



March • April  
2015



# Italia

NEWSLETTER of the ITALIAN WORKMEN'S CLUB

914 Regent Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53715

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## President's Message



There's a hint of spring in the air as I write this message. I've lived in Wisconsin too long to expect that we've seen the last of cold and snow, but it's nice to enjoy a little warmth and sunshine.

This is a busy time for our club. Planning for Festa Italia 2015 is in full swing with all committees making progress. Other events inside and outside the club reinforce and spread the message of our proud Italian heritage.

### Festa Italia (May 29 – 31)

McKee Farms Park in Fitchburg will again be the site for our annual celebration of Italian food, culture, music and fun for the whole family. As a reminder, profits from this event help fund scholarships for local high school students, who are planning to attend four – year or two – year degree programs.

### Festa - The Planning Committee



International Festival Crew: John Castronovo, Vito Vitale, Jim Trameri, Ricardo Gandolfo and Dan Dyer.

Our Festa Planning Committee (Frank Alfano, Charlie Belz, John Benjamin, Gary Berger, Tony Bruno, John Caliva, Todd Cambio, Mike Cammilleri, John Castronovo, Phil Clementi Jr., Trevor Conti, Joe Daguanno, Raul DeLuna, Ross DePaola, Dennis DiCarlantonio, Jim DiUlio, Dan Dyer, Tim Gatti, Ron Giordan, Travis Hunter, Dan Malone, Peter Montelbano, Ed Naumann, Tom Pisapia, Butch Pullara, Antonio Re, Mike Reuhl, Greg Schroeder, Jack Theel, Steve Tortorici, Jim Trameri, John Troia, Frank

Vitale, and Frank Zampardi) tackles topics ranging from securing permits and contracting with entertainers to setting up tents and staging, pursuing food vendors and sponsors and developing an overall marketing campaign to name just a few.

### Festa - What's New

Musical acts for all three days will feature traditional favorites along with some new sounds to broaden our audience reach. We'll also have two new performers to

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# Amichevole Novita (friendly news)

By Catherine Tripalin Murray



George Schiro is his name. Golf is his game. And fame... along with being

an IWC member for the past 70 years. He's played with some of the greatest golfers in the world on many of the finest courses in the country and it all began as a 13-year old youngster from the old Greenbush neighborhood who spent days on campus and the Wil-lows to retrieve golf balls hit by Jerry Onheiber, who also lived in the old "Bush."

Let's lay the putter aside for a few moments to carry us back to 1925 when a baby boy was born to Joe and Catherine (Wrenda) Schiro, whose first generation immigrant parents settled with their families in the triangular-shaped neighborhood bordered by Park and Regent streets and West Washington Avenue. The Schiro families had left their village of Piana degli Albanesi behind in Sicily for an opportunity offering a better life in a place called America...final destination being Madison, Wisc. Greenbush was a place where doors were never locked. Everyone knew each other by their first names, but as George remembers, adults were always referred to as Mr. or Mrs. It also was a neighborhood that supplied him with "the best buddies a friend could ever have."

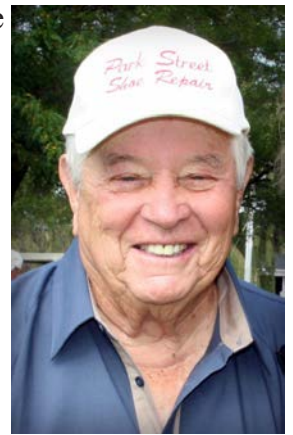
As for having relatives, there were so many Schiros living within the triangle that a reporter for the newspaper once wrote about the confusion it created. Knowing of the Sicilian tradition of naming first sons and daughters for their grandparents, and next born for their parents, it went something like this according to the article that appeared in 1942: there are two Don Schiros and two George Schiros whose cousins were brothers Don, Ben and George, whose ...well you get the picture and now understand why it was important for everyone in the Schiro family to have nicknames. The first Don was "Herky" and another Don was "Boosey." George was "Geegie" and the other George was "Jughead" or "Goon." And, if Ben was the brother of "Herky" and "Jughead,"

**“George was] a natural talent that set records on every course he ever played.”**

who are the cousins of "Geegie" and "Boosey?" One thing for certain was how proud they all were to become IWC members.

