

IAHF NEWS



Italian American Heritage Foundation Newsletter • February 2015 • Founded August 5, 1975 • Celebrating 39 Years



President's Message

Dear fellow members of the Italian American Heritage Foundation, recently I was elected as your new President. I consider this a great honor which I am very proud to accept.

This organization of people sharing, volunteering, and communing is as good as it gets. Never have I seen so many wonderful people held together by the common bonds of love of ancestry, of the desire to learn of their language and culture, and especially of the ability to bless, give, and share with one another. I promise that I will do my best to promote these great qualities, and also to enjoy and appreciate the people that make this organization so wonderful.

So, my vision for our future becomes simple. I want to do more of what we have been doing, and to help the members of this organization to maintain and grow their strong connections and to continue their love and appreciation for their beautiful Italian culture.

Thank you for your support. I look forward to serving you.

Dave Perzinski

President, Italian American Heritage Foundation



Hensley Residential Historic District

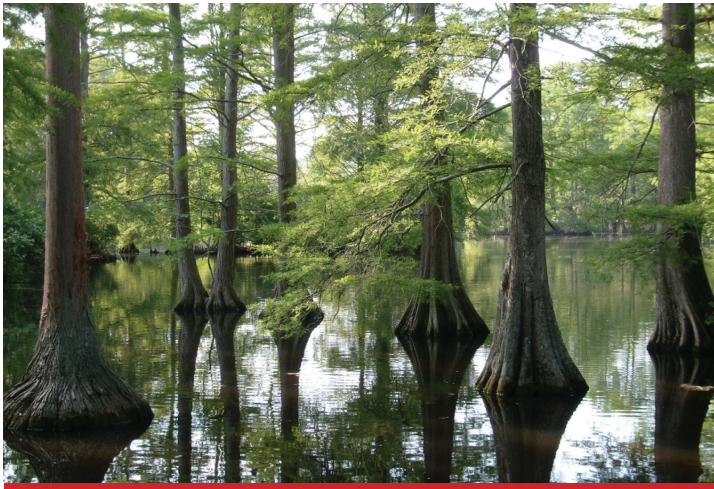
Did you know the Italian American Heritage Foundation is in the Hensley Residential Historic District, San Jose, California?

The neighborhood was named after Samuel J. Hensley and a three block long street between North 1st and North 4th also bears his name.

At the turn of the century, many of the homes on North 2nd and North 3rd Streets were once owned by some of the city's wealthiest residents, while homes on North 5th and North 6th were more often owned by "working class" families.

North Fifth Street, formally Main Street, was intended to move the center of downtown development to the east and the additional width of the street accommodated the Horse Railroad serving the area from 1875 to 1901. The expansion of San Jose State University across South 5th at San Fernando and the demise of the horse railroad significantly changed those plans and a large median island (a portion of which still exists between Julian Street and Empire Street) was constructed down the street.

Beginning with the Great Depression in the 1930's and continuing into the 1940's and 1950's many of these historic homes were turned into boarding houses and converted into multiple living units. The 1960's will be remembered for the flight of homeowners to the suburbs leading to the final decay and destruction of many of San Jose's historic dwellings. Sadly, many of the larger homes were razed to give way to apartment buildings and commercial endeavors. A renewed appreciation for these old homes and the beginning of historic preservation efforts began in the 1970's, was boosted in the 1980's with national recognition and city landmark status, and continues to this day. For more information check www.hensleyhistoricdistrict.org/ -- Richard Stewart 🌿



Alligator Bayou Wendy Lamb Books / Random House

A Review by IAHF Member Richard Vannucci

Thoughtful visitors to our Cultural Heritage Booth at our Family Festa are struck with the plethora of pins stuck in Sicily in the map of Italy, noting where many of our members and visitors trace their roots. These Sicilians also found their way to the lush environs of the Louisiana delta. Tullulah, the site of Donna Jo Napoli's *Alligator Bayou* is the site of a tragic lynching of Italian immigrants during the turn of the century. Napoli's jewel of a novel is based on one of these tragic incidents, the story of 5 Sicilian grocers of Tullulah in 1899. The book was awarded the "Parents Choice" in Italian Studies, and the target audience is teenagers, but the tale is appropriate for all of us.

