

LA VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 2591, SARASOTA, FL. 34230

WWW.GCICS.ORG

November 2020



President's Message:

Well, can we tell it is almost Thanksgiving? For many of us this would have been a time to witness falling leaves that have reached their red, orange, and golden colors. However, here we are basking in a warm sun. Fall has welcomed cooler temperatures and drier air with soft breezes. Yes, I know many of you will be hosting Thanksgiving celebrations with friends and be ever thankful for them, while others more fortunate will celebrate with family who live here in FL. To all our members and their families, I wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.

This has been an exciting month for GCICS. Nancy Schubert hosted October's Social Hour and I have heard many positive remarks. The subject was a favorite Italian piece of art, architecture, or museum. Many brought pictures, photos, or personal stories about their "favorite". One could tell from the conversation that they were emotionally connected to the art they spoke about. One of our members, Robert Gaglio, showed slides of Sicily. I feel confident that many are eager to join his next tour to Sicily when travel is once again safe. Look for an announcement soon on a GCICS-sponsored Zoom presentation (Nov 30) by Robert entitled "*Secret Places Off the Beaten Path in Venice.*"

Our transatlantic conversation with Master Sculptor Gianni Sessa and his wife, art enthusiast and teacher, Francie Hammond, was a huge success. I am sorry if you were unable to join us for this exciting conversation with our friends in Catania, Sicily. Francie and George Arfield, working as interpreters, interviewed Gianni as he explained the many photos, slides and a video depicting Gianni's work. We learned that Gianni has been honing his craft since the age of six. For many years he apprenticed before becoming an award-winning master sculptor. We were saddened to learn that the future of sculpting will be left to modern technology, using lasers and other methods to quicken this process. There are few young people to carry on this art form by hammer and chisel with the love and dedication displayed by Gianni. Gianni and Francie have a home in Sarasota where they spend summers. We look forward to being reunited in the future.

Erika Cummings provided a wonderful testimonial: *“Thank you for having arranged such a wonderful and amazing Zoom session with renowned master sculptor Gianni Sessa and his wife Francie. Being able to watch the artist at work on his master pieces and providing insight was truly enlightening.”*

Special thanks to George Arfield for making this conversation with Gianni and Francie the success that it was. Special thanks to Jerry Hall for making our Zoom encounters accessible and easy. And a final thanks to Ellen Roderick for her expertise in organizing and communicating. She works tirelessly to make certain that GCICS runs smoothly! Please continue to make good choices and stay safe.

Julie Bondarenko, GCICS President

ITALIAN FILMS EASILY AVAILABLE

By George Arfield



As is the case for other activities, the pandemic has robbed us of the opportunity to organize the popular Italian film afternoons presented by Dr. Scott Perry. We will strive to reinstate these periodical events when it becomes prudent to have large meetings again. But “coraggio!” This does not preclude accessing a large collection of classic and recent Italian movies. They are no farther than a smart TV set, a computer, a tablet, or a smart phone.

Nothing can really substitute for the entertaining and educational meetings held at the Community Foundation. But in to find reasonable substitutes for said experience, we’re suggesting some alternatives. No subscription is needed to watch for free many Italian productions on YOUTUBE. A search from the home page for “Italian films,” “Italian movies” or “Italian language movies” will yield a surprisingly rich selection. Among the many films available, not all with English subtitles, here are ten picked at random:

1. La Dolce Vita
2. La Strada
3. Romeo e Giuletta
4. Le Galline Selvatiche e la Vita
5. Non ci Resta di Piangere
6. Bangla
7. Le Vacanze Intelligenti
8. Uomini Contro
9. Tre Mogli
10. Lo Scapolo.

As this was written HBO was airing several seasons of the serialized Elsa Ferrante work “My Brilliant Friend.” The soundtrack is in Italian and subtitles are available.

Streaming networks also feature Italian films. NETFLIX has a rich collection of Italian language movies, usually listed with their titles in English.

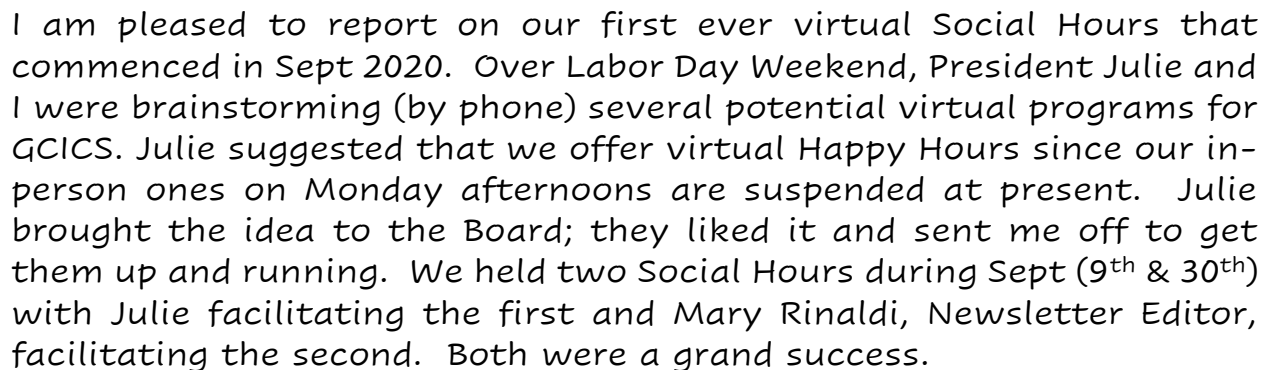
Lastly the ever-present AMAZON holds a vast repertory; many films in their collection are free to Amazon Prime subscribers or under \$5.00 each. A random selection follows:

Amazon Prime Video

1. An Ordinary Day
2. Il Mio Giorno
3. Figs for Italo
4. Innamorarsi
5. Profumo de Venezia (sic)
6. Scacco Matto
7. Mia Madre
8. Il Carrello
9. Stefano Formaggio.
10. The Most Beautiful Wife.

Here’s hoping this brief list will be useful. Doing searches from the home page of these and other services leads to many more titles. Good luck and good viewing!

Written by Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary

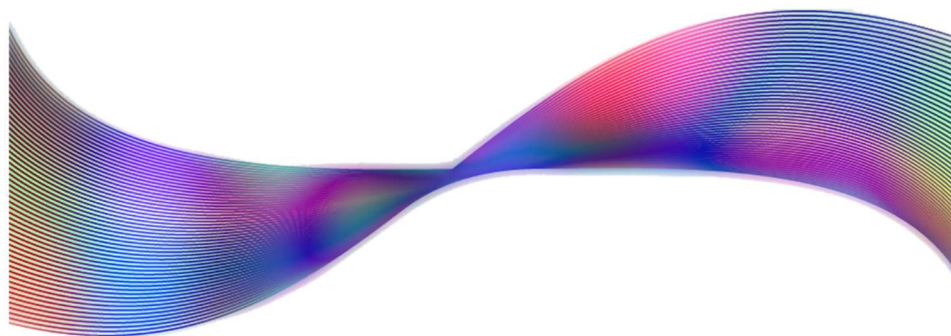


Sept 30: We had 14 attendees with the topic: **“A Favorite Spot You Have Visited in Italy.”** Leita Kaldi Davis shared that a favorite spot of hers is Noto, a baroque city in southeastern Sicily (20 mi SW of Syracuse). Leita highlighted the “Infiorata di Noto” (Noto’s Flower Festival) and read an excerpt from a publication describing its sheer beauty. Commenced 40 years ago and held the 3rd weekend in May, artists produce floral designs on Via Nicolaci – an artistic treasure to behold.

Rosie Lumetta spoke about Terrasini, Sicily (19 mi W of Palermo) with its strongly curved coastline with large and small bays, and the home of her grandfather. Rosie also spoke about nearby Carini, home of her grandmother.

George Arfield who, like many others in QCICS, has traveled extensively in Italy enjoys Bassano del Grappa in the Veneto region of Northern Italy, founded in the 2nd century BC by a Roman. Pam Arfield's response to the question of a favorite spot was "I like whatever city I'm in." She enjoyed visiting knitting factories in Italy which related to her career in the fashion industry. Larry and Lucille Samartin zoomed from their home near Austin, TX. Larry's roots are in Italy. He has a soft spot for Castelgomberto in the Veneto region (39 mi NE of Verona) where he has family. Linda Mercurio and husband Michael Kean enjoyed their visit to Orvieto (81 mi N of Rome) where there is a magnificent Duomo. Mary Rinaldi spoke about Canicatti, Sicily (92 mi SE of Palermo) and neighboring Agrigento (23 mi SW of Canicatti) with the preserved Valley of the (Greek) Temples. Mary spoke about her great uncle who founded a religious order in that region. Members also mentioned Rome, Venice, and Florence as favorite locations.

As you might imagine, we could have talked for hours about our ancestries and our favorite spots in Italy. Please consider joining us for a Social Hour when next announced. We learned so much about one another and about the varied attractions of the "homeland."