Family generations later, while researching the neighborhood, just when I thought I knew who all the Schiros were, another one seemed to appear out of nowhere. And that is why I refer to my good

friend George Schiro the golfer as "G.G." though I think "Geegie" was a simple adaptation of being called George when he was a youngster.



"G.G." was an outstanding athlete at Central High who planned to serve his country as a Navy pilot after graduating from high school. Instead, because of a heart murmur, he served as a gunner on an aircraft carrier. Giving thoughts to the past, there was something special back home about chasing golf balls for his Greenbush friend Jerry Onheiber, who paved a different path to follow. Earning a nickel for every retrieved golf ball was just fine at the time until one day when Onheiber gave him a club to swing, it encouraged him to caddy on local links. It was the beginning of a lifetime of a sport he loved that reached great heights as being one of Madison's finest, most beloved golf pros since 1946. Along with operating his own golf pro shop, and teaching youngsters how master the sport, he golfed with Perry Como, Eddie Arcaro, and Willie Marconi, and celebrated golf with Sam Snead, Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and others. He also played with Steve Caravello and described him as being the "very finest golfer in Madison who always did everything right with a natural talent that set records on

*continued on page 3*

every course he ever played.”

Today, George “G.G.” Schiro has many other memories to share, one being the son of Joe Schiro who was affectionately referred to as “The Mayor of Greenbush” for driving people throughout town to appreciate its beauty and what it offered. Joe also owned the beloved Schiro’s Tavern at the corner of Regent and S. Brooks streets where his specialty of Spanish Hamburgers were proudly made and served on a daily basis until it was torn down during the city’s insensitive 1960s urban renewal project.

As a 70-year IWC member and past-president who treasures each memory attached, according to “G.G.,” the other most important things in life include *la famiglia*, his children Mark, George “Jay”, and Monty, grandchildren, and lovely wife Pat. And because George will celebrate his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday April 5<sup>th</sup>, I’m delighted to be among the hundreds wishing him a very happy birthday!

*Buon Compleanno George!*  
*Salute!* 🇮🇹



In March, County Executive and IWC member Joe Parisi helped promote the Meals on Wheels program by delivering some himself. One recipient was IAWC member Ninfa Grinnell.

### CALENDAR of Events

IWC Council Meetings – 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Tuesday of Each Month  
7:00 pm

IWC Membership Meetings – 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Tuesday of Each Month  
7:00 pm

*Please clip and post this calendar.*

## Italia

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# President's Message *continued*

entertain the kids. Other surprises are still in the works. Our website is currently being redesigned and should be up and running in early April. We'll load it with Festa information.

## Festa - Volunteers Needed

The mission of the IWC is to preserve the history, culture, language and memories of the Italian people who immigrated to Madison. Festa Italia is the best demonstration of that mission in action. Participate in the mission.

The people mentioned above are volunteering their time and energy to plan and execute Festa, but they can't do it alone. I would like all members to enjoy the tastes, sights, sounds and camaraderie of Festa. I need you to volunteer a few hours of your time to staff one or more of the many roles required to ensure a successful event. Watch your in box, or mail box for a personal note from me.

## International Festival - The Crew

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, several members of the IWC staffed a booth at the Overture Center and sold meatball sandwiches, hot beef sandwiches, and olive salad at the International Festival. **John Castronovo** led a team that included **Paul Meyer, Ricardo Gandolfo, Jim DiUlio, Dan Dyer, Todd Vitale, Jim Trameri** and **Dan Malone**. Together they raised over \$1,000 for the club. A special thanks goes to **Vito**

**Cerniglia** for once again being the supplier for the various food items. **Frank Alfano** also staffed an information booth regarding club activities, especially our sister city relationship with Mantova.

