

LA VOCE DI GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

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

WWW.GCICS.ORG

April 2020



As I write to you, I am listening to the news. It centers on COVID-19 and the states that are figuring out ways of managing this crisis. We are aware of the suffering and losses that our Italian "brothers and sisters" are experiencing currently. We know that one Board member and her husband have family members living near Milan. They are in communication with these dear folks almost daily. And perhaps many of you have close relatives and friends in Italy who are in the center of this crisis. Our prayers and thoughts are with them.

The Marina Jack II Dinner Cruise was delightful. We had 39 on board and the photos in this newsletter will show you what "happy campers" we had on board. The food was delicious and the company "divine." We had a great time. On behalf of all the cruisers, I thank George Arfield and Penny Thomas for their dedicated work in "pulling off" such a successful GCICS event "under a full moon."

The St. Joseph's Feast Day Luncheon Celebration at Café Baci was "pulled off" successfully just as cancellations were rolling in. Mary Rinaldi, managing the function, began with a registration of 60 members/guests. She was down to 50 by

Friday evening prior to the Sunday luncheon. She phoned in 40 to Café Baci on Saturday evening. Bottom line was that 27 members came out to dine and honor St. Joseph on Sunday, March 15th. We totally understand the many cancellations. The extra meals did not "go to waste". Folks such as Paola Tate took Bob's meal home to him. The Raia's took the Barresi's their meals. So, there was great cooperation and many folks who were not able to attend had their dinners Sunday night while toasting St. Joseph. Thank you, Mary Rinaldi, for volunteering to run this function in Ellen Roderick's absence.

The Scholarship Committee has completed its work under the leadership of Julie Bondarenko, Scholarship Chair. You will find a report contained herein. We regret having to cancel the Scholarship Brunch on April 5th and we look forward to scheduling a "replacement activity" to celebrate our recipients and their parents. Please stay safe and practice "social distancing" following the guidance of our FL Governor and local Sarasota leaders. They have our best interest at heart.

Ciao,
Sheryl



Patrick (Pat) Corsentino, GCICS President, 2001-2004

11/24/1928 – 2/18/2020



Patrick (Pat) Corsentino, 91 years old, passed away on Tuesday, February 18, 2020. He was a resident of Sarasota, FL for the last 25 years. He was born on November 24, 1928, in Brooklyn, NY. He also lived in Massapequa, Long Island, and enjoyed his vacation home in Wells, NY.

Pat was an elementary school principal for most of his career. He graduated with his Bachelor's degree from Oswego and his Master's degree from Columbia University. Pat enjoyed many activities, including traveling, hiking, swimming, golfing, tennis and pickleball. He enjoyed social activities with The Gulf Coast Italian Culture Society (GCICS). Pat served as GCICS President for three years (2001-2004), and with his wife, Marie, were recipients of GCICS's top honor, "GCICS Italian Americans of the Year".

Pat is survived by his wife of 64 years, Marie Corsentino. Some of his other family members include his three children, Patricia; Philip and his wife Beth; and Dorothy and her husband Peter; his grandchildren Tricia, Justin and his wife Alejandra, Keely and her fiancé Jackson, Joy and her husband Matt, Allison, Billy & Emily. Pat is also survived by 5 great-grandchildren, Natalie, Jason, Carter, Talia and Riley.

A Celebration of Life was held on Saturday, February 29 at 1 pm at the home of Andy and Joan Colletta, 6651 Bobby Jones Ct., Palmetto, FL 34221. His ashes will be brought to NY where he will be buried. A Celebration of Life will also take place in NY during the summer.

EMBRACING OUR 2020 SCHOLARSHIP YEAR: PART 4
Julie Bondarenko, GCICS Scholarship Chair



On March 7, 2020 the GCICS Scholarship Committee interviewed ten Sarasota and Manatee County high school seniors, selecting six awardees who will each receive \$2,000 from the GCICS Scholarship Fund. The recipients are graduating from five different high schools in Manatee and Sarasota counties. Many thanks to our outstanding committee: Linda Ahern, Carolyn Chiantella, Vincent DeNicolas, Lucille Samartin, Matti Santagata and myself, Julie Bondarenko, who chaired the committee. I sent the email below to each awardee:

Dear Honored Awardee,

I am sure you are very aware of the current situation regarding the Pandemic that has reached our communities near and far and has now become a great concern for us all. It is with this awareness of our own frailty and our obligation to protect our members and guests that we have sadly decided to cancel the Festa Brunch April 5, 2020, celebrating your accomplishments.

We have had many members in years past looking forward with great enthusiasm to attending this event. The Scholarship Festa Brunch is GCICS's largest and most prestigious event of the year and now, however, we must exercise caution to hopefully lessen any possibility of this virus being passed among us and you, our esteemed guest of honor. We have decided that it would be in the best interest for all of us to seek another time in the future when this situation will be remedied.

This in no way impacts your scholarship award. We wish we could have had the celebration that was planned where we would have been able to honor you, a very extraordinary person. You have accomplished much, and I know that you will continue walking on your path to success. It was truly a pleasure getting to know you. The entire GCICS membership shares in wishing you well and members look forward to honoring you later.

