, Peter is credited with introducing a number of innovations in Napa Valley winemaking. He brought vintage dating for varietal wines, cold fermentation for white wines, cold sterile filtration, and fermentation in small French oak barrels.

Decades later the verdict is in: Peter's efforts, and the efforts of his sons Peter Jr. and Marc, have established Charles Krug Winery as a leader in American wine.

Marc studied viticulture and enology at the University of California

(Davis) and marketing at California State University (Sacramento) — He returned to the family business in 1978, after completing his studies.

Peter Jr. studied engineering at Stanford, earning both a bachelor's and a master's degree in the field. He later added an MBA to his credits, then brought his education and skills back to Charles Krug. While he's involved in the winemaking process, his focus is on the large investment program at the winery.

Although the wines have been good
(See *In Vino Veritas* on Page 50)



The name may be Prussian, but under the stewardship of the Mondavi family, the Charles Krug Winery has emerged as an Italian-American success story.

ANTIPASTI

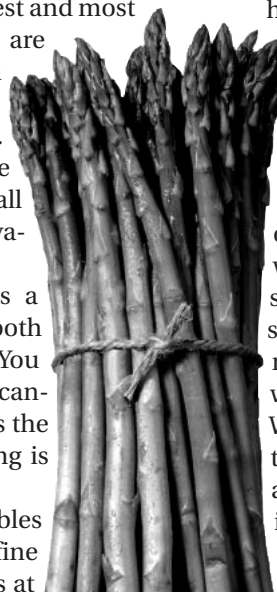
A lasting summer

by Chef Michael Ponzio

The best time of the year is upon us. Fruits and vegetables are at their sweetest and most delicious and farmers markets are everywhere. The only sad thought is the thought of the long winter months to come. How can we as cooks take the beauty of summer and enjoy it all year round? One word ... preservation.

Preserving food products is a long-practiced method used by both home and professional cooks. You may have heard of it as pickling, canning or jarring, but the process is the same. The key to good preserving is all in the ingredients.

Find yourself the best vegetables you can. My preference is the fine produce of the Michigan farmers at



local markets, but a good grocery store can have some beautiful produce as well.

Once you have the vegetables, all you need is a mason jar, vinegar, sugar, spices and a pot of water. Let's use asparagus as an example.

In a large pot, boil two gallons of clean water. Place a second pot on the stove with 3 cups of white wine vinegar, 3 tablespoons of sugar, a pinch of salt, one tablespoon of pickling spice (available in most grocery stores), and one cup of water. Bring the mixture to a boil. While the vinegar mixture is coming to a boil, cut the bottom parts of the asparagus off and pack them tightly in a clean, 1 liter mason jar. Strain the boiling vinegar into the jar,

(See *Antipasti* on Page 50)

BABINI

(Continued from Page 35)

Coast; I've played New York City a few times, and I've been playing some theaters in Connecticut, which is awesome because that's where I grew up.

FN — Has there been any major label interest? How do you feel about that system given the state of the music industry?

AB — They're interested, but nothing's for sure yet. But labels today are definitely over-rated; the whole system is breaking down. It's not what it used to be. A lot of artists want to do it by themselves. I'm working with my own publicist, my own college booking agent and my own publisher — so just that makes a statement. But I also have friends who've been signed to a label, and they've gone from playing small clubs to festivals in front of large crowds. And a lot of times, you need a label to do that. ... I've been writing and traveling for almost four years now. I know what songs get through people. I've done the market research, and I think that's something a label could take advantage of.

FN — What is your songwriting process like?

AB — I'm constantly writing songs. It's not so much finding time to write as just sitting down to get all my ideas. Even before I sit down with the instruments, I have an idea of the song in the head. If there's a melody I'm trying to write down, I keep a lot of rough demos. I send voice mails to myself — I don't want to forget what the words are or the melody is going to be. Though I do get a couple of weird looks from people when they see me singing into a phone. (Laughs.)

FN — Did growing up in an Italian-American family have any impact on your musical upbringing?

AB — I've always wanted to go to Italy and be inspired by all of that. I have family there; I didn't know this until recently, but I have a lot of cousins there and I've always thought about going, maybe this year. There are a million things that have influenced the music, especially the household I grew up in. I'm Italian on my father's side, and he's big into classical guitar music, so that was a big influence on me. He also had his Frank Sinatra records, and I got into those later in life. I love him.

FN — So are you content for now? Or eager to climb that next rung on the music business ladder?

AB — I can never say I'm fine where I am: I have to keep moving. I just got a college booking agent, and I playing love colleges, so I'm going to keep doing that. One of my big goals for 2009 is to get my songs into TV and film. Finding the perfect match for a label or a management company might be the next baby step for me on this set of stairs. And I'd love to do more opening slots for the artists I really love. That's one of my goals. I have a lot of goals.

To sample the music of Alexis Babini, visit myspace.com/alexisbabini.

SCIENCE

(Continued from Page 35)

ed his career at MIT, serving as associate professor in the Department of Psychology and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory from 1981 to 1984. These prestigious positions in the United States came as the result of his work from 1971 to 1981 at the world-renowned Max Planck Institute for Biological Cybernetics in Germany. He earned a Ph.D., graduating summa cum laude, in theoretical physics from the University of Genoa, Italy, in 1970.

Tomaso Poggio was born on Sept. 11, 1947, in Italy, and from an early age had a fascination with the science of the brain. He was particularly intrigued by the problem of intelligence and how to affect or increase it. His initial studies led him to the area of

mathematics and physics. These were foundational to his desire to understand how the brain worked.