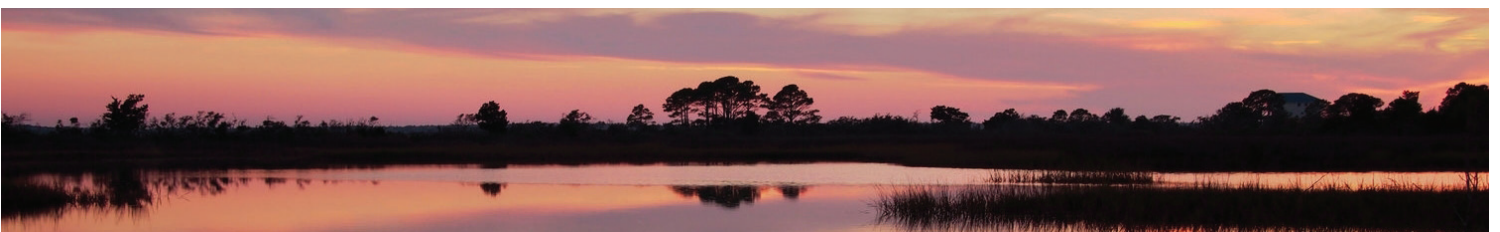
The book, according to Napoli, highlights an aspect of immigration that her readership of all ages is likely to be unfamiliar with. The tale of a folk who looked evil in the face and retained their dignity. It is a message that needs to be absorbed by all of us, as it is an American story. Napoli's tale reconstructs, very carefully, the events that led to the Tullulah lynchings, including a fictitious version of the interaction between the Sicilian grocers and the town doctor. In fact, newspapers in the 1890's document six incidents against these immigrants in the Louisiana area. By far the most notorious one involved the shooting of the Police Commissioner of New Orleans, and reprisal against 20 Italian men who were arrested and jailed on March 14 1891. A mob stormed the jail and killed eleven of the prisoners. Typical of the Jim Crow attitude of the South at the time, a subsequent investigation excused the mob.

This sort of mob justice, occurred again five years later in St. Charles Parish where 3 more immigrants were hung and finally the Tullulah incident, the setting of *Alligator Bayou*, where 5 men were lynched and the Italian community was forced to flee the parish (county).

The major theme of *Alligator Bayou* is the struggle of the Sicilian Grocery Store Owners to succeed in this land despite the bigotry and prejudices of the time, along with the jealousy and tensions that economic success created. To add to the plot Donna Jo Napoli, created a love tale between Calogero, originally from Cefalu, Sicily and a mulatto named Patricia. The romance is of course forbidden, and Patricia warns Calogero of the risk they are taking being seen together. While Calogero's feelings for Patricia continue unabated the twains do not meet.

On the surface the tale is sanguine, and Calogero leaves the bayou town with the urging of a Tunica Indian Chief, Joseph who befriends Calogero, and tells him, he is free to define himself, and to make of himself what he chooses. At the conclusion of *Alligator Bayou*, Donna Jo Napoli, the author, raises some very interesting questions, such as What did it mean for a Sicilian to immigrate to Southern Louisiana. How was the trauma experienced in their daily lives. And the concluding remarks by Calogero, that "I will be back", and return to his new home, represents the roots that the Sicilian immigrants planted throughout Southern Louisiana at a great cost and toil. The drive on the part of these Sicilian "contadini" is amazing and Donna Jo Napoli captures those historic times for Italian immigrants in the South, especially Louisiana. 🌿

Cultural Note: Richard Vannucci is a long time member of the IAHF from Castro Valley, and is one of those "rare breeds" who supports Italian American Heritage throughout the region. He is enthusiastic about his heritage, and the real life experience of Italian Americans. He is also a "Cultural Booster", and recently sent this book review to the IAHF. Another project the IAHF Cultural Committee, will be taking on thanks to Richard, is having author and social commentator, MICHAEL PARENTI speak at the IAHF. We are negotiating a date on that one, but it will be in the evening. He will present on his book "Waiting for Yesterday, pages from a street kids life". Richard and I have had many discussions about our heritage and the one thing we share in common is a fascination or passion for the real story of Italian Americans in the USA. It is an amazing legacy that One: we all share in common and celebrate, and Two: we need to rescue from Hollywood stereotypes! -- Ken Borelli, Chair IAHF Cultural Committee



Where Angels Fear To Tread



Excitement builds as world premiere of 'Angels' approaches

Rehearsals are well under way for our world premiere production of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* on Feb. 7, and the excitement is palpable here at OSJ!

Adding to the anticipation is the recent announcement by ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) that 'Angels' composer Mark Lanz Weiser was announced as the 2015 Nissim Prize Winner for his work, Symphony No. 2.

Visit the OSJ website for complete casting and a synopsis, and don't forget to visit GD Larry Hancock's blog describing his impressions of a musical rehearsal of 'Angels.' To order tickets, go to tickets.operasj.org or call the OSJ Box Office at (408) 437-4450. 🌿



Castel del Monte: "The Crown of Stone"

Andria, Puglia - Built in 1240 by Swabian Frederick II Hohenstaufen, the impressive Castel del Monte has views stretching in every direction including the Murge and the Adriatic as far as the Gargano.

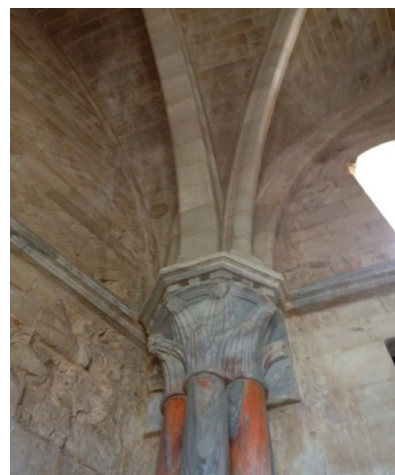
The last descendant of the Norman dynasty, Frederick was born in 1194 and orphaned at four. He inherited the Empire and Kingdom of Sicily and, at the age of 15, married Catherine of Aragon. Over a 30 year period the charismatic Emperor built/restored a system of 111 castles including 11 between 1241 and 1246 in Puglia and Basilicata alone.