## Wine & Cheese Tasting

On February 14<sup>th</sup>, we held a wine and cheese tasting at the club. Ricardo Gandolfo led the planning for the event and recruited guests to attend. The cold weather and Valentine's Day timing kept the numbers down, but those in attendance had a great time sampling a variety of wines, chesses, crackers and delicious desserts hand made by **Sandy Hunter**.

## Updates

### Honor The Past

At our membership meeting on February 17, we offered the opportunity to watch Part 1 of the PBS series, *The Italian Americans*.

Those who stayed to watch were deeply moved by the sacrifices made by those early immigrants. It was a great tribute to their hard work and dedication to helping each other assimilate to the new world.

### Celebrate The Present

The February 14<sup>th</sup> wine and

cheese tasting and the February 21<sup>st</sup> food offerings at the International Festival were great examples of enjoying each other's company and sharing our culture with others.

### Envision The Future

We welcomed seven new members to the club in the first two months of the year.

The Greenbush Heritage Foundation is established and its 501c3 status will aid in our fund raising efforts in the future.

## President's Mail Box

Send me an e-mail ([david-rizzo@me.com](mailto:david-rizzo@me.com)) or drop a note in the box I'll provide in our club's office. If there's something you like or don't like about our club, I really want to hear from you. I can't promise that we'll address every need, or implement every idea, but I can promise you the courtesy of a response.

Fino alla prossima volta, essere bene e che Dio benedica.

David Rizzo ■



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# Lasagna dinner for Gilda's Club

By Phyllis DeGioia, IAWC president

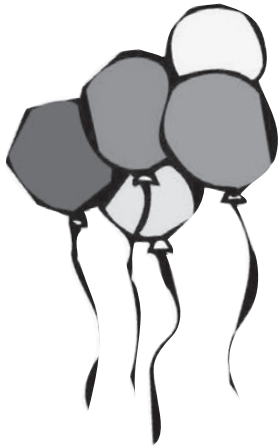
An abundance of homemade lasagna was once again made by IAWC members and served to members of Gilda's Club in Middleton, a support group system for cancer patients and their families. Now an annual February tradition, members of both clubs look forward to it.



## IAWC Birthdays

Cheryl Bruce 3/20

Mary Katic 4/10



Numerous industrial-sized pans of lasagna, mostly meat and one vegetarian, are made by IAWC members. Typically these are made at St. Joseph's, but this year we were unable to because a water pipe burst at the church, and so our regular meeting and lasagna making were moved to Gilda's Club (thankfully their kitchen was available). The dinner was served the following night. Salad and bread accompanied the lasagna. The dinner was, as it is every year, exceptionally well received and attended.

Many thanks go to Rick and **Debby Hillebrand, Jean Musillami, Teri Belz, Marcia Smecko, Ashleigh Yonke, and Sister Toni Palermo.**

## Birthday Wishes

### March

- Tom Pisapia (3)
- Frank DiPiazza (10)
- Jim DiUlio (13)
- Joseph Puccio (13)
- Joseph Melli Jr (18)
- Robert Brill (24)
- Russ Cerniglia (29)
- Antonio Re (29)

### April

- Mark Fumusa (5)
- George Schiro (5)
- Tom DiPiazza (8)

- Dennis Pucetti (8)
- Karl Szewczyk (8)
- Mario Russo (14)
- Anthony DeGregoria (14)
- John Caliva (15)
- Tony Bonano Jr (17)
- Paul Meyer (17)
- William Peden (17)
- Nino Amato (23)
- Ricardo Gandolfo (26)
- Daniel Langlois (27)
- Joseph Gmeinder (28)
- Dominic Cuccia (28)
- Anthony Bruno (30)

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