"As a kid I was fascinated by the problem of intelligence. What made Einstein such a genius? I wanted to know what is intelligence, how to increase it and how to build intelligent machines," Dr. Poggio commented in a 2004 interview in Current Biology. His 1970 doctoral thesis, "On Holographic Models of Memory," was a combination of biophysical and mathematical models applied to how we remember. This multidisciplinary approach to a neurological issue led to his acceptance at the Planck Institute as a research assistant.

While at the Planck Institute, Dr. Poggio expanded his research horizons through the application of theoretical mathematics to various brain functions. He did so by applying empirical experiments to models and theories to ensure that what was theorized can have practical proof through experimentation. After 10 years in Germany, he was offered a position at MIT in the United States, which he quickly accepted. For the past 28 years, he has been a fixture in academia and research at MIT.

Dr. Poggio is a prolific author, with many books and hundreds of peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals. He has also been a contributor to many textbooks and reviews in the neurosciences and related areas. He is a sought-after lecturer and speaker worldwide and has numerous memberships and honorary degrees from institutions and universities around the globe.

Perhaps his most renowned works are related to the use of specialized mathematical computations in the fields of computer vision and bioinformatics, the application of information technology to the field of molecular biology. In addition, his research into vision led to seminal contributions in stereopsis, which is the ability of the brain to determine depth based on the geometrical parameters of the two images intersecting between the eyes.

Dr. Poggio has received hundreds of awards and recognitions, with his most recent recognition as Distinguished Lecturer coming from the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C., on April 24, 2009. Last year, he was the Distinguished Speaker at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's information processing techniques conference. In addition, he serves on numerous editorial boards and advisory groups covering a wide array of scientific disciplines from the neurosciences to mathematics to computer technology.

When asked why the process of learning is the focus of his research, Dr. Poggio commented, "It is our ability to learn what preserves our individual freedom and our human dignity, and can effectively save each one of us from the imperialism of the genes. My specific interest in the scientific aspects of learning is mirrored in my broader belief that research and education are the key engine of evolution for our culture and society."

Science may never entirely figure out how our brains work, but Dr. Tomaso Poggio, an Italian-American scientist and researcher, is dedicating his life to unlocking its secrets.

NEWSMAKERS

(Continued from Page 35)

education and admits it helped mold the man he is today.

A fierce opponent of bigotry in any form, Bennett marched beside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma. Bennett remembers, "That is what was needed at that time. I was glad to stand by Dr. King. It is amazing in 40 years, look how much Dr. King made happen. Now just look — we have President Obama saying, 'Yes we can!'"

What also helped mold the man was his tight-knit, very Italian family. Bennett recalls his youth, "My father died when I was 10. My mother had to raise three children during

the Depression. My mother worked so hard. She sewed dresses for one penny per dress just to feed her children. I remember one particular Thanksgiving when I was 7 and my mother was crying because we had no food. I felt so bad for her because I knew even then how hard she was working and trying. I went to the movies because I heard they were raffling off turkeys. I bought a ticket and of all things to happen I won. I walked in with a turkey on Thanksgiving and I became very famous in my family."

Bennett fondly recalls how he got his start in show business. "Every Sunday my family, my uncles and aunts, my cousins and nieces would come over and make a circle around my brother, sister and me. We were their entertainers. They encouraged us so much and we loved it so much that I became an entertainer and I am still in show business today."

Bennett also explains how he went from Anthony Benedetto to Tony Bennett: "It's quite a story, Rosemary Clooney and I were the first American idols and were competing on the "Robert Q. Lewis Show" a long time ago. Rosemary won the competition and I came in second. The great entertainer Pearl Bailey saw the show. She got a kick out of my performance and gave me an opportunity by putting me in her show that was being performed in Greenwich Village. It was a special show, an all-black revue. At the same time, Bob Hope was performing at the Paramount. ... Bob came down to the Village to see Pearl Bailey and he enjoyed meeting me, maybe because I was the only white kid in the show. He called me over and asked my name and at that time I was using the stage name of Joe Bari. He asked for my real name and I said Anthony Dominick Benedetto. He told me my name was too long for the marquee and he said he was going to Americanize it and he looked at me and said, 'You are now Tony Bennett.'"

And, as you all know, the rest is history. Bennett's interview goes on to discuss his various passions, like his Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, his own artwork and wife Susan. Susan is also interviewed on how she got to be Mrs. Tony Bennett.

THE FELLAS FROM PHILLY

What would summer be without "Beach Blanket Bingo," "Muscle Beach Party" or Frankie Avalon? A native son of Philadelphia, Francis Thomas Avallone has been entertaining us since he was 12. He was recently catapulted back into the spotlight when he performed live on "American Idol" in April. Fifty years later and Avalon can still make the girls blush when he sings "Venus." Debuting in 1959, "Venus" was the No. 1 hit on the "Billboard Hot 100" for more than five weeks.

Topping the charts again and keeping him forever young, Entertainment Weekly ranked him No. 2 as one of "The Top 17 Hottest Teen Idols" in history.

A man with a good work ethic and passion for entertaining, Avalon is on the road six months out of the year touring with the Golden Boys. His tour kicked off in July and will wrap with a New Year's Eve performance in Las Vegas.