Whether or not the geometrically perfect Castel del Monte, without a moat and embrasures, could function as a military defense remains in question but, with its undisputed strategic location, the imposing crown of stone sent the undeniable message of royal power to his people and enemies alike.

Frederick was interested in astronomy and there is speculation that the castle, which receives sunlight all day and has a terrace and courtyard with unobstructed views of the heavens, could have been used as an astronomy observatory.

Built from local stone 540 meters above sea level, the massive octagonal crown-shaped footprint, has two floors with 16 trapezoid rooms, eight on each floor. There are eight octagonal towers on the eight corners with winding staircases in three of the towers and cisterns to collect rain water in the other five. Impressed with the Arab way of living, Frederick II (and his court) adopted their customs of cleanliness. Hence, very modern for its time, some of these towers have baths with toilets and washbasins.



Acquired by the Italian state in 1876, the castle endured serious damage from centuries of wind, extreme temperatures, and neglect. Restoration started in 1879 and continued for decades. In 1966, Castel del Monte became an UNESCO World Heritage Site. I can't help but think that Frederick II would be quite pleased! 🌿

Article by Victoria De Maio - Victoria is a travel consultant, blogger, writer, tour leader, published author, and lover of all things Italian.

Join the IAHF Board

Due to the unforeseen resignation of one of our new board members, there currently is an open position on the IAHF board. It's going to be an exciting year and you can help us build on our great heritage and history in the community. We are looking for new ideas, new perspectives, new voices. So what's stopping you? Call or email us today to get more information or to receive an application for the board contact Nancy Morreale, nancy.morreale@iahfsj.org or 408-368-9094. 🌿

Piemonte Regional Lunch ~ January 15, 2015



Piemonte Regional Lunch ~ January 15, 2015



Spring Fling

Save The Date! Saturday April 11, 2015

Co-Chairs Cathy De Maria and Marge Valente, with their outstanding committee, are planning an exciting dinner event, **SPRING FLING**, to be held at the Italian American Heritage Foundation.

- ~ Social: 6 PM to 7 PM
- ~ Dinner: 7 PM
- ~ Entertainment by Alfie Dreifuss & His MVP Show Band
- ~ \$75 per person

Invitations will be mailed the first week of March. If you are not a member of the IAHF and would like to receive an invitation, call the IAHF office @ **408-293-7122** or send email to events@iahfsj.org ~

What Sets Italian Americans Off From Other Immigrants?

By Vincent J. Cannato

HUMANITIES, January / February 2015 | Volume 36, Number 1



“And so you know the difficulty in becoming an American. It isn’t a sudden process. You get over it. But you don’t ever quite get over it. You carry it with you. That’s the great—and not so great—aspect of being or trying to be an assimilated American.”

So says writer Gay Talese about his experience growing up Italian American in 1940s

South Jersey. It is an introspective and angst-filled admission, somewhat unusual for Italian Americans, who tend to vacillate between voluble romanticism and hardheaded pragmatism. Yet his words are an important reminder that the process of assimilation is often, to borrow a phrase from Norman Podhoretz, a “brutal bargain.”

Talese’s interview comes from a new documentary entitled *The Italian Americans*, scheduled to air on PBS beginning in February. It is a stylish, engaging, and thoughtful documentary of nearly 150 years of history, chronicling the migration of a largely southern Italian population to America, beginning in the late 1800s and following its winding path toward the American mainstream. The documentary touches on the greatest hits of Italian-American life, from Fiorello La Guardia to Mario Cuomo, from Rudolph Valentino to Frank Sinatra, from Sacco and Vanzetti to Joe Valachi, and from Bank of America founder A. P. Giannini to Chef Boyardee.

We live in an era that is increasingly nervous about assimilation, finding it too coercive an idea to impose on new immigrants. A multicultural America seeks better analogies than the old “melting pot” and instead speaks of “salad bowls” and “gorgeous mosaics.” But *The Italian Americans* doesn’t shy away from the idea of assimilation, presenting episode titles like “Becoming Americans,” “Loyal Americans,” and “The American Dream.”

Yet this is no simple-minded tale or romanticized story of plucky immigrant success. It plumbs the complexities of immigrant assimilation and American ethnic identity in relatively sophisticated ways. In addition to the discussion of famous Italian Americans and the thoughts of academic

talking heads, the documentary tries to include the perspectives of average Italian Americans. For this is their history, as much as it is the history of the wealthy and the successful.

Assimilation has never meant a “melting pot” where everyone “melted” into a homogenous “American” stew. As political scientist Peter Skerry writes, assimilation “has typically meant that immigrants have adapted and changed in disparate domains, rejecting their immigrant past in some ways (forgetting their parents’ mother tongue and speaking English, or learning to tolerate individuals with sharply different values) and holding on to other aspects of their heritage (ethnic cuisine, specific religious holidays, family traditions from the homeland).” It is a process that spans generations and involves a fair share of ambivalence. The loss of traditions and a psychic sense of displacement mix with the benefits of becoming a middle-class American. There are always two sides to every bargain.

