



May • June  
2015



# Italia

NEWSLETTER of the ITALIAN WORKMEN'S CLUB

914 Regent Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53715

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## President's Message



The greater Madison area is alive with activity as the late April/early May temperatures brought people out of their homes and into their yards and communities. Our club is active as well as we continue our efforts to fulfill our mission to preserve the history, culture, language and memories of our Italian ancestors who immigrated here in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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**  
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, 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 entertain the kids. Other surprises are still in the works. Our website has been redesigned and was up and running in April. We'll load it with Festa information.

### Italian Students seeking host American Families

Many ASSE (International Student Exchange Programs) Italian high school students seek American host families. Students are between 16 and 18, and are screened for English ability, academic performance and maturity level. Students vary widely in their interests and skills, ranging from 17-year-old Lia, a Catholic who speaks Italian,

*continued* page 3

### 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 names 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.

*continued* page 4

# Scholarship Winners – On to College!

This year, IWC funded five scholarships and IAWC funded four. Congratulazione to all!

## IWC

### Tatiana Cambio

Tatiana Cambio, the niece of **Todd Cambio**, wants to become an orthodontist and plans to attend North Carolina State University. That said, her high school passion has been theater, not biology. Due to budget cuts, half of West High School's theater classes were eliminated; so she started a campaign to get them reinstated. With the help of her cousin, director/actor Mark Ruffalo, they started a Twitter feed that went national; organized a rally; and created a short film of student interviews about what theater meant to them. Her efforts were successful and the budget was adjusted. Tatiana is a member of the National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, Math Team, and is a peer tutor. She knit 100 hats for the Ronald McDonald House, and interned at a dental clinic.

### Elena Gratton

Elena Gratton, daughter of **Claudio Gratton**, could speak Italian with her family when she was a child; at 12, she lived in the Italian village where her father grew up. While fluent, she is finishing her third semester of Italian at UW to improve. She attends West High and hopes to study conservation biology at college. Elena has participated in forensics, jazz, theater, cross country, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, Latin club, photography, and the Wisconsin Junior Classical League. Elena has taken Latin for four years. She was a volunteer lab assistant in a wildlife ecology lab at UW, and a "Rooftop

Ranger" at the Children's Museum.

### Lindsey Loniello

Lindsey Loniello, daughter of **Steve Loniello** and great great niece of **Nate Troia**, has a family rooted in the Bush. Her relatives helped build Paison's and Portabella. She plans to go to UW Oshkosh and major in athletic training, eventually earning a master's. She has been on the honor roll all along and is a member of the National Honor Society. She has been active in fine arts, softball, volleyball, show choir, and Spanish Club. She has volunteered at several places in the community. Lindsey is a crew trainer at McDonald's, where she has worked for three years. She is the captain of her softball team, volleyball team, and dance group.

### Baelee Shell

Baelee Shell's great, great, great, grandfather, Anthony Stassi, was a charter member of IWC and lived in the Bush. She is the granddaughter of **Michael Stassi**, a long-tenured member of IWC. At Cedarburg High School, she has participated in swim team for four years, and softball. Baelee plans to attend UW Whitewater in radiation therapy and then get a master's in medical dosimetry, so she can design treatment plans for cancer patients. She has taken Advanced Placement classes and coached swimmers. She has also volunteered at

## Italia

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Vacation Bible School, Safety Town, youth swimming, and a senior care facility.

### Dominic Urso

Dominic Urso has family ties to IWC: **Tiny Urso** is his grandfather. After graduating from Monona Grove High School, he plans to attend UW Whitewater. He doesn't know what he'll pursue – likely business – but he will play rugby there. His football coach is proud of Dominic's athletic ability not only in football, but in rugby and track and field. Dominic is president and co-founder of the Monona Grove Young Republicans. He has volunteered for three political campaigns. He is still active in DECA, a marketing club. He was even in show choir. He volunteers regularly at his church and has been on missions.

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# IAWC

## Brandon Bongard

Brandon Bongard received the Ben Schiro memorial and IWAC scholarship; half of Brandon's scholarship was donated by Ben's widow, Sally Schiro. A LaFollette student heading to Edgewood College, Brandon plans to study chemistry and physics. Named the Advanced Chemistry Outstanding Student of the Year for 2014, Brandon also participated in marching band, jazz band, and the Experimental Garden Club, all while tutoring other students in math and science. He volunteers at an animal rescue group. His Italian heritage comes from both sides. His great-grandfather, Domenico Scuderi, was born in Sicily, where his father was a Mafia don. The poverty and violence forced him to leave for America, alone, at the age of 16. At Ellis Island, his last name was changed to Scudera, and eventually he and his family settled in Greenbush.