For the remaining six months of the year, he spends countless hours as the national ambassador for the National Arthritis Foundation, annually hosts the Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon and runs his own company — Frankie Avalon Venus Ltd.

In addition to music, movies and memorabilia, Avalon's company carries his patented line of self-tanning spray called "Twilight Tan" and a topical homeopathic pain medication called "Zero Pain."

Avalon has eight children.

And, really, what would summer be without a little Moondoggie? James William Ercolani, a.k.a. Jimmy Darren, might be best known for his role on "Gidget," but he recently regained the limelight when he stared as Vic Fontaine in "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine."

In a rare interview with Digital Bits, Todd Doogan calls this Philly native "one of the coolest guys who ever walked the Earth. I mean that in every possible way of cool there is. Here's a checklist: Hung out with the Rat Pack? Check. Drag-raced on the streets of Philly? Check. Worked with Anthony Quinn, William Shatner and Burl Ives? Check, check and check. This guy

even directed episodes of 'Hunter,' 'T.J. Hooker' and the frickin' 'A-Team.' His coolness doesn't slow down there. He's the hippest character in the 'Star Trek' universe, he was animated in 'The Flintstones' and lived with comedy legend Buddy Hackett for 12 years."

One of his sons, Jim Moret, is the chief correspondent for "Inside Edition." His third son, Tony Darren, followed in his father's footsteps and is a singer-songwriter.

He and his wife are godparents to Nancy Sinatra's daughter, Frank's first grandchild.

And who can forget the swoon-inducing songs of Fabian? With a charming, smile, timeless good looks and sexy voice, he still knows how to get the girls screaming. For these good reasons, Fabiano Anthony Forte ranks No. 3 in Entertainment Weekly's "The Top 17 Hottest Teen Idols" in history.

Since the 1950s, Fabian has had over a dozen Billboard hits, starred in 40-plus films and even posed for "Playgirl." And it just so happens this South Philly native is one the Golden Boys who hangs and tours with EW's No. 2, Frankie Avalon.

Currently Fabian and his wife, the former Miss Pennsylvania USA as well as the Bituminous Coal Queen, work tirelessly for the American Diabetes Foundation and the American Heart Association. In January he was awarded the Harvey Award from the James M. Stewart Foundation and he has taken a position on their board.

His son Christian is a screenwriter who is currently working on "The Monkey Wrench Gang," scheduled for release in 2010.

LEGENDS

(Continued from Page 39)

quick for the weight of the bat you use. As a result, you're out in front of the ball too much." Kiner felt that being in front of the ball and pulling it all the time made it too easy for opposing defenses to steal hits from Zarilla. Starting at the beginning of the 1948 season, he went from a thirty-two ounce bat to a thirty-six ounce bat.

Finally, in spring training of 1948, Brown's manager Zack Taylor noticed that at certain times Zarilla would consistently hit balls directly to the shortstop. In the Baseball Digest article, Taylor told Drees "When he (Zarilla) was trying to hit to the opposite field, he'd hold on to the bat too long. The result was that he was hitting most every ball so the shortstop could handle it."

Zarilla took all these different pieces of advice to heart and worked them all into his hitting philosophy at the start of the new season in 1948. The results were nothing short of miraculous. By the middle of May, Zarilla was batting .478! According to a piece in the May 19, 1948, edition of The Sporting News by Dent McSkimming, Earle Combs (who was now coaching for the rival Boston Red Sox) approached Zeke after he'd enjoyed a four-for-four day against the Bosox and told him ".450 in May and .250 in September." Whether Combs was just uttering what is usually a baseball truism due to the fatigue of a long season or whether he was referring to Zarilla's specific track record of inconsistency is unknown. What we do know is that Zarilla took the comment as a challenge and enjoyed what was arguably the best season of his career, batting .329 with 12 home runs and 74 runs batted in. His sterling season was rewarded with an invitation to the 1948 All Star game.

Al Zarilla was, without question, the best hitter on the whole St. Louis Browns team in 1948. Even so, when he came out of the gate a little slow at the start of the 1949 season, batting only .250 after 15 games, he was traded. Truth be told, he was the very last player from the 1944 pennant winner to be released or traded away. Further truth is that he was pretty pleased. He went from a perennial basement dweller in the Browns to a perennial pennant contender in the Boston Red Sox.

The difference in team dynamics was immediately evident to Zarilla. "The big change I noticed," said Zarilla in an April 1950 article in The Sporting News, "was the attitude of the Sox. They had that feeling of a team that knows it's good and the boys felt

(Continued on the next page)

they should be near the top all the time.” According to Zarilla, he was nervous when he first joined his new ball club and was trying to do too much. Manager Joe McCarthy talked to Zarilla and helped him to relax.

The 1949 pennant race was a nail-biter immortalized by David Halberstam in the book “Summer of ’49.” Zarilla helped his new club with his glove as much as his bat, making some memorable catches in right field to keep the Red Sox in games. That’s why it was all the more painful on the last day of the season, a playoff game between the Yankees and Red Sox, that it was Zarilla who made a diving plunge for a sinking, slicing bloop double off the bat of rookie Jerry Coleman down the right field foul line that just eluded his grasp. That hit sealed the Yankee victory and pennant.