Italian immigrants began arriving in large numbers in the late 1800s as relatively unskilled labor that helped fuel a booming industrial economy. These Italian workers seemed unlikely new Americans. Most of those early arrivals were young men leaving a semifeudal Italian South that held little in the way of opportunity.



Nearly half of Italian immigrants would eventually return to Italy, but today’s Italian-American community is descended from those who decided to remain in America. They brought over their families and created ethnic enclaves in Northern cities and small industrial towns of Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Each immigrant group possesses its own strategies for survival and success. For Italians, theirs rested upon two pillars: work and family. Italian immigrants helped provide the labor for American factories and mines and helped build roads, dams, tunnels, and other infrastructure. Their work provided them a small economic foothold in American society and allowed them to provide for their families, which stood at the core of Italian-American life.



Another paradox is that although Italian Americans tend to respect authority, especially the authority of parents and elders, they also harbor a suspicion of broader authority figures, such as politicians and the Catholic hierarchy. This stems from the distrust of such authority in Italy. In America, the family stood as a bulwark against the larger, sometimes hostile, institutions. Respect for authority within the family; suspicion of authority outside of the community.

The downside was that Italians often chose to wait to become naturalized citizens, delaying their full inclusion in America's political and civic life. One finds many Italians becoming naturalized in the years 1939 to 1941 as war erupted in Europe. The Second World War would find the United States in conflict with Italy, as non-naturalized Italian immigrants would find themselves briefly branded "enemy aliens."

Yet the war would prove to be the third key foundation of Italian-American assimilation. The stereotypical Hollywood wartime platoon usually included the Italian American from Brooklyn. Over half a million Italian Americans served in the American military during World War Two. Soldiers like Congressional Medal of Honor winner John Basilone, one of thirteen Italian Americans to win the award, became national heroes. Italian Americans now achieved a place in the postwar world, sound track provided by Frank Sinatra.

Even in the 1950s and 1960s, however, Italians encountered prejudice and negative stereotypes. Much of that was related to the Mafia. Often victimized by organized crime, Italian Americans also found their collective reputation tarnished by organized crime, even as they climbed the socioeconomic ladder.

Then there is The Godfather paradox. Written by Mario Puzo, directed by Francis Ford Coppola and starring Al Pacino and Robert De Niro, the first two Godfather films stand as two of the greatest American films of all time.

The movies introduced famous lines into the American lexicon: "I'm gonna make him an offer he can't refuse," "Luca Brasi sleeps with the fishes," as well as the ominous message behind a horse's head in a bed.

The paradox is that one of the great triumphs of modern Italian-American culture has also reinforced many of the negative stereotypes that have long dogged Italian Americans. The book and the movie also provided a more unfortunate justification for organized crime: The business of Don Corleone and his family seemed to differ very little from the business of American capitalists. This dark lesson may have fit with the decade's sense of corruption and disillusionment, but it also seemed to legitimize organized crime.

It has also spawned a whole genre of mob-related imitators, including Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas* and *The Sopranos*, one of the best television shows of all time. There seems to be no end to mob-themed entertainment, yet there is no denying the greatness of some of the work or its popularity among Italian Americans, as well as the broader public. Mafia-related shows and movies, plus reality entertainment shows like *Jersey Shore* and *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*, present a skewed version of Italian-American life.



The Italian Americans condemn those cultural stereotypes that still permeate media depictions of Italian Americans before returning to Roseto, Pennsylvania, a small working-class town with a large Italian-American population. In the early 1960s, a medical survey found its residents had a lower-than-average incidence of heart disease. Researchers argued that the explanation lay in the social cohesion of a community centered on large Italian families, the local Catholic church, and ethnic associations.

When researchers returned to Roseto years later, however, they found that heart disease rates were no longer exceptionally low, but rather in keeping with other nearby towns. What happened? As the older generation aged, their local institutions weakened. The young generation grew up and moved out of their tight-knit ethnic enclaves, experiencing the benefits of upward mobility.



The Roseto story itself contains a bit of romanticizing. Anyone familiar with large Italian families knows that they can be a source of comfort and stability, but also a source of tension and stress. Nevertheless, the story of Roseto plays into a deep-seated nostalgia for the “old neighborhood.” The conflict between romanticism and pragmatism again raises its head; Italians long for the simpler past and old neighborhoods, but they have also been quick to leave those neighborhoods for greener pastures—and larger houses.

The documentary is ambivalent about these changes. It segues from Roseto to Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, the site of a murder of a young black man by a mob of mostly Italian Americans in the late 1980s. The idea is that the isolation and insularity of the “old neighborhood” is also problematic. Assimilation means not just giving up the language of one’s ancestors, but also learning to live in a pluralistic society.

Finally, we are left with a third-generation Italian American who goes to Sicily in search of his family roots. In recent decades, genealogy has exploded among Americans. In the past, genealogy was mostly the preserve of old-stock Americans seeking to trace their family trees back to the Puritans and Pilgrims. Today, with the popularity of web-

sites like Ancestry.com and easy access to immigrant ship manifests at the Ellis Island website, genealogy has exploded among Americans of a more recent vintage.

