



AMHS

# NOTIZIARIO

CELEBRATING ITALIAN CULTURE & COMMUNITY SINCE 2000

A Publication of the Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society of the Washington DC Area

May/June 2020



Children's artwork, like this one, has spread Italy's message of hope.

## ANDRA' TUTTO BENE

*Becomes Italy's Inspiring Slogan*

By Nancy DeSanti, 1st Vice President - Programs

The phrase *Andrà tutto bene* (everything will be all right) has become the rallying cry in Italy. Pictures bearing the slogan have been all over Italian social media as people seek to reassure each other and brighten up days spent at home under quarantine. Now the catchy phrase has gone viral, alongside the hashtag #iorestoacasa ("I'm staying at home.")

As Italians adjust to a very different life under emergency lockdown measures, the world has seen the feeling of calm and solidarity between people around that country which is best summed up by this Italian phrase. Many videos were posted of Italians singing from their balconies and also applauding the medical professionals at a certain time of day — ideas which were adopted in Spain and other European countries and now in New York City.

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Dear members and friends:



The spring has offered us its usual array of pleasures — mild weather, green grass, beautiful blooms, and a hint of summer. At the same time, its arrival came amid most unusual circumstances, unlike any most of us have ever experienced. I refer of course to the pandemic

called COVID-19, which has taken the lives of many people around the world. Among those lost are thousands of Italians and thousands of Americans, including of course some number of Italian Americans. The lethal virus struck first in China, then South Korea, Italy and the U.S. Millions across the world watched on TV, computer and cell phone screens as Italian hospitals, doctors and nurses, medical researchers and civic authorities pulled together to take care of the sick and combat the spread of the virus. They also saw Italians demonstrate a remarkable resilience and determination to get through the crisis, as depicted on our newsletter cover and detailed in a subsequent article by AMHS Vice President Nancy DeSanti. Seeing events unfold in Italy was of course especially poignant for the Italians abroad and for Italian Americans everywhere, including in our own community, worried about family and friends both in Italy and, for us, here at home.

As I write this message to you, I am in quarantine — the same situation in which you may be reading it. We have all had to adjust to the changes in everyday life around us — the closing of stores, schools and public places, the suspension or cancellation of the schedules of professional sports teams, of March Madness and of the Wimbledon tournament, the discontinuation of public Mass and other religious services in our churches, to cite a mere sampling. Our organization too has had to adjust to the new reality. We cancelled our March 22 general meeting, which was to feature author and speaker Carla Gambescia. In normal times, this newsletter would have shown a picture from that meeting on its cover. We hope to re-schedule this event sometime later this year, if life as we used to know it returns. We have also cancelled our 20th anniversary celebration that was to take place on June 14th, which we intend to re-schedule later this year or perhaps next year. We will keep everyone informed of our new plans regarding these activities as soon as we are in a position to make them.

One AMHS function that has not been impacted is the work of our Scholarship Committee, which, as usual during this time of year, has been hard at work reviewing and ranking the applications for this year's scholarship winners. We were especially pleased that we actually received applications this year given the disruption to academic and student life brought about by the pandemic, and given our late start in setting up the program to operate on its own. In years past, we partnered with the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) to run the program. However, as you may recall, late last year NIAF made the decision to discontinue its matching scholarship funds, terminating its administrative support to us at the same time. So it wasn't until rather late in the usual scholarship cycle (late January of this year) that we were up and running on our own. The Committee expects to be able to announce the winners on time in early May. Look for the results in our next newsletter.

I encourage everyone to take part in a survey that has been sent out to our membership. One of our Board members, Andrea Balzano, headed up a small group of colleagues to come up with a short series of questions aimed at obtaining feedback on AMHS activities. This is an excellent opportunity for our members to provide their opinion on the activities that the Society undertakes and to offer suggestions on alternatives. The survey is short and takes only a few minutes. Please look for it in your email queue — you should find that it arrived on April 5. The subject or title of the email is: "Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society — We want your opinion". This is your chance to comment on our programs and have your views considered.

The current crisis has demonstrated just how interconnected we are on this planet. We are really one family — the human family. What a wonderful world it would be if we could all act on this insight! The crisis has also shown us to what extent we are social beings. Without interaction with others, without the human touch, we are just not whole. Our AMHS events are rooted in this reality — they create and strengthen a community that shares a set of values. A chunk of us has been missing as a consequence of self-isolation and social distancing. I look forward to the time when we can be whole again.

*Best regards,*  
Ray LaVerghetta

# ANDRA' TUTTO BENE: *Becomes Italy's Inspiring Slogan*

▼ *Continued from page 1*

Italian parents began sharing images on social media of artwork created by their children — all out of school at the moment — bearing the hopeful message.

There have been plenty of depressing news stories in the Italian press about the coronavirus pandemic — how many people have been infected, how many people have died. But amid all the bad news, there have been some bright spots, too. The call for 300 retired doctors to help their beleaguered colleagues was answered by several times that number. In Naples, residents are lowering “solidarity baskets” of food from their balconies down to the street for those who don’t have enough food, and setting up folding tables with everything from groceries to hot dishes. Carabinieri are offering to collect pension payments for the elderly from post offices and deliver the cash to their home so they don’t have to go out. Many museums and art galleries have put their collections online so that they could be enjoyed during the lockdown.

Doctors and nurses are using sleek new robots in hospitals, helping to reduce the risks of direct contact with infected patients. “Tommy” the robot nurse and his six “teammates” are now helping doctors at a hospital in Varese. Engineers in Italy have transformed scuba diving masks into ventilators as a 3D printer business helps hospitals by converting a snorkeling mask into a mask for oxygen therapy. Car makers Ferrari and Fiat Chrysler are in talks with Italy’s biggest ventilator manufacturer, Siare Engineering, to speed up production of the life-saving equipment.

Other Italian companies have been pitching in, too. Italian eyewear Luxottica announced that although it is laying off 12,000 workers, they will get 100% of their pay while managers will take a 50% voluntary pay cut. The Italian tire maker Pirelli said that factory workers among its 3,000 employees will remain on the company’s payroll during the lockdown. And top fashion designers such as Armani and Prada have begun making masks and protective coverings.

These are but a few examples of Italian ingenuity and patriotic spirit at work.

On March 11, a video was broadcast to the world of a prayer offered by Pope Francis to mark a day of prayer and fasting for the coronavirus

emergency. Italian President Sergio Mattarella, on World Health Day April 7, thanked the doctors, nurses and others “who in these moments of coronavirus emergency find themselves on the front line. Work done to the limits of their energy for a service that some of them have paid for with their lives.”

And famous tenor Andrea Bocelli gave an Easter concert of sacred songs to an empty Duomo in Milan, a concert that was seen by millions

worldwide. He said “a lockdown can be a chance to do things that often we would like to do — read, listen to music, try to keep the body and mind very active and, last but not least, do not be afraid of a virus that will pass.”

Meanwhile, as the lockdown is extended in Italy, as many find themselves in dire circumstances and as “normalcy” seems far off, let’s hope the spirit of *Andrà tutto bene* continues and finds a place here in the United States. ■

## Lynn Sorbara Tells NOIAW of Challenges in Cancer Research

By Nancy DeSanti

In fighting cancer, progress lies in early detection more so than treatments, AMHS Vice President Lynn Sorbara explained at a recent event sponsored by the National Organization of Italian American Women. Lynn’s presentation on February 19, 2020, was preceded by a dinner at Lia’s Restaurant in Chevy Chase

Her informative talk covered “Advances in Cancer Research: What is Known? What Remains Challenging? What Are the Future Possibilities?” Attendees who had heard Lynn speak previously knew that she has a real knack for explaining complicated subjects in easily understood layman’s terms. She also had an excellent Powerpoint presentation and she recommended a DVD by Ken Burns for PBS, “The Emperor of All Maladies.”

Lynn grew up in Queens, N.Y., the granddaughter of immigrants from Sicily and Calabria. She received her Ph.D. from Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York — the only woman in her class. She has been a cancer researcher and program director in the Division of Cancer Prevention at the National Institutes of Health, and she is currently in charge of a program on promising technology for early detection of cancer using bodily fluids. In addition to being an expert in her field, Lynn is very generous in sharing her knowledge with others.

Lynn explained that since there are a “gazillion” types of cancer (including 72 just for non-hodgkins lymphoma), and since each one would require a different course of action, the progress in fighting cancer is going to come in early detection, when the cancers are more amenable to treatment. In response to a question from the audience, she said a good example is pancreatic cancer, which is so deadly because by the time symptoms appear, the cancer is already in a late stage, unless it’s detected during an unrelated medical exam or test.

She contrasted this with an “indolent” cancer such as slow-growing prostate cancer, and she noted that men are likely to get prostate cancer in proportion to their age. For example, a 50-year-old man has a 50% chance of getting it, while an 80-year-old man has an 80% chance.

She did note, though, that a lot of amazing progress has been made. For example, DNA sequencing that used to take 13 years at a cost of \$1 billion, can now be done through Automated DNA Sequencing in 1-2 days at a cost of \$3,000 – \$5,000. ■



# AMHS Member on Former Colleague Dr. Anthony Fauci

By Nancy DeSanti

With the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic, the whole world has come to know Dr. Anthony Fauci. “Tony” has become the “rock star” among medical experts, known for his no-nonsense style of telling us what is known and what is not known. He has been ubiquitous at White House press briefings and on cable news TV interviews, and the American public has come to rely on him for the truth in a difficult and unnerving situation.

es such as SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome), and covid-19. The latter is caused by SARS-CoV-2, one of seven known coronaviruses that can infect people. Bill notes that many writers use the terms “covid-19” and “coronavirus” interchangeably, but that is incorrect. SARS-CoV-2 causes covid-19, just as HIV causes AIDS.

And Bill says while Dr. Fauci’s brilliance, talent and work ethic were recognized early on, his communication skills were honed during the

*“Dr. Fauci’s brilliance, talent and work ethic were recognized early on, his communication skills were honed during the decades he testified at congressional appropriations hearings on Capitol Hill, where he remains respected for his ability to break down complex medical subjects into layman’s terms.”*

Bill Sansalone, former NIH biochemist

One of our AMHS members is not at all surprised. William Sansalone, a Ph.D. biochemist at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) during the 1970s and 1980s, worked in the same building as Dr. Fauci but for a different institute. He remembers when Dr. Fauci arrived at NIH and quickly made his mark. By 1984, he had become Director of the National institutes of Allergies and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), one of the largest of the 27 components that make up NIH. Dr. Fauci’s grandparents were immigrants from Naples and Sicily. Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., he was educated by Jesuits in New York City and at Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass. He then graduated at the top of his class at Cornell Medical School in Manhattan and decided to make the study of infectious diseases his life’s work. The recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Dr. Fauci has been awarded 45 honorary degrees from academic institutions in the United States and abroad.

Bill recalls that some years ago, Dr. Fauci was offered the job of Director of NIH but turned it down, partly because it was a political appointment but, mostly, because he thought he could do more good at NIAID. There, he oversees research to prevent, diagnose and treat many infectious diseases, including emerging diseases

decades he testified at congressional appropriations hearings on Capitol Hill, where he remains respected for his ability to break down complex medical subjects into layman’s terms — a skill which is now serving him well. He became very effective in explaining to Congress how his institute had spent the previous year’s funds and what he and his team needed money for in the coming year.

Bill noted that, following the attacks on September 11, 2001, there was a big emphasis on infectious diseases as a national security threat. NIAID’s funding increased sharply under Dr. Fauci, who inspired confidence and trust that the taxpayers’ money would be spent wisely.

He recalls that in the post-9/11 world, NIH changed from being an accessible campus near a Metro stop, to a high-security area with electrified fences. As Bill explained, the anthrax scare was a wake-up call, given the deadly pathogens stored in highly secured areas on the NIH campus.

Bill says Dr. Fauci, the grandson of Italian immigrants, is a New Yorker through and through, although he actually lost some of his Brooklyn accent over the years.



Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., NIH photo 2020

It is notable that two grandsons of Italian immigrants have been playing prominent roles in fighting the covid-19 pandemic: Dr. Fauci as the go-to medical expert and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, whose state is now the hardest-hit in the nation.

And as Governor Cuomo has said more than once during his press conferences, we are “blessed” to have Dr. Fauci. ■

*(Note: Bill Sansalone contributed to this article. He had a 46-year career in teaching and research at three medical centers in Brooklyn, N.Y., Bethesda, Md., and Washington, D.C. During the middle part of his career (1971-1996), he was at NIH. For his work mentoring recent Italian medical graduates on the NIH campus, the Italian Government named him Cavaliere della Repubblica. Bill is the son of Italian immigrants from Calabria who, as newlyweds in 1916, began clearing 35 acres of woodland for fruit and vegetable production in southern New Jersey. They raised eight children, of whom Bill was the seventh. Bill was the first participant in the Marconi Project of audio interviews for the Casa Italiana Sociocultural Center’s Immigration Museum.)*



# SIAMO UNA FAMIGLIA

## Italian President's Grandson Interviewed at Casa Italiana

By Nancy DeSanti

**O**n March 1, 2020, Luigi Einaudi, the grandson of Italy's first post-World War II president, was interviewed by the Marconi Project team at Casa Italiana.

As it happened, Einaudi, who is named after his grandfather, was celebrating his birthday that day, so that called for a champagne toast and the singing of the birthday song (Italian and English versions) by Maria Marigliano, our Holy Rosary music director and AMHS member who, it turned out due to her own career, was very familiar with Einaudi's work as a diplomat at the U.S. State Department.

Einaudi was interviewed by Ciro DeFalco, who was executive vice president of the Inter-American Development Bank and who knew him through his diplomatic work in Latin America. Interestingly, the two men ran into each other at the 2018 Bella Italia Market at Casa Italiana; Ciro was later able to arrange the interview.

Luigi Einaudi, the grandfather, was an Italian economist, university professor and statesman, and the first president of the Republic of Italy (1948-1955). In 1936-1943, he was the editor of *Rivista di storia economica* ("Review of Economic History"), which was suppressed by the Fascists, against whom he was an unwavering opponent. In 1943, he fled to Switzerland.

Returning to Italy in 1945, Einaudi was appointed governor of the Bank of Italy (1945-1948). He was a member of the Constituent Assembly, becoming deputy prime minister and minister of the budget, a new post in which he successfully curbed inflation and stabilized the currency. In 1948, Einaudi became a member of the Senate of the Italian Republic and then in the same year became its first president. His term lasted until 1955. His grandson describes him as "the thinking man's president and a man of the greatest integrity."



*Pictured after the recording of the Marconi Project interview are (left to right): Francesco Isgro, Luigi Einaudi, Ciro DeFalco, Maria Marigliano, Nancy DeSanti, Tom Sweeney and Willy Meaux.*

His grandson, Luigi R. Einaudi, was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, graduated from Harvard University, was drafted into the United States Army, then returned to Harvard, earning his Ph.D. in 1967. He spent a decade at the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, Cal. Einaudi has taught government at Harvard, Wesleyan, UCLA and Georgetown Universities and has lectured widely in the United States and abroad.

In 2000, Einaudi was elected Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and served also as Acting Secretary General in 2004-2005. At the OAS, Einaudi supported both the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights and the Inter-American Defense Board, and brokered negotiations to reduce border problems in Central America.

During his 23-year career at the State Department, he helped articulate policy and conducted consultations with most Western European nations, NATO and Japan as well as with Brazil, Latin America and nations in the Caribbean. Three U.S. Presidents and the Presidents of Ecuador, Italy and Peru and the King of Spain have also decorated Einaudi for his achievements. Now retired, Einaudi and his wife divide their time between their homes in Washington, D.C. and Italy.

It is worth noting that Luigi Einaudi was honored by AMHS at its 2008 Gala "for outstanding ser-

vice and contribution to world peace." Then-AMHS President Omero Sabatini stated "Mr. Einaudi's many accomplishments are an inspiration to all Americans, not just those of Italian descent. And, as we hear him talk and break bread with him, let us reflect on how fortunate we are to have the grandson of the first President of the Italian Republic and the progeny of the downtrodden (which most of us members are) sit together at this banquet of celebration and joy."

The Marconi Project is a facet of the new Immigration Museum, which AMHS members Anna Isgro and Liz DiGregorio have been working on for the past year. The Marconi Project interviews are generally conducted by AMHS member Tom Sweeney and the audio recording is handled by AMHS member Willy Meaux. The project is collecting oral histories to capture the memories and experiences of local Italian immigrants and their Italian American descendants.

A number of AMHS members have already been interviewed for the Marconi Project, including William Sansalone, Omero Sabatini, Lucio and Edvige D'Andrea, Joe Novello, Roberto Severino, Maddalena Borea and the late Angelo Puglisi. Other AMHS members will be interviewed during the year. ■

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*Siamo Una Famiglia continued on 6*

# The AMHS Shop

Please make sure to check out the cool merchandise AMHS has to offer:

**“Traditional Cuisine of Abruzzo and Molise” cookbook** (2nd printing) **\$5.00**

**Buon Appetito Chef’s Apron** **\$20.00**

**T-Shirts** **\$20.00**

- Men’s sizes:  
S / M / L / XL; Crew neck;  
50% cotton/ 50% polyester
- Women’s sizes:  
S / M / L / XL; V-neck;  
90% cotton/10% polyester

**AMHS Tote Bag** **\$30.00**

17" W x 6" D x 13½" H;  
bottom 12" W; handle drop 9";  
100% durable cotton fabric



This year, we are pleased to offer our newest merchandise item, the AMHS baseball cap

**AMHS Baseball Caps** **\$15.00**

We offer merchandise for sale at bi-monthly AMHS general society meetings and for order, by check on the AMHS Shop.

The proceeds from merchandise sales go toward the AMHS Annual Scholarship Fund. We thank you for your patronage! If you have any questions regarding AMHS merchandise, please contact Michele LaVerghetta, (410) 707-4611.



## SIAMO UNA FAMIGLIA

▼ *Continued from page 5*

### AMHS Membership

By Lynn Sorbara, 2nd Vice President, Membership

As of April 20, 2020, the Society has 240 members. We would like to remind you that the option to renew your membership online has been simplified. We now have a new drop-down box under Membership, on the AMHS website “Renew Your Membership”, at [www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org/renew-your-membership/#myaccount](http://www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org/renew-your-membership/#myaccount). From here, you enter your email address and password. If you’ve forgotten your password, you can request that it be emailed to you). Your membership profile will populate, and you are given the option to renew, upgrade, or update your billing. We would also like to remind you that membership renewals are automatically sent via email. We appreciate your support of AMHS events and activities. Should you have any questions regarding membership, please email me directly at: [drlynnrose@yahoo.com](mailto:drlynnrose@yahoo.com).

#### NEW MEMBERS

*A warm welcome* is extended to: **Julia Boivin, Abby CuvIELLO, and Jason A. Quaglia.**

#### BIRTHDAYS

##### Compleanni a Maggio

**Joseph Scafetta, Jr.**, May 10; **Amy Antonelli**, May 15; **Victor Ferrante and Kathlyn Nudi**, May 16; **Robert Woolley**, May 19; **Peter Bell**, May 20; **Rocco Del Monaco, Giulia Michonski, and Abby CuvIELLO**, May 21; **Aldo D’Ottavio**, May 22; **Cristina Scalzitti, and John Dunkle**, May 25; **Ennio DiTullio and Renato Orcino**, May 30.

##### Compleanni a Giugno

**Judy D’Ambrosi**, June 2; **Lucille FuscIELLO, and Janet Marmura**, June 6; **Alicia Fawcett**, June 7; **Joseph Lupo**, June 9; **Alberto Paolantonio and Robert Tobias**, June 10; **Gino Fosco**, June 16; **Sharon Moran**, June 17; **Harry Piccariello**, June 24; **Margaret Uglow and Cristina Scalzitti**, June 25; **Omero Sabatini, Barbara Bernero, and Rita Orcino**, June 28; and **Helen Antonelli Free and Jason Quaglia**, June 30.

#### ANNIVERSARIES

##### Anniversari a Maggio

**Francesco & Anna Isgro**, May 19; and **Mario & Carmen Ciccone**, May 27.  
Ordination: **Rev. John V. DiBacco Jr.**, May 13.

##### Anniversari a Giugno

**Joseph & Betsy Ruzzi**, June 4; **Omero & Belinda Sabatini**, June 6; **Lucio & Maria Marchegiani**, June 9; **Tom & Cindy Savage**, June 13; **Victor Ferrante & Sharon Moran**, June 17; **Tony & Judy D’Ambrosi**, June 22; **Anthony & Elodia D’Onofrio**, June 25; and **Lucio & Edvige D’Andrea**, June 27.

#### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Category	# of Persons
Associate (Couple)	2 x 2 = 4
Associate (Individual)	30
General (Couple)	112
General (Individual)	82
Honorary	5
Scholarship	4
Student	3

**Total Membership: 240**

Give the Gift of **MEMBERSHIP!**

For details visit **Become a Member** on [www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org](http://www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org).





# LUCOLI

PROVINCE OF L'AQUILA, REGION OF ABRUZZO

By Nancy DeSanti

The picturesque small town of Lucoli is one of the nearest communes to the Campo Felice plain and ski resort. The epicenter of the 2009 L'Aquila earthquake was near the communal northeastern border. The town has approximately 1,029 inhabitants, known as Lucolani.

Lucoli is a group of hamlets, among which Casamaina is considered the center, along the valley of the river Rio, a few miles from the beautiful ski slopes of Campo Felice. Another one of the hamlets is Santa Croce, about 2 kilometers from Lucoli.

The town was formed by the union of several Roman "villas," which until 1530 were part of the jurisdiction of Aquila. Lucoli was the stronghold of the Colonna family and later Marcantonio Palma, who bought it in 1610. It later belonged to the Barberini family.

On its territory once was the ancient Benedictine abbey of St. John of Collimento, founded by Count Odoriso of the Marsi family in the 11th century.

Visitors to Lucoli can venture to nearby sights like Sirente-Velino Regional Park and Montagne della Duchessa Regional Nature Reserve. ■

## What to See

- Parish church of San Giovanni Battista which houses beautiful sculptures of the 16th century.

## Important Dates

- **June 24** — Feast of San Giovanni
- **August 10** — Feast of San Lorenzo

## Sources:

- [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucoli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucoli)
- [www.italyheritage.com/regions/abruzzo/laquila/lucoli.htm](http://www.italyheritage.com/regions/abruzzo/laquila/lucoli.htm)
- [www.expedia.com/Lucoli.dx6159750](http://www.expedia.com/Lucoli.dx6159750)

Italiano

# LUCOLI

PROVINCIA DI L'AQUILA, REGIONE ABRUZZO

Translated by Ennio DiTullio



A panoramic view of Lucoli.

La pittoresca cittadina di Lucoli è uno dei comuni più vicini alla pianura di Campo Felice e alla stazione sciistica. L'epicentro del terremoto di L'Aquila del 2009 era vicino al confine comunale nord-orientale. La città conta circa 1.029 abitanti, noti come Lucolani.

Lucoli è un gruppo di frazioni, tra le quali la Casamaina è considerata il centro, lungo la valle del fiume Rio, a pochi chilometri dalle splendide piste da sci di Campo Felice. Un altro dei borghi è Santa Croce, a circa 2 chilometri da Lucoli.

La città fu formata dall'unione di diverse "ville" romane, che fino al 1530 facevano parte della giurisdizione dell'Aquila. Lucoli fu la roccaforte della famiglia Colonna e in seguito Marcantonio Palma, che la acquistò nel 1610. In seguito appartenne alla famiglia Barberini.

Sul suo territorio un tempo era l'antica abbazia benedettina di San Giovanni del Collimen-

to, fondata nel 11° secolo dal conte Odoriso della famiglia Marsi.

I visitatori di Lucoli possono avventurarsi in luoghi vicini come il Parco Regionale Sirente-Velino e la Riserva Naturale Regionale Montagne della Duchessa. ■

## Attrazioni del luogo:

- Chiesa parrocchiale di San Giovanni Battista che ospita bellissime sculture del XVI secolo.

## Date da ricordare:

- **24 giugno** — Festa di San Giovanni
- **10 agosto** — Festa di San Lorenzo



# MONTAQUILA

PROVINCE OF ISERNIA, REGION OF MOLISE

By Nancy DeSanti

The beautiful small town of Montaquila is located in the western area of Molise in the Alta Valle del Volturno. With the Mainarde Mountains as its backdrop, it is the gateway to the Apennines. It has approximately 2,471 inhabitants.

The town's name seems to derive from the Latin "Montis Aquili" or "Mons Aquilus". In the 10th century, it was included in the possessions of the monastery of San Vincenzo. Montaquila was destroyed completely by a fire of 1464, then rebuilt by order of Ferdinand of Aragon. Until 1861 it belonged to the province of Terra di Lavoro, and only after that it was joined to the province of Molise, at that time included in the Abruzzi region.

For the past 37 years, on the Labor Day holiday on May 1, Montaquila hosts its Frittata Festival (a frittata being the Italian version of an omelette). The festival celebrates the egg as one of the most important elements in cooking and in human nutrition. In springtime, eggs are naturally abundant, so it made sense that the tradition was started in many hill towns in the province of Isernia.

*The Frittata Festival celebrates the egg as one of the most important elements in cooking and in human nutrition.*

The idea for the festival was born about 40 years ago when the people of the town wanted to raise funds for the feast of the patron saint, San Rocco. They decided to take advantage of the culinary skills of the locals and use readily available ingredients, so therefore, the idea of the frittata was born. Over the years it evolved into a festival. It also came to be known for the exceptionally large number of eggs that make up the "mother" omelette. On the afternoon of May 1, the giant omelette is carried on a cart through the town by a procession of locals dressed in folk costumes. Accompanied by folk



*A scene from Montaquila's Frittata Festival.*

music, it winds its way through the hill town until it reaches the main square.

This year, the plan was to prepare a mega omelette with as many as 1,501 eggs, to be flanked by other smaller ones ranging from 51 to 201 eggs which are offered by local families. In addition to the eggs, the ingredients are a com-

bination of local products that please the palate and pay homage to the local culture. Numerous events are tied to the festival (it's not all about eggs) including concerts, hiking, horseback riding through the surrounding mountains, photo contests, and vintage car and motorcycle shows. Unfortunately, this year the festival will probably to be rescheduled due to the health situation with the coronavirus.

Leaving the village towards Isernia, there is a fine view of the "Ponte dei 25 Archi" (25-arches bridge). ■

## What to See

- The church of Assunzione, of medieval origin, was destroyed and completely rebuilt in 1850
- The church of San Michele, hosting inside interesting frescoes

## Important Dates

- **August 16** — Feast of San Rocco, the patron saint

## Sources:

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montaquila](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montaquila)

[www.enchantingitaly.com/regions/molise/province-isernia/montaquila.htm](http://www.enchantingitaly.com/regions/molise/province-isernia/montaquila.htm)

[magazine.dooid.it/en/interests-en/events/montaquila-and-its-unique-festival](http://magazine.dooid.it/en/interests-en/events/montaquila-and-its-unique-festival)



# MONTAQUILA

PROVINCIA DI ISERNIA, REGIONE MOLISE

Translated by Ennio DiTullio

La bellissima cittadina di Montaquila si trova nella zona occidentale del Molise nell'Alta Valle del Volturno. Con le montagne delle Mainarde come sfondo, è la porta di accesso agli Appennini. Ha circa

*Il Festival della Frittata celebra l'uovo come uno degli elementi più importanti in cucina e nell'alimentazione umana.*

2.471 abitanti.

Il nome della città sembra derivare dal latino "Montis Aquili" o "Mons Aquilus". Nel X secolo fu incluso nei possedimenti del monastero di San Vincenzo. Montaquila fu completamente distrutta da un incendio del 1464, poi ricostruita per ordine di Ferdinando d'Aragona. Fino al 1861 apparteneva alla provincia di Terra di Lavoro, e solo dopo fu unita alla provincia del Molise, a quel tempo inclusa nella regione Abruzzo.

Negli ultimi 37 anni, durante la festa del lavoro il 1° maggio, Montaquila ospita il suo Festival della Frittata. Il festival celebra l'uovo come uno degli elementi più importanti in cucina e nell'alimentazione umana. In primavera, le uova sono naturalmente abbondanti, quindi aveva senso che la tradizione fosse iniziata in molte città collinari della provincia di Isernia.

L'idea per il festival è nata circa 40 anni fa, quando la gente della città voleva raccogliere fondi per la festa del santo patrono, San Rocco. Decisero di sfruttare le abilità culinarie della gente del posto e di usare ingredienti prontamente disponibili, quindi nacque l'idea della frittata. Nel corso degli anni si è evoluto in un

festival. È diventato noto anche per il numero eccezionalmente elevato di uova che compongono la frittata "madre". Nel pomeriggio del 1° maggio, la frittata gigante viene trasportata su un carro attraverso la città da una processione di gente del posto vestita con costumi popolari. Accompagnata dalla musica folk, si snoda attraverso la città collinare fino a raggiungere la piazza principale.

Quest'anno, il piano era di preparare una mega frittata con un massimo di 1.501 uova, affiancata da altre più piccole che vanno dalle 51 alle 201 uova che vengono offerte dalle famiglie locali. Oltre alle uova, gli ingredienti sono una combinazione di prodotti locali che soddisfano il palato e rendono omaggio alla cultura locale. Numerosi eventi sono legati al festival (non si tratta solo di uova) tra cui concerti, escursioni, passeggiate a cavallo attraverso le montagne circostanti, concorsi fotografici e spettacoli di auto e moto d'epoca. Sfortunatamente, quest'anno il festival sarà probabilmente riprogrammato a causa della situazione sanitaria con il coronavirus.

Lasciando il paese verso Isernia, si gode una bella vista del "Ponte dei 25 Archi". ■

## Attrazioni del luogo:

- La chiesa dell'Assunzione, di origine medievale, fu distrutta e completamente ricostruita nel 1850
- La chiesa di San Michele, che ospita al suo interno interessanti affreschi.

## Date da ricordare:

- **16 agosto** — festa di San Rocco, il santo patrono

## THIS IS YOUR NOTIZIARIO

By Carmine James Spellane, Editor

*The Notiziario belongs to all of us, and we want to hear from you.*

The AMHS is much more than just its meetings. We are a vibrant society of people who care about their heritage and want to learn more. And all of us have stories to tell. We encourage you to submit articles for the newsletter to tell yours. It could be about a recent trip to Italy, honors received by you or your family, milestones such as significant birthdays or anniversaries, reviews of books on Italian topics, or recipes, to name but a few ideas.

All articles can be emailed to [abruzzo-moliseheritagesociety@gmail.com](mailto:abruzzo