For years afterward, Coleman remembers feeling guilty over the “cheapness” of the hit. Halberstam remembers that “Forty years later, (Ted) Williams could still remember that last game of the 1949 pennant race. ‘Oh, God, that cheap hit, that cheap god**** hit,’ he said. ‘It’s like yesterday. Coleman is up. Tex makes a good pitch. A damn good pitch. Then Bobby (Doerr) is going back and Zeke (Zarilla) is coming in. Oh, Jesus, I can still see it with my eyes closed. Zeke is diving for it, and then I see it squirting to the foul line. It’s funny how you can remember something so painful so clearly.’”

Zarilla finished the 1949 season hitting .281 for the Bosox while driving in 71 runs. One of the more remarkable achievements of his 1949 season was his record versus left-handed pitchers. Left-handed hitters rarely started games against left-handed pitchers. McCarthy’s intention was to keep Zarilla out of those situations as well but in a May contest against the Athletics, McCarthy was forced to start Zarilla against southpaw pitcher Bobby Shantz. Zarilla went three for four against Shantz, the last hit being a game-winning grand slam home run. McCarthy started to think maybe he didn’t need to pull Zarilla against the lefties. The result was Zarilla ended up hitting an amazing .423 for the Sox when facing left-handed pitching.

1950 was the last great season Zarilla would enjoy in the majors, equaling almost all of his high water offensive marks set in 1948. In fact, he set two more individual records with 10 triples and a whopping .423 on-base percentage. The OBP total was the sixth highest in the American League for 1950. Unfortunately, even though Zarilla finished the season with a .325 average and the Red Sox team finished with an amazing .302 average, they could manage no higher than third place despite their 94 wins. They finished four games behind the dreaded New York Yankees.

The last three years of Al Zarilla’s career were spent more on trains and in automobiles than on the playing field. He was traded to the Chicago White Sox for the 1951 season and hit a mediocre .257 for the year. In 1952, he started with the White Sox, got traded to the Browns and wound up back in Boston before the end of the ’52 season. His major league career ended with a whimper as a part-time player for the ’53 Red Sox when in just 67 at bats he managed only a meager .194 average.

He played three more years in the minor leagues, 1954 and 1955 in the Pacific Coast League and 1956 in the Pioneer League, but the magic was gone. Al Zarilla hung up his spikes for good after the 1956 season.

There’s little information to be found about Zarilla’s post-baseball years. It was known and reported during his playing days that he worked as a grip at the Columbia Pictures movie studio during the off-season. There is some evidence that he worked on and off as a baseball scout in the years following his playing career as well.

In a small newspaper clipping dated Oct. 24, 1970, and found in the Baseball Hall of Fame files, it says, “Ex-major leaguer Al Zarilla will join the Senators’ coaching staff under Ted Williams next year. Williams is said to have promised the job to his former Red Sox teammate, who needs only a few months to be eligible for the pension.”

Zarilla did coach for the Senators in 1971 and then retired. He died in 1996 in Honolulu.

In a 1951 article titled “Zarilla: Top Secret in Boston,” Al “Zeke” Zarilla is described as “overlooked and under-rated.” His manager Steve O’Neill said, “He often gets that extra base the ordinary player wouldn’t think of trying for.”

Bart Giamatti, Yale professor and eventual president of the National League and commissioner of baseball, named Al Zarilla as one of the five outfielders on his All-Time Italian-American Team, the others being Joe and Dom DiMaggio, Sam Mele and Carl Furillo.

Sadly, Zarilla is almost completely forgotten now, a relic of a bygone era. But truly, “Zeke” was a force to be reckoned with in his playing days and a baseball name that all Italian Americans should be proud to remember.

CINEMA

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(Continued from Page 43)

diversion to my dry career in law! I wanted to do something different, something fun. So within two or three years, I decided to pursue acting and I left my career in law behind. For a couple of years though, I was actually a lawyer and an actress! It was definitely interesting. But once I decided to pursue acting, it all moved pretty fast. Deciding to study acting when I was older gave me an advantage because I was more aware of what I was doing, and I already had my own life experiences.

FN — I’d like to talk about your character in “Brave Men.” Tell me a little about Lucia, her passions and also her challenges.

DF — Lucia is definitely a woman who has to rise to a lot of challenges. She’s a woman who needs to create a space for herself in a world that is dominated by men and, of course, she struggles with it. She fights left, right and center to do that. The movie at the same time is a love story and is a depiction of what life was like during the ’80s in the Salento area of Puglia. The love story takes place in the city of Lecce. It describes that historical period and the relationship between two high school friends who loved each other ever since they were kids but were separated and ended up being on the opposite sides of the law. He became a judge and she became head of the Mafia. She lives a very hard life that is full of contradictions. We see her in many different circumstances. Sometimes she’s very harsh and hard. Other times, she’s very sensual and feminine. We also see her as a mother. We see a lot of facets of her personality. That’s the ambiguity of this character that makes the movie so rich: the contradictions, layers and dimensions to Lucia. She would like to be somebody else, but the world that she grew up in turned her into this person. So the movie is about this deep conflict within her, between what she actually is and what she would like to be.

FN — Your performances are always very intense. What do you look for in a character that makes you want to take on that role?

DF — What fascinates me and draws me to a certain character is her contradictions, the idea that she can be one thing and so many others at the same time. This is what I saw in Lucia as well as many of my other characters in the past. So what I like to see is development of the character. I like to play a character that starts out in one way and ends up in another. I like when there is an evolution, but the conflict within the character is what ultimately makes me say yes to a part.

FN — Once you decide to portray a character, how do you make the transformation?

DF — First, I observe people that are like the character in real life. In the case of Lucia, I observed women in the Salento region of Puglia. What I noticed the most about them was their sweetness, and at the same time, their ability to lead. They’re very feminine but at the same time, they have everything under control. You see it all in their eyes. They have a dignity about them that comes out of every pore of their skin. Having said that, I also look within myself for my own contradiction as a woman. I think that we have everything that we need inside of us. It’s just a matter of being able to take it out and express it. That’s the type of skill than an actor refines and learns to use. You learn to actually draw from all those rich resources. In real life, people tend not to do that. They put on a mask and display that one character. If they really dug deep within themselves, they would have everything they need to do whatever it is in life they want to do.

FN — At the end of they day, are you happy with the path you chose, leaving law for cinema?

DF — Yes, I am really happy with the path that my career has taken. I can’t complain because I have been offered a wide range of great roles that are very different from each other and are all very intense. I think it’s true that one builds her own path based on her yeses and nos, with what you accept and what you refuse. I chose a road based on my own tastes and sensitivity. I continue to choose roles that actually reflect who I am, what I like and my sense of what cinema should be.

FN — What can we expect from you in the future?

DF — Well, my next project is going to be with the first director I ever worked with, Roberta Torre, and I’m very happy about that. It’s as if it was your first love, you know, the first director that you ever worked with. I learned how to be in front of the camera with her, so it’s great for me to go back and work with her. The film is a beautiful story about a mother/daughter relationship. I’m really looking forward to working on it.

Several of Finocchiaro’s films are available through Amazon and Netflix, including “Angela” and “The Wedding Director” (“Il regista di matrimoni”), which costars the great Sergio Castellitto.

IO VAGABONDA

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(Continued from Page 43)

seemed to me, though, that the Arthurian search for the Holy Grail might have been a quest more easily accomplished than finding a job in the United States in this particular time in history.

For the entire eight years I spent in Italy, I can’t remember a time when I wasn’t working. All right, let me clarify that. I spent an enormous amount of time not working, actually goofing around and probably having more fun than anyone really should, but I was always employed in one form or another. Even though I was an illegal alien the entire time I was there, I could somehow always find work easily and often. True, it was never what one could classify as “white collar” or anywhere near such a nomenclature, but some sort of employment was always available. And I found that the approach to the idea of “work” was very different in Italy than anything I had been taught growing up in America. The overall philosophy there is that it’s more important to work to live than live to work.

I remember when I first began studying the Italian language, in my textbook there was a little story about a shop owner who put up a sign on the front door of his store one day that read, “Earned enough money for today. Gone to the beach.” I laughed like the rest of the students in the class that day, as such a thing seemed just downright silly by our American standards. However, once I was a permanent resident in Italy, I began to notice signs like that on various shop doors and windows quite frequently, and realized it wasn’t a joke. And I began to think that Italy was someplace I just might be able to call home, as this kind of thinking was something I believed I could subscribe to.

American tourists, however, often thought very differently. I witnessed everything from mild annoyance to outright anger if a tourist would find a store closed. They would look at the store hours posted in the window, look at their watch, look at the store hours again, look at their watch again, and then throw their hands up in the air in utter despair, sometimes followed by stomping feet and/or bad words. I would always know, however, that the owner of that particular store went to visit their mother in the hospital, had a last minute phone call from a friend who needed to talk, or took their daughter to an amusement park. “Work” was a way to earn money, yes: enough money to support the important things in life like family, friends and fun. For many Italians, your work doesn’t define you as much as your life does.

Returning to America recently, this stark

contrast in philosophy was even more apparent to me than ever. Shortly after my arrival, I met a man who had recently been laid off from his job of several years. He was distraught, as one could easily imagine that he might be. After talking with him a while, I found out that he had stashed away enough cash that he could easily live at least a year without finding another job. I was thrilled for him! I told him that this time was perhaps a blessing in disguise. I suggested that while he job hunt, he do things he had always wanted to do but never had the time. I optimistically told him that I had faith that another job will come, but how often does one get such a huge lump of free time without the worry of financial stress? We kept in touch during his time of unemployment, and he unfortunately spent a lot of time fretting and complaining about not being a “productive member of society.” I suggested that he do some volunteer work in the meantime, if he needed an outlet for such a desire, but somehow he had it in his mind that if he wasn’t being paid, then it didn’t count. Shortly thereafter, he did find a job, one that he didn’t care for much at all, and was paid a mere fraction of what he had been making before, but his self-esteem issues were alleviated and he felt much better about his life and circumstances. I was happy for him, though I never did fully comprehend his motives. Income is important, this I do understand all too well. But is it the one, key thing that makes a life complete?

Having been unemployed now myself since January of this year, the importance of regular income is an issue I wrestle with on a daily basis. I know how the lack of cash flow can put a nasty dent in one’s self-image, and how having to rely on the kindness of others for your basic survival is a humbling experience to say the least. I do consider myself very fortunate and am sincerely and eternally grateful to be able to search for gainful employment while not living in the park, which is probably where I’d be right now if not for my dear and magnificent friends. I know that these extremely difficult economic times are taking a severe toll on the lives of many, many Americans, and I don’t wish to make light of such a serious issue. It is merely my desire to share a little “perspective spark” that I learned from the Italian people during my stay in their country. We are here in this life for a very limited number of moments. There will always be difficult times, but it’s imperative to remember that there will always be wonderful times, too, if we allow them. It is important that we learn to shift our focus from an obsolete Work Ethic to a new, more all-encompassing Life Ethic, in which unexpected rainy days are not a time for anguish, but are a time to bathe in all the refreshing joys such turns of fate can bring us.