Some Italian Americans are researching their ancestors and turning to Italy to regain a kind of authenticity of experience they feel has been lost in the assimilation process. One reason why many of our ancestors did not spend time dwelling on the past was that they understood there was little future for them in Italy. The process of immigration thrust an insular people deeply rooted in family and place into the modern world. Once in America, that conflict between deeply rooted traditions and the possibilities of a new life grew. Their descendants have been dealing with that tension for generations.

As Italian Americans rediscover Italy and their immigrant ancestors, new immigrants from across the globe are continually arriving in America. They are making their own lives and navigating the complicated process of adapting to a new world while not completely surrendering the past.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, history doesn’t repeat itself. These new immigrants face their own unique challenges, different from those of Italian immigrants. It would be a mistake to say *The Italian Americans* represents a roadmap for assimilation. Instead, it is a useful reminder of the duality of immigrant life, of the strivings and contortions of those who live in the present while simultaneously facing both the past and the future. 🌿

About the Author

Vincent J. Cannato teaches history at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and is the author of *American Passage: The History of Ellis Island*, which was written with the support of an NEH-research fellowship.

Funding Information

The Italian Americans was supported with \$500,000 in funding for development and production. It will air on February 17 and 24.





MANGIA! *The IAHF's Regional Lunches*

By Ken Borelli

There are very few words in the Italian Language as well loved or understood as the verb "mangiare" (to eat). I often recall bringing friends home, especially during college break, and at some point watching them respond to my parents' welcoming call to "mangia!"....several hours later we were still at the kitchen table! I am sure you all have had common experiences. To some extent many of the events at the IAHF follow this pattern, especially our regional lunches. We have been having our popular regional lunch now for several years, and travelled the length of ITALY, and even jumped over to the Ticino, the Italians of Argentina, and also explored Ethiopia and East Africa's Italian influence on their cuisine.



Italy is about the size of California, but the culinary traditions are quite diverse and delicious to the point that the diversity from region to region, province to province, and village to village is truly amazing. Naturally it also leads to some lively discussions about the "right way" and "wrong way" to prepare a specialty dish--I won't even go there! In doing research and working with many of our guest chefs I know enough to say there is a great variety in our cuisine

and that is what our regional lunches are all about, exploring the diversity that is Italian cooking, especially the home fare. We leave the more standard dishes to many of the wonderful restaurants we have in our area, along with our "Cena Fuori" (IAHF's Dining Out activities). Yet there is one other common thread in our regional lunches that needs to be acknowledged....and it is more than "mangia" but "NURTURENCE" or, in other words "Soul Food".

Along with our Regional Lunches, is a program, some more formal than others, about the region, customs, history and even family traditions of the areas we feature. Sometimes people share their vacation experiences or growing up in the region, and even recalling a time, especially during the war years when there was not a lot of food to go around. Those stories are equally fascinating. Recently we have had some great exhibits associated with the regional lunches thanks to the research of Richard Stewart and audio-visual skills of Dave Perziski. And thanks to our regional lunch about Basilicata, with Tony Amato, I was motivated to visit Matera Sassi, a UNESCO world heritage site...it was an unforgettable experience--thanks of course to Tony



and our regional lunch series. (Tony and the Tricarico Club will be cooking for our Polenta Dinner, Saturday February 28).

This year Augustino (Tino) Burzio, our chef for the January lunch, featured some of the cuisine of Piemonte, and highlighted a "Bagna Cauda" event, along with specialty dolci, antipasti, and a regional Piemonte red wine. Bagna Cauda is a specialty of the region, and even today many families keep this tradition alive with an annual Bagna Cauda Party where you sit around and share a variety of vegetables, dipped and eaten in a hot olive oil, anchovy, and garlic sauce. There was also a photo presentation highlighting the beauty of this Alpine region of Italy, and Richard's very in-depth display of the national parks, culinary traditions, and a great book display from our library. The regional name Piemonte means "foot of the mountains" and of course translated to Piedmont, including Piedmont, California, as well as other place names in the USA.

Next month, on February 19th, we will travel south central of Piedmont to Molise, one of Italy's smaller re-



gions to sample the dishes of the area along with learning about some of the historic sites and geopolitical dynamics. At one point Molise was a part of the province of Abruzzo, and in fact many people when asked where your family was from still refer to being Abruzzese, but in today's Italy, they may now, in fact, be from Molise! Leading us in this adven-

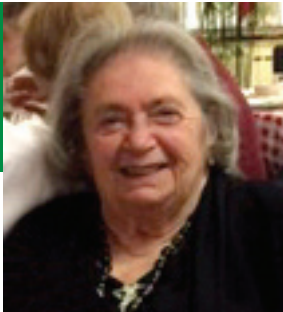
ture will be John Romano who will provide some fun insight and a delicious meal as we visit the area. Our regional lunches are always on the 3rd Thursday of the month. On March 19th, rather than a regional lunch, we will be celebrating the traditional Feast of St Joseph or Festa di San Giuseppe, which coincidentally is on the third Thursday of March. Gene and Joanne San Filippo will be chairing the event. This is a Lenten activity (hence no meat) and a traditional St. Joseph Day Lunch, in the Sicilian Tradition, will be provided for all who attend. The lunch is free, and open to all and will be held after Mass, followed by special "dolci" from the Altar table. All the "dolci" are donated by friends and members who yearly share them with us at the St. Joseph Day Table.