*Yours very truly,
Julie Bondarenko, Chair*

You can well imagine what a disappointment this is for all of us. We worked all year to arrive at our famed Festa Brunch -- the culmination of hard work not only by the committee but also the work and generosity of our members. This is the day that our awardees are recognized by GCICS. Also, the brunch is a time for all of those in attendance to realize the fruits of their commitment to GCICS, to realize the joy in being part of the Scholarship Program.

The committee received 15 applications and enjoyed the opportunity to get to know them. Committee members often wonder how the applicants find the time to do all that they have accomplished in addition to excelling scholastically. They are truly amazing! Each year applicants are required to write an essay on a famous Italian American. Deceased Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonin Scalia was the Italian American selected this year. The committee thoroughly enjoyed reading them and thought they were well written. We all learned much about Justice Scalia.

Although difficult, we narrowed down the field to ten students. Each interview lasted 15-20 minutes. Each of us posed questions in hopes of learning more about the candidates. It is a challenging process when one is meeting and getting to know someone on a more personal basis for the first time. We then have the arduous task of narrowing the field to six. We are not always in agreement, but we work until we do come to a consensus. After we determine the top six, we eliminate all doubt by examining the finalists once again. We then know that the chosen six were chosen correctly.

Our six 2020 awardees are Hannah Ford, Sarasota Military Academy; Robert Imperiale, Venice HS; Graham Lewis, Southeast HS; Isabella Sanchez, Manatee HS; Daniel Staas, Venice HS; and Nina Volpe, Pine View School.

GCICS will continue working on attaining our scholarship goals for 2021. I wish you good health and please stay safe. Thank you for the opportunity to lead the Scholarship Program. It is an integral part of GCICS's mission, and it has brought me much joy and satisfaction.

REVIEW OF MADI GRAS/CARNEVALE PARTY

Masks, colorful beads, wine, gourmet dishes, loads of camaraderie – these were the order of the day for GCICS's for the 46 people who joined the Mardi Gras/Carnevale Party on Shrove Tuesday, 2020. Penny Thomas, GCICS Treasurer, opened her beautiful home for us and she truly was the perfect host. The bottle of wine and dinner gift certificate was a great success in the effort of scholarship fundraising. All bottles were sold out!



REVIEW OF CONGREGATION NER TAMID ITALIAN DINNER



Congregation Ner Tamid in Bradenton hosts an annual Italian Dinner every February. The Congregation sends an annual invitation to Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary. In turn, she sends it out to all GCICS members. Twelve GCICS members attended the dinner on Feb 29, 2020 and had their photo taken with fellow GCICS member, Rabbi Barbara Aiello. "Teresa" caters the affair (same caterer we use for the Annual Meeting) and Rabbi Barbara always does a presentation of some kind. This year, the Rabbi presented an activity designed to bring Italians and Jews together and to examine similarities that have existed, sometimes hidden, for centuries.



GCICS members with Rabbi Barbara Aiello: Gene & Barbara Barattini, Blanche & Joe Barresi, Phil & Mary Maresco, Joe & Lucille Raia and Larry & Lucille Samartin



2 GCICS members Natalie & Bob Amedeo

REVIEW OF THE GCICS MOONLIGHT DINNER CRUISE



The clouds that had hovered over Sarasota most of the day began to part as GCICS members and their guests set sail for the Moonlight Dinner Cruise on March 9 aboard the yacht Marina Jack II. And to everyone's delight a bright, full moon rose from the east, above the city's skyline, and cast silver beams on Sarasota Bay. The seas remained calm giving everyone a chance to relax over an excellent buffet dinner and enjoy conversation as the shoreline slid past the large picture windows.





REVIEW OF ST. JOSEPH'S DAY LUNCHEON



On March 15, 2020 GCICS returned to Café Baci for honoring the Feast of St. Joseph, Patron Saint of Italy. At the time we followed CDC guidelines for gathering in groups of 50 or less. When the final numbers came in, we were at 40 people. Therefore, we held the event, but on the actual day only 27 people came. Mary Rinaldi spoke about the Ides of March since we dined on that day. March was the first month of the Roman calendar and the Ides was the full moon of the month. The Ides of March was celebrated as the Roman New Year. Then she spoke about St. Joseph's Day. In ending she wished everyone a happy Roman New Year and a happy St. Joseph's Day. Linda M. did a raffle which included a 50/50 and a \$50 restaurant gift certificate. Also a silent auction was held. Everyone appeared to have a great afternoon.



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Past Presidents

Joseph Raffaele, PhD	1988-1992
Gabriella Thurston	1993-2001
Patrick Corsentino	2001-2004
Arthur Castraberti	2004-2006
Marie Corsentino	2007
Mary Amabile Palmer	2008-2010
William Korp	2010-2014
Anthony Esposito	2015-2016

CANCELLATION NOTICE



As we navigate the increasing threat of the COVID-19 (corona virus) spread, GCICS is taking the opportunity to say that we are all in this together and must follow the prescribed protocols outlined by the CDC regarding social distancing. Know that we are concerned and care about your well-being. There is much misinformation out there so we suggest that you stick with reliable sources such as the CDC at www.cdc.gov

With the Presidential mandate of not holding gatherings of 10+ persons, the Board strongly feels that we must temporarily discontinue our events of 10+ members. We have a genuine responsibility for the safety of our Society's members.

Therefore the following weekly events have been temporarily discontinued:

- 1) Monday Happy Hour



- 2) Wednesday Language Classes



- 3) Sunday Bocce



Thank you for your understanding in this critical time in our nation's history.