GCICS TRANSATLANTIC ART VISIT

Text by: Jack Norman

Photos by: Ellen Rodrick (taken from a slide show)



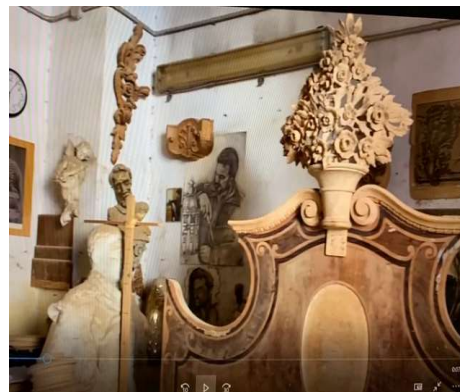
On Thursday, October 29th, 2020, GCICS members were privileged to “Zoom” into a visit with a “power couple” in the world of artistic craftsmanship, Francie Hammond and Gianni Sessa, who graciously invited us into their home in Catania, Italy overlooking the sea and an ancient medieval castle. The setting was spectacular but even more remarkable and breathtaking was the skilled and inspired artistry of Gianni who, unfortunately, is one of the last of a dying breed of gifted artists. Over the course of our nearly two-hour visit, we were given a rare glimpse into the world of a lost art—handcrafted wood carving and sculpture reflecting a unique delicacy, elegance and ornateness that we seldom find today in a time of mass production and factory fabrication. We were able to see Gianni at work on his balcony overlooking the waters of Catania – his new “work site” due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. We saw pictures of furniture he designed and brilliantly executed including a chair, a bed, and religious iconography used in the Saints Day processions and floats. Many of Gianni’s works have been commissioned by the church, but all have been sought and admired by lovers of beauty and art the world over. The visit was truly a treasured and memorable experience, although a bit sad as we all reflect on the “lost world of art” that we have been privileged to enter.



Chair



Top of Chair



Bed



Visual image of iconography used in the Saints Day processions and floats.



Working in his Factory



Gianni has to now work on his balcony because of Covid-19

GCICS Membership Renewal: A Call for 2020-2021 Dues



Dear GCICS Members,

It is time to renew your GCICS membership. Because our Fiscal Year begins on Oct 1, 2020, we are collecting dues now. Individual membership is \$35, while family membership is \$60. The GCICS Membership Renewal Form is on the next page for sending dues and perhaps a scholarship donation. Please print the form and send it with your check to the address shown on the form. *We do welcome scholarship donations.* If you are unable to print the form, simply put the information on a piece of paper. Deadline for dues submission is **Nov 30, 2020.**

Do's & Don'ts:

1. Do send your dues/scholarship donation to: GCICS, P.O. Box 2591, Sarasota, FL 34230.
2. Don't give your dues/scholarship donation to another member and ask him/her to include it in their check. This creates problems.
3. Do honor the date of Nov 30, 2020.
4. If you decide NOT TO RENEW, please let me know so that I will no longer send reminders to you. Thank you.

Heads-Up: Due to the virus and our goal of protecting your safety and well-being, we will have virtual programs/events ONLY through Dec 31, 2020 and possibly beyond. Soon, we will be announcing new virtual events. We welcome your continued support of GCICS. Thank you.

Ellen Roderick
GCICS Secretary

10/1/2020 - 9/30/2021 RENEWAL FORM

DEAR MEMBERS,

Membership covers the fiscal year that begins on October 1 of one year and ends on September 30 of the next year. If you initially joined GCICS on or after March 1, 2020, your membership is automatically extended through September 30, 2021. Dues must be received no later than November 30, 2020.

☐ Individual Membership (\$35) ☐ Family Membership (\$60)

☐ Donation to Scholarship Fund

Select One: BOOSTER ☐ \$20-\$49 DONOR ☐ \$50-\$99

PATRON ☐ \$100-\$249 SPONSOR ☐ \$250-\$499 ANGEL ☐ \$500-\$999

BENEFACTOR ☐ \$1000+

Membership Amount \$ _____
Scholarship Amount \$ _____
Total Enclosed \$ _____

Name(s)

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Areas of special interest and personal talents you would like to share with the group

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**Please write "Membership" in lower left corner of your envelope & mail completed form
and check to GCICS, PO Box 2591, Sarasota, FL 34230**

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Past Presidents

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| Patrick Corsentino | 2001-2004 |
| Arthur Castraberti | 2004-2006 |
| Marie Corsentino | 2007 |
| Mary Amabile Palmer | 2008-2010 |
| William Korp | 2010-2014 |
| Anthony Esposito | 2015-2016 |
| Sheryl Lazzarotti | 2016-2020 |

Italian Language Class Notice



GCICS is pleased to announce the resumption of **Italian Language for Beginners & Italian Conversation** classes in a virtual environment (Zoom) for GCICS members only. Please make sure that you have renewed your membership by submission of 2020-2021 dues. As in the past, classes will be taught by Paola Tate on Wednesday afternoons. Here is the schedule:

***Italian Language for Beginners: 2:00-2:55 pm Eastern time**

***Italian Conversation: 3:00-3:55 pm Eastern time.**

Prior to each Wednesday, Jerry Hall will email enrollees the Zoom link. GCICS has a Zoom subscription that gives greater flexibility in time. The classes are accessible on a PC or iOS device -- computer, tablet or smartphone using the Zoom app; it's free at the App Store website. No need to RSVP. All will receive the Zoom link prior to Nov 4.

Ci vediamo presto!
George Arfield,
GCICS Social & Cultural Chair