Part of the tradition of St. Joseph Day is a donation to support local charities. We also welcome you to assist us with the festivities, as well as any of our events. More information on this event is forthcoming, but if you would like to promote a region at the lunch or help with the Festa di San Giuseppe contact us at the IAHF. And since we are talking about "mangiare", our Cena Fuori activities are starting up: for January, Thursday, the 29th, we are going to the Florentine Restaurant in Saratoga, February 26th at Al Castello in Campbell and March 26th at Bocca Lupo in San Pedro Square. These dinners are always on the last Thursday of the month. More information can be gleaned on line or by calling the IAHF. 🍷



How I Remember Teatro San Carlo

By Francesca Stewart



I'm a little bit familiar with Teatro San Carlo. In the 1920's my mother and father used to go and see opera performances. They heard Caruso sing La Boheme. In the 1930's after I was a debutant, I started to go to San Carlo with my parents. I heard Beniamino Gigli, Tito Schipa, and Giacomo Lauri-Volpi and Toti Dal Monte-Soprano in various operas, but even today nobody sings Pagliacci like Beniamino Gigli.

I remember when Hitler came to Naples in 1938. There was a big parade. At night, in his honor, there was a gala performance at Teatro San Carlo with the opera Aida. The theater was decorated in white roses and other white flowers. Even the ladies wore white dresses. It was a performance to remember. I was there with my mother and father. My cousin Mario Martino, Generale de Carbineri, was assigned to be Hitler's escort for his total stay in Naples. I remember Mario's wife, Elena, was hysterical because she was afraid if someone tried to kill Hitler, Mario would take the shot. Teatro San Carlo was closed during the war and reopened in 1944 after the Americans came to Naples. I went to see La Traviata. It wasn't very good. This, for me, was the last time. In July 1945, I married an American Aviation Officer and started a new life. In 1946 I left Italy, but I came back every year afterwards with my husband and four children.

A World Premiere of Two Women (La Ciociara)

SOME EXCITING NEWS: The San Francisco Opera is presenting a special world premier of La Ciociara or Two Women (of Sophia Loren fame in a movie of the same name) The opera is based on a book by Italian Author, Alberto Moravia. The Music and libretto is by Marco Tutino, with libretto assistance by Fabio Ceresa. This is a rare opportunity to hear a modern Italian opera, by a contemporary Italian composer in a world class opera house. The conductor will be Nicola Luisotti. This is a lyrical opera directed by Francesca Zambello, and features the Italian soprano, Anna Caterina Antonacci in the roll of Cesira.

This is a not to be missed experience for opera lovers, and “patrons of our common heritage”, in a very special setting, the San Francisco Opera House. The IAHF Cultural Committee, has secured 25 Orchestra circle tickets for \$103.00 a person (20 % discounted for group sales). The date of the performance is Sunday June 28, at 2:00. There is also a pre opera lecture one hour before the performance. In order to lock these tickets in, I need to secure the commitment of 25 of our members and their friends via a check for \$103.00 per person payable to me, Ken Borelli, care of the IAHF at 425 N. 4th St. San Jose, Ca. 95112.

Certain conditions need to apply. All tickets are non refundable meaning if you can not attend the performance it will be your responsibility to dispose of the ticket, either selling it or give it to a friend. Likewise, we can not provide transportation to the event; however if people who are going up for the Sunday afternoon performance are willing to provide a ride to the event to someone with a transportation problem, please let me know, and I or a Cultural Committee person will help to coordinate the feasibility of a ride share. Likewise for those who are going to the opera, I will also call you personally to see if you would want to go to dinner after the performance. There are many excellent, moderate price restaurants close to the opera house.

In working with San Francisco Opera, we have two blocks of tickets at the Orchestra Level, they circle the main Orchestra section. While all seats are good, if your preference is seeing a more global overview of the opera, the seats in back are more preferable, if you would like to see more of the staging the front row seats are better (my preference), but some of the entry and exit points may not be visible. The sooner I can get your reservation in the better I am able to coordinate your seating need. Naturally first come will have the best options in seat selections.

It is anticipated that this June event will be sold out, so there is a certain urgency in committing to this once in a life time activity. Also, in the event there is a higher interest in this event than anticipated I may be able to secure additional seats which would translate into an additional discount in the price. If that is the case the additional \$5.00 or so will be donated to the IAHF hall improvement fund. Final cut off date will be May 15, but the sooner you are able to confirm the sooner I will secure those tickets for you. If you have any questions about the event please contact me at the IAHF c/o Ken Borelli, Chair IAHF Cultural committee. -- Ken Borelli, IAHF Cultural Committee 🌿



The Italian Americans

The Italian Americans is a production of WETA Washington, D.C., and Ark Media, in association with John Maggio Productions. Corporate funding is provided by DelGrosso Foods. Foundation funding is provided by the NEH, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and the Annenberg Foundation. Major funding is provided by CPB and PBS.