## Riley Boyce

Riley Boyce of Madison East will be studying business and accounting at North Central College in Naperville, Ill. He hopes to get an MBA too. Riley's grandparents took him to Italy when he was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, including their native Aeolian Island of Lipari. He was in awe of how welcoming his grandmother's family was. His grandmother showed him her grandfather's home. He learned a lot that summer: "Sadly I live in a society where more is better; buildings are no longer preserved rather tore down; and people are more engrossed in their material items instead of loved ones." An accomplished, award-winning athlete in cross country and track & field, he also delivered Meals on Wheels.

## April Hommerding

April Hommerding of Sun Prairie High School will study environmental science or engineering at UW Madison. A relative from Italy reconnected with her mother via Facebook, and they have been going to family reunions in Italy. Both April and her mother are reconnecting with their heritage, and went to Festa for the first time last year. Active in basketball and softball, she is also in the National Honors Society, Future Farmers of America, and yearbook. She volunteers at the Dane County Humane Society, Kindness/Courage/Respect retreats, and Down Syndrome Association summer camp.

## Jordan Taylor

Jordan Taylor will go to the University of Houston after graduating from DeForest High. She is still contemplating her major, which could be English and International Studies, or a Liberal Arts major based in Italian, English, and creative writing. She plans to study abroad in Italy. She referred to a previous trip to Italy as "like stepping into a fantasy novel." Jordan enjoyed drama club, radio speaking, and being in Students Against Destructive Decisions and Norski Mentors. A member of the National Honors Society, she received an AP Scholar with Distinction award. She has a talent for psychology, physics, math, and government & politics.

## IAWC Woman of the Year

Yes, a full-blooded Norwegian is Woman of the Year!

**Phyllis Masino** was born at Methodist Hospital in 1930. Her parents were Ann (Krueger) and Martin Hegley. At age 15



she attended dances at The Loft on Doty Street, where she met all those handsome Italian boys from Central High. Phyllis graduated in 1948 from East High and worked as a typist in the capitol.

She married Tony Masino, and they lived at 815 Regent Street where their three oldest children (Tony, Rosie and JoAnn) were born. She is sure that Tony would agree that living in the "Bush" was their happiest time because they were always surrounded by family, friends and the best neighbors in the world.

Her mother did not allow her in the kitchen except to peel potatoes. Her sister-in-law Ann Gandolph took her under her wing and taught her how to make meatballs, spaghetti sauce and Italian cookies. In 1966 she and Tony moved to Fitchburg and had their youngest child, Gina. In 1957 Phyllis returned to the workforce with the Wisconsin Corrections Camp System where she worked for 27 years before retiring in 1987.

In 2001, her daughter Gina was crowned Festa Queen, and last year her granddaughter **Angela Masino** was Festa Queen. ■

## Italian Students seeking host American Families (continued)

English, French, and German, and plays soccer and guitar, to 16-year-old Andrea, who speaks Italian, English, and German, and likes fencing, computers, swimming, and physics.

Once a potential host family is screened, they can view more detailed profiles, including photos, and choose the student they feel would be the best fit. Host families do not need to have

children in the home. If interested, contact Shari Osterude, the ASSE Wisconsin State Coordinator, at (612) 900-7612, shari@asse.com, or can complete the online application at <https://db.asse.com/hfa2/index/company/asse>.

Additional information can be found at [www.asse.com](http://www.asse.com). Bring a little bit of Italy right into your home! ■



# President's Message *continued*

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, plus 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 ([davidrizzo@me.com](mailto:davidrizzo@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*

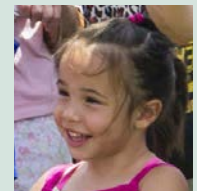
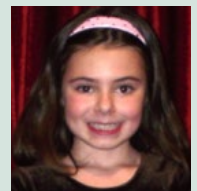


## Festa Queen and Little Miss Festas

**Annemarie Borelli Newman**, an IAWC member, is this year's Miss Festa. She says her Italian heritage provides context for one of the most important parts of her identity. Annemarie's hobbies are dancing and singing. She belongs to the Madison Symphony Chorus, Harmonic Convergence, and Jumptown Swing. She works in communications at Alliant Energy Center.

Her mother was born to her Irish grandfather and her grandmother, Yola Borelli. Yola was born in Philadelphia but moved back to Italy until she was 18. She returned to the U.S. and earned a college degree in French. Her mother Concetta Borelli was a seamstress who also worked for the U.S. government running Italian-American assimilation programs. Her sister Ada Lombardi was a professional classical pianist, and she and her Maestro husband Luigi toured in the symphony orchestra. Her other sister Mary, with her husband and brother-in-law Paulo and Joe Sartori, started the Sargento cheese company and Sartori cheese. They later sold their interest in Sargento to the Gentine family.