ANCIENT ROME

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to collapse, historians can point with certainty to the two brothers who started the downward slide. The Gracchi brothers, whose names sound more like a good handle for a grocery store chain than instigators of revolution, came into the political arena when Rome’s rapid expansion was straining the government’s ability to rule. Enter Tiberius Gracchus, Tribune of the Plebs in 133 B.C.

Tiberius was very much aware of the land problem plaguing the Roman countryside. He decided he could solve it by reviving an old neglected law that limited the amount of public land (acquired by Rome during conquests) one person could hold to 320 acres. Land in excess would be confiscated and redistributed to the poor. According to custom, Tiberius first should have brought his agrarian bill before the Senate for approval.

He bypassed the Senate and went straight to the concilium plebes. This incensed the Senate, which wasn’t big on reforms, especially ones that impacted their landholdings. They tapped another tribune,

(Continued on the next page)

Octavius, to veto the bill as was his right. Tiberius, in an unprecedented move, used the council to depose Octavius. By denying the right of veto by a colleague, Tiberius took a step toward the removal of all constitutional restraints on popular will. It was tyranny in action. The bill was passed, and Tiberius also decided to stand as tribune another year, even though this violated the law of limited tenure. Ultimately, a group of senators killed Tiberius and 300 of his followers in a street riot.

For the first time in Rome's domestic politics, the Senate had resorted to violence in response to a new and very real threat by the plebs. The boundaries of proper behavior had been crossed. All those who witnessed the transgressions had an “aha” moment. Why bother with *mos maiorum*, the way of the ancestors? Why not simply kill your political opponents?

The next troublemaker up to bat was brother Gaius Gracchus, tribune in 123 and 122 B.C. Gaius was a flamboyant demagogue who tried to lessen the power of the Senate as well as seek revenge for his brother's death. He came in with a program of reform bills he wanted passed that benefited the welfare of the people but weakened the Senate. One piece of legislation, however, made him unpopular with both Senate and Rome's “mob.” He proposed granting citizenship to the Latins and Latin rights to all other Italian allies. Citizenship was something the Romans selfishly guarded. Perceiving a threat to the state, the Senate took out another Gracchus brother. In a bloody street riot in Rome's center, 3,000 of G. Gracchus' supporters were murdered and Gracchus himself possibly committed suicide. The bodies of both brothers were tossed in the Tiber. Cast off with them were the old established patterns of behavior, an ominous portent of things to come. Violence, anarchy and civil war were now possibilities for any ambitious man seeking power and wealth.

Gaius Marius, a “new man” of humble origins and the uncle of Julius Caesar through marriage, was the next popular protagonist to leave his mark on Rome. Marius was a great military leader who first impressed the people of Rome by successfully ending a war that began in 111 B.C. with King Jugurtha of Numidia (Algeria), a war that the incompetent Senate hadn't been able to win in four years. Over the protest of the Senate, Marius was elected consul in 107 B.C., an office he held seven times. Next, Marius resolved a looming threat to Italy itself posed by two Germanic tribes menacing close to the Italian borders. Three Roman armies had met with defeat. The people of Rome were panicked as they remembered the ferocious barbarian invasion of 390 B.C. that destroyed Rome. Marius was awarded unparalleled power (*imperium*) to fight the battles and was held in awe by the Roman populace when he succeeded in crushing the enemy by 101 B.C.

In order to achieve his significant victories, Marius overhauled the entire Roman military system, transforming the army from a militia of Roman citizen farmers to a paid professional force drawn from the noncitizen urban proletariat. This was a big deal and inadvertently led directly to the downfall of the Republic. Now a soldier's loyalty rested not with the Roman state but with his commander, the man who would share the spoils of war with him. Though Marius retired when his incompetence began to show, he came back to lead and stir up trouble in the years that followed.

Rome's next big event was the Social War. In 91 B.C., war was instigated when an arrogant tribune named Drusus was murdered for again proposing the enfranchisement of the Italian noncitizen allies. The allies had fought alongside the Roman citizens, yet suffered from economic inequities. This time, the angry allies rose up in arms and seceded to form a new state, Italia. It was a pointless, savage civil war that lasted three years and ended with the rightful granting of citizenship to all free Italians. Rome's next great leader, the sociopath Lucius Cornelius Sulla, emerged during the Social War.

Sulla proved to be a talented military leader and led forces in the south of Italy. Marius came out of retirement to lead in the

north. There was no love lost between the two men. Sulla was a pedigreed though impoverished nobleman who championed the traditional *optimates*, while Marius sided with the *populares*. Once the Social War ended, all hell broke loose between them, plunging the Republic into a horrifying abyss of violent civil war. And, so, the saga continued.

In 89 B.C., while Sulla and Marius were engaged in the Social War, King Mithridates VI of Pontus leaped at the opportunity to wreak havoc in the east. He seized Roman Asia and encouraged a Greek revolt. Though the figures are probably exaggerated, the king ordered the execution of 80,000 Italians and Romans living in his domain. Both Marius and Sulla hungered for the command to crush the king. The Senate gave the post to their buddy, Sulla, who was consul in 88 B.C. An elderly Marius, however, seeking the rewards of conquest for himself, linked up with a vibrant tribune named Sulpicius. He manipulated the *populares* plebeian assembly to name Marius commander to the same post.

When word reached Sulla, he was in Campania with six legions. Furious, he marched his army against Rome itself in an unprecedented act of revolution, claiming he was liberating the city from a despot. The blood of civil war washed the streets of Rome, and Sulla's army emerged victorious. Marius escaped to Africa, and Sulla went off to fight King Mithridates. The situation crystallized the growing tension between *optimates* and *populares* and demonstrated a new level of disrespect for Rome's constitutional forms. Mayhem now ruled the day.

Sulla and Marius weren't yet done with one another or with Rome. While Sulla was engaged with Mithridates, Marius returned to Rome in 87 B.C. with a small force of motley recruits and joined forces with a rebel consul named Lucius Cinna. Together they stormed Rome and engaged in revenge butchery, slaughtering those Sulla supporters who had betrayed him. Marius made himself consul for the seventh and last time in 86 B.C., but died shortly after taking office. His supporters, however, remained.

Meanwhile, Sulla forged a rather dishonorable peace with Mithridates in exchange for money and supplies. After looting Roman Asia, he returned to wreak more havoc on the Roman people. He fought a vicious civil war, eventually declaring himself dictator with no limits, and proceeded to rid the entire country of his enemies. He posted lists called *proscriptions* naming all political opponents who could be murdered for a price, their property then sold off at auction for discounted prices. Thousands were brutally annihilated.

Historian Appian writes: “Some were ... bodily heaved up from where they were and taken and thrown at Sulla's feet. Others were dragged through the street and kicked to death, the spectators being too frightened to utter a word of protest.”

Those who escaped were hunted down by spies. Decapitated heads were displayed in public. Three thousand were slaughtered in the Circus Maximus on one day. When Sulla had finished with his atrocities, he proceeded to restore the government to its former position where the *optimates* and Senate once again wielded power. His goal had not been to overthrow the government but to restore it. In truth, however, his actions only hastened the destruction of the Republic. He hadn't addressed the underlying cause for discontent and left a legacy of hatred.

VIAGGIO

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Persian deity Mithras — a male-only cult especially popular with Roman soldiers that featured a gory initiation rite in which the new member was bathed in the blood of a sacrificed bull. Mithraic cult rooms can be identified by the presence of a stat-

ue group, or a relief sculpture on an altar, showing Mithras killing a bull. There's a Mithraeum below S. Clemente; others (open only occasionally) can be found under the little church of S. Prisca on the Aventine Hill and under the church of S. Stefano Rotondo; there's one close to the Circus Maximus, one under the Baths of Caracalla, and still another beneath Palazzo Barberini.

Enough remains of the Colosseum and at least the outlines of the Circus Maximus for modern visitors to imagine them as what they originally were: an immense sports arena and a racecourse. It's less obvious that Rome's marvelous Piazza Navona — site of Bernini's Fountain of the Four Rivers, Borromini's church of S. Agnese in Agone, and the splendid Pamphili family palazzo that's now the Brazilian embassy — was also once an ancient Roman racecourse. An aerial view clearly shows the elongated oval shape, a smaller version of the Circus Maximus. Since some of Rome's most expensive real estate rims Piazza Navona, it's obvious why archeologists can't excavate there. They've had to content themselves with digging out a small portion of the northernmost curve, exposing the stonework of the stadium, built for the emperor Domitian in the late first century A.D. Visitors can peer down into the site from the street and guided tours are sometimes offered, but they're a disappointment, as the excavations aren't extensive and the tour doesn't show you much more than what you can see from the street. Rumor has it, though, that all the privately owned buildings around Piazza Navona have well-preserved remains of Domitian's stadium in their basements.

There are many more underground sites to be found in Rome, among them one that's quite exotic and others decidedly down-to-earth. Visitors are often puzzled by the sight of a pyramid in Rome, rearing up near the Porta S. Paolo, in the middle of a busy network of streets. Once, while on a bus with my friend and fellow Fra Noi writer Terri Maxfield, we overheard some tourists exclaiming, “Oooh look! A pyramid! I wonder what they used it for?” “That's where they buried the gladiators,” Terri muttered in my ear. Noooo, not really! Built during the height of Roman “egyptomania” in the first century B.C., it's the tomb of Gaius Cestius, a Roman political figure who achieved immortality through his choice of a burial monument. It was long ago broken into and looted — there's no trace of Gaius Cestius beyond the inscription on the exterior that records his name and the extraordinary fact that the pyramid was built in 330 days. Inside, early Christians hewed out a rough little shrine, and steps lead down into below-ground chambers of uncertain use. On rare occasions the interior of the pyramid is open for guided tours, and it's worth going on such a tour if only for the sheer oddity of it.

Continuing down the social ladder as well as literal ladders, there are a couple of other underground sites worth mentioning, as they too are sometimes open for guided tours. One is an amazingly well-preserved ancient Roman fire station, located under a nondescript building just off Viale di Trastevere, at Via della VII Coorte, 9. The strange name — “Street of the 7th Cohort” — refers to this fire station, manned during the time of the emperor Augustus by a Roman military unit known as a cohort. Fires were so common and so destructive in an era when Rome was largely a city of wood and brick that the emperor put highly trained military personnel in charge of fire-fighting. After descending a long, steep staircase the visitor enters a complex of rooms that includes sleeping quarters, storage areas, a latrine and a large central courtyard (once open to the sky) with a fountain at its center. There's even what appears to be a shrine, dedicated to whatever deity protected firemen. Fighting fires has always been a dangerous job.

If you've ever wondered how Rome, a city of more than a million at the height of the imperial period, accommodated people's — ah — sanitary needs, a visit to one of the ancient city's only surviving public latrines will answer the question. The Forica della via Garibaldi, on the Janiculum Hill near the church of S. Pietro in Montorio, is hidden behind a modern door and getting to it requires a tricky descent — by ladder at the time I visited. The latrine consists of a room with a series of keyhole-shaped holes cut into a long marble slab and set over a trench that used to be furnished with running water, the latter courtesy of Trajan's nearby

aqueduct. No privacy provided — users would have sat cheek to cheek, so to speak, and whether it was sex-segregated is unknown. But if an ancient Roman asked “Ubi forica est?” — Where's the bathroom? — a fellow citizen could have pointed to this and hundreds of similar facilities all over the city.

IN VINO VERITAS

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through the years, the Mondavi family initiated a capital improvement project in 1999 that continues today, to invest more in vineyard development and technology, improve wine-making techniques and facilities, and to prove that great American wine can also be great world wine.

Vineyard improvements have included replanting most of the acreage to Bordeaux varieties, based on extensive research in clones and rootstock. Winery improvements include a new barrel program of French oak and more precise timing, new equipment for crushing and destemming, a new fruit sorting system to ensure selection of only the highest quality grapes, and new fermentation tanks to ensure greater control of the temperature and length of fermentation.

In 1995, Peter Sr. was honored by the Napa Valley Vintners Association as one of the twelve “living legends” of Napa Valley. In 2009, after spending his entire adult life making wine and making Napa Valley wine more accessible to the public, received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the California State Fair in recognition of his accomplishments.

TASTING NOTES

2008 Sauvignon Blanc (Napa Valley, \$18) — Bright, brilliant flavors of grapefruit, peach and guava. Score: 85

2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Yountville, Napa Valley, \$27) — Scents of blackberries and mocha, repeated on a rich palate, accent on cherries. Score: 86

2005 Generations Family Reserve (Napa Valley, \$50) — A blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot, petit verdot, and syrah, this wine is soft, succulent, and full of dark fruit flavors with a thread of black pepper from front to back. Score: 90

Editor's Note: Dick Rosano's wine rating system is based on quality and price and breaks down as follows: 96-100 (excellent, worth any price), 91-95 (very high quality, worth a high price if you can afford it), 86-90 (high quality, worth the price if you like that type of wine), 81-85 (moderately good, should shop around for best price), 76-80 (some defects but generally acceptable), 70-75 (of doubtful value), below 70 (not worth drinking).

ANTIPASTI

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until it reaches the top and seal the jar tightly with the lid. After the lid is tightly on, gently place the whole mason jar into the boiling water so it is completely submerged and let it boil for 8 minutes. Make sure the jar is completely under water or it will break. Once the 8 minutes have passed, remove the jar and set upside down on the counter for about 20 minutes. Leaving the jar upside down allows a tighter seal to form.

The jar will still be warm when the 20 minutes have passed, but it is OK to turn the jar back over and store it in the pantry. While the asparagus will be good for months, you can start to eat them as soon as one week after processing. The preserved asparagus has a lightly spicy, vinegar flavor perfect for martinis or with a good prosciutto.

There are resources to turn to in looking for more ideas, both in books and online. Remember that it is always good to look for information on the items you are going to preserve before you actually go ahead and do it. So grab a hold of the treasures of the summer and fill your pantry. There is no reason to not have a little bit of sunshine in your pantry on the gloomiest of winter days!

Michael Ponzio is the executive chef of Volare in Oak Brook, Illinois.

VASTOLA AWARD



A humble and most deserving Paul Alongi accepted the Dr. Anthony P. Vastola Award.



UNICO National's highest honor is the Vastola Award named after the founder of UNICO. Many Vastola awardees attended our 2009 Convention.

AROUND THE RITZ CARLTON



INAUGURATION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS



Delegates from UNICO Chapters across the nation enjoyed the inauguration ceremony on Saturday morning. UNICO banners from individual chapters and districts festooned the convention hall.



André DiMino takes the oath of office as President of UNICO National. Outgoing National President Kathi Strozza conducted the ceremony and Jenny DiMino held the Bible.



The UNICO President's gavel is passed to André.



A relieved and happy Kathi Strozza celebrates the end of her UNICO presidential year.



Kathi Strozza joins the PNP Club ! Above, Kathi receives her official PNP pin.



The DiMino family celebrates the chievement of new UNICO President André,



President André delivers his inaugural speech to the convention crowd.



New UNICO National Officers are sworn into office en masse.



Frank Greco receives the UNICO Treasurer's pin as well as all of the responsibilities of the job.



President André and Jenny with the Lipari girls



President & First Lady- André and Jenny DiMino

CONVENTION HOSPITALITY- ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKE GIACAMO A DULL BOY



Deana Martin (Dean Martin's daughter) with our Dean Martin impersonator.



First Lady Jenny DiMino swoons to the music of Dean Martin who was born as Dino Crocetti!



PNP John Alati explains that our Dean Martin impersonator, Andy DiMino, is probably a relative of President André. Both trace their roots back to the small Sicilian village of Grotte.



First Lady Jenny DiMino dances with John Griffeth who is Deana Martin's husband.



President André sings the Dean Martin standard and convention theme song "Ain't That a Kick in the Head" along with our Dean Martin impersonator and surprise guest Deana Martin.