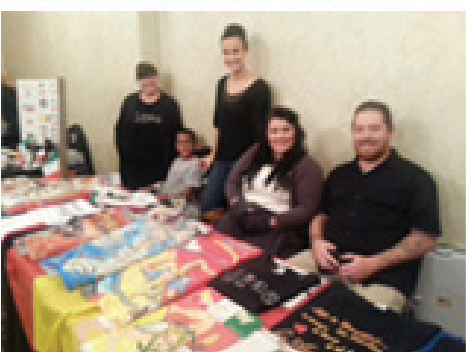
This series will be broadcast on KQED (channel 9 PBS) starting Tuesday, Feb 17 at 9 PM.

<http://video.pbs.org/program/italian-americans/>

World Premiere of Italian Opera ~ December 5, 2014



World Premiere of Italian Opera ~ December 5, 2014



Darling Zina and her Delicious Biscotti

Buon Natale Holiday Lunch ~ December 18, 2014



The Italain American Heritage Foundation: Great People & GreatFun



Irene Dalis Remembered

Diva ~ Impresaria ~ Legend ~ Metropolitan Opera Star ~ Director of San Jose Opera

To describe our collective feeling about Irene Dalis is truly a work in progress, but on December 14th Irene Dalis passed on after a brief illness. For many of us this was a tragic spin on the holidays. A moment of silence was held at our holiday lunch. We had just finished the World of Italian Opera on December 5th. This was also the first time Irene had not attended the event, or for that matter, our 30 plus year benefits for Opera San Jose. The founding of Opera San Jose and the IAHF were within months of each other, and in fact, many of the original opera props were stored at the IAHF and we grew up as community organizations together. There were so many linkages between Irene and the IAHF, that it would take a very long article to write about it, but both an IAHF founder John De Vincenzi and Irene were professors at San Jose State University where the connections were first made between our two groups.



*Irene Dalis as
Princess Eboli
(Don Carlo) at the
Metropolitan Opera*

Likewise Irene was a member of the IAHF since its founding and I recall a couple of years ago when we started our IAHF Patron membership, she was one of the first persons to send in a check for her patron membership. Believe me she understood the necessity of fundraising (basically in the “big leagues” on that account!), and many of our IAHF members were also members of Friends of Opera, Raiders of the Lost Aria, and the boards of both Organizations. After 35 years of co chairing the World of Italian Opera, and Opera San Jose Benefit along with Tony Zerbo, Tony and Kay Virgilio, Teresa Spinler, Jeanne McCann, Martha Best, Nancy De Vincenzi-Melander, Delia Schizzano, Sal Scrivano and others, it really is hard to come to terms with all the memories our work with Irene brings up. At some point we really do have to have an “Irene Dalis Remembered Night” at the IAHF. This is all history in the making.

We were very fortunate too to have had available a biography of Irene at the 2014 World of Italian Opera boutique. It is entitled Irene Dalis: Diva, Impresaria, Legend, How a Metropolitan Opera Star Created America's Unique Opera Company by Linda Riebal. Linda also donated a copy to our IAHF Library, and a review of the book is certainly in order as a way too for all of us to process the loss Irene has meant to the arts community both locally and nation wide. As soon as we regroup for the new year our Cultural Committee will definitely take this task upon ourselves, as a work in progress. Amongst so many memories and flash backs I will share this one

experience. One of Irene's signature rolls was the Princess Eboli, in Giuseppe Verdi's Don Carlo. San Francisco Opera did the opera several years ago, I was in the audience when Lofi Mansouri, the then general director of the Opera, presented her with a gold medallion at the opening night, in recognition of her performance of the opera at the New York Met. Also while traveling in Spain I discovered the Princess Eboli's Castle way off the beaten path and shared some photos with her. Actually in the 1980's I was a “spear carrier” for the fledgling San Jose Opera Company's production of Don Carlo, featuring another New York Met legend Cesare Siepi! It was a great experience but I think it was financially too much for that opera company, paving the way for Opera San Jose's emergence, via San Jose State, to the Montgomery Theater, and even our early Festa's, 24 hour operathon fund raisers to the now stunning California Theater. This is only a small sketch of a life, whose roots in this valley run deep, and as a Boitano on her mother's side, included a pride in her Italian Heritage too. *Ciao bella!* -- Ken Borelli ~

Irene Dalis

- * That Blazing Talent*
- * That Stunning Determination*
- * That Radiance*
- * That Face*

Haiku by Constance Lo Bue Scarpelli

Polenta!!

On Saturday, February 28th at the IAHF, we will have our annual Polenta Night co sponsored with the Tricarico Social Club of San



Jose. This is always a delicious and fun filled night. The chefs for the evening will be Tony Amato and a crew from the club, the proceeds from the event will support both organiza-

tions. The Tricarico Social Club also staffs the Polenta Booth at our annual Festa. At the polenta dinner we will also have a video show of the Basilicata region around Tricarico, including Matera Sassi a UNESCO world heritage site, enjoy the sounds of Tom Volpi our DJ for the evening and meet the officers of both groups, including IAHF President David Perzinski, and Tricarico Social Club President Mike D'Antonio. A flyer will be forthcoming, but our two organizations working together really enhances this special winter event. The chefs at the Tricarico Social Club are "pros" when it comes to a delicious Polenta and Sausage Dinner. This is a great social event to bring friends and family alike for an old fashion classical Italian Polenta Dinner! 🌿

Bocce!!

On Sunday March 15th from 3:00 pm to 5:30 pmv there will be an IAHF BOCCE FUNDRAISER at Campo di Bocce in Los Gatos. Join us



for an exciting series of games, and support the IAHF's year around series of activities. We are giving you enough notice to practice your skills. Join other Bocce enthusiast at Campo di Bocce, for two hours of play, appetizers will be served and we will be having rotating teams culminating in some championship play-offs. You can develop your own team of 4 players or we can do some team assignments too. The proceeds for this event will target the needs of the foundation: our scholarship programs and Pre-2015 Festa planning expenses. We have a full series of activities at the IAHF, and these fund raisers are critical to help to support and supplement these worthy events. Your support is greatly appreciated as we get the word out about Italian American Heritage, and have a lot of fun at the same time. 🌿

More information about these events are online and a **Save The Date** note will be out shortly.

You can contact the IAHF at (408) 293-7122 or check us out at www.iahfsj.org.

Your IAHF Newsletter

The first two IAHF Newsletters in 2015 will be sent in two versions. A colored email and a black and white one through the U.S. Postal Service will be sent. This will give you the opportunity to look at the differences. After the first two IAHF Newsletters, you will get it by email only if you have an email address; otherwise you will get one delivered to you by U.S. Mail. Sending a newsletter by email cuts down labor time spent by volunteers and expenses. In this way it will make it affordable to do a monthly newsletter. If you prefer to have an IAHF Newsletter sent to you in black and white through the U.S. Mail, please don't hesitate to contact me.

The IAHF Newsletter is your newsletter. All articles, pictures and advertisements will be considered. It'll be great to submit some of your stories as an Italian, Italian American or about its culture and heritage to share. Please send your stories or any other information for the newsletter to me.

Richard Stewart, IAHF Newsletter Chair / news@iahfsj.org / Cell: 408-821-4260 🌿

IAHF Office Assistance Needed

Could you spare a day or an afternoon a month or a week to come in and answer phones?

Also help with small projects that come up in the office.

Volunteer and make the IAHF a better place for all of us. 🌿

Benvenuti New Members

John Gimelli Family ♦ Fred & Shawn Casucci
 Brent Bonfiglio ♦ Brian Cantoni
 Alba & Mort Sherin ♦ Valeria Roman
 Anna & Giulio Bernardi

Mille Grazie 2015 Patron Members

Mike Console ♦ Jeanne McCann
 Dave Perzinski & Lucia Clementi
 Gwen & Rich Daulton ♦ Melvin & Anna Di Salvo
 Ralph Di Tullio ♦ Olga & Anthony Nespole
 Pam & Steve Lyons ♦ John & Marge Papp
 Carlo & Rosa Severo ♦ John & Marge Valente
 Linda & Bob Binkley ♦ Ken Borelli ♦ Rose Crimi
 Mike D'Ambrosio ♦ George Guglielmo
 Bobby & Ruth Moorhatch ♦ Virginia Sincich
 Corinne Tomeo ♦ Tony Zerbo
 Kevin & Aurelia Pezzaniti ♦ Matt Weppler

—It's Membership Dues Time!—

Mille Grazie to all the members that have already sent in their renewals. Your membership acknowledgement and card are on the way.

The IAHF depends on member dues to keep the organization, and it's programs and events funded.

Please pay your dues today. Send a check to the office or pay online at iahfsj.org/membership.

If you have any questions or need any assistance contact the office at 408-293-7122, or at IAHF, 425 N. Fourth St, San Jose, CA 95112.

If membership dues are not paid by March 31, your membership will become inactive and you will no longer be eligible for member benefits. 🌿

Remodelling the IAHF

We have recently been seeing new improvements to our building here on 4th street. The bathrooms have been improved with painting, new flooring, and tile work. A new handicap ramp has been built. The Italian colors have been newly painted on the front of the building. In addition, our parking lot has been resurfaced. But, there is more that needs to be done.



We want to continue our efforts to beautify and enhance our home. We have many ideas for developing a truly unique and beautiful environment where we can work, play and gather.

We have started a list of projects that we would like to accomplish and there will be more.

Already generous members have stepped forward to donate for special projects.

Here's the list so far with the names of those pledged to donate:

- ♦ Insulation of office attics \$975.00
 (Ken Borelli--\$500 / Frank De Turris--\$500)
- ♦ Replacement of parking lot bumpers \$750.00
- ♦ New planters, roses and flowers
 for the front entrance \$350.00
- ♦ Hand rail at the front entrance steps \$250.00
 (Richard Zamar--250.00)
- ♦ Bocce ball court in back of building TBD
- ♦ Remodeling of bar TBD

IAHF Library

Volunteers Needed

Libraries aren't only books. They're a place for discussions, music, films and much more. Let's get creative. It's your library and organization. Help it grow. Contact me to volunteer and for information.

Richard Stewart, Librarian / librarian@iahfsj.org
 Cell: 408-821-4260 🌿

Submitted by Richard Stewart