Annemarie has studied the Italian language and visited Italy four times. She enjoys the relationships she has developed at IAWC as well as the sense of family it exudes.



Miss Festa **Annemarie Newman**, an IAWC member

**Sophia Bettinger**, age 9, is the cousin of last year's Miss Festa, Angela Masino.

**Kaia Troia**, age 5, visits Festa every year wither grandmother Mary Troia.

*continued on page 5*



## IAWC Birthdays

Terri Belz (May 7)  
Kate LeTourneau (June 23)  
Peggy Lutonsky (May 18)  
Jean Musillami (June 21)  
Mary Schiro (June 9)

## IWC Birthdays

### May

Enzo Ciarletta (1); Robert Smith (4)  
William Battista (7); Tevor Conti (10)  
Anthony Gatti (10); Frank Zampardi (10)  
Joe Brusca (12); Ron Giordan (16)  
Michael Cerniglia (17); Nicholas Schiavo (17)  
Jim Pullara (19); Jay Moretti (20)  
Ron Gatti (23); Anthony Fiore (26)  
Greg Thoenke (26); John Colletti (27)  
George Colletti (28)

### June

Antonio Rauti (1); Todd Cambio (4)  
Nick Lemin (4); Anthony Ballistreri (6)  
Gary Berger (8); Dick Murray (12)  
Bob Lavigna (17)  
Christopher Eaglin (20)

## Condolences

**Joseph C. "Buffo" Cerniglia**, age 80, was born to Charles and Georgia (Schiro) Cerniglia. He proudly grew up in the Greenbush and graduated from Central High in 1953. Upon graduation, Joe enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and served in Korea. In the mid 60's Joe was a co-founder of the Madison Mustangs semi-pro football team and served as their general manager for many years. Joe was president of IWC from 2001-2003. He had an incredible memory, sense of humor and loved entertaining friends and family with his storytelling. Joe was also known for his great Italian cooking and his famous weekly luncheons.

**Samuel J. Balistreri**, age 93, was born in Milwaukee, the son of Frank and Anna Balistreri. Sam was raised in Milwaukee and attended St. John's High School, where he met his wife, Mary D'Amato. At age 21, he served in the 9<sup>th</sup> Army Air Corps and fought in the Normandy Invasion and Battle of the Bulge. Sam built a successful career in the produce business. He started Fruit Ranches and later joined the A.J. Sweet Company, where he worked for 50 years as general manager. Sam enjoyed traveling, golf, fishing, bowling, and listening to Frank Sinatra. Sam was proud of his Sicilian heritage, cherished his family, and enjoyed cooking and eating good food. He was a member of IWC.

**Tom Ross Parisi**, age 68, was born in Madison to Ross Vito Parisi and Kay Parisi. Tom graduated from Madison West High School. Tom enjoyed fishing and was an avid sports fan. He worked for several years for Pittsburgh Paints and then managed Parisi's Bar & Grill, "Home of the Dago Burger," for 18 years. He was a member of IWC. Tom was a major blood donor to the American Red Cross. He was always a man of few words and they were... "WHAT!" "I don't know" "I don't care" "Whatever" just to name a few. ■■

## IWC Sauce Tasting Contest!

by Ross DePaola

The IWC sauce-tasting contest was, again, a success as celebrity judges and the audience tasted some of Madison's finest recipes! Top honors went to IWC President **David Rizzo** and wife Barbara (who, David admits, had more than a hand in the winning product). Dr. **Dan Malone** organized the event while **John Benjamin** served his winning sauce from a few years back for dinner. Also, thanks go to **Vito Vitale, Gary and Mary Berger, and Nick Lemin** (who took second honors for his sauce) who helped with refreshments. Celebrity judges included Leigh Mills, Charlie Shortino, Michelle Carolla, Amy Pflugshaupt, and Judge Julie Genovese and her Mom. Many thanks to all who participated! ■■

*Little Miss Festas continued from page 4*

### Little Miss Festa

For the first time, the clubs will have not one but two Little Miss Festas at the event.

Sophia Bettinger, 9, cousin to last year's Festa Queen **Angela Masino** and granddaughter to **Phyllis Masino** and **Jan Barbone**, is the older of the

two girls. Her grandfather, the late Tony Masino, grew up in the Bush. Sophia's mother, Gina Masino Bettinger, was Festa Queen in 2001 and is half Italian, and Sophia's father, Shawn Bettinger, is one-quarter Italian.

Kaia Troia has been to Festa every one of her five years, as she comes

with her grandmother **Mary Troia**. Kaia is daughter to Brandon Troia and Dana Nowland. Kaia is well known to many members of both clubs. She's excited to be a Little Miss Festas (although it is possible she's more excited about her floral headpiece than anything else). ■■

## 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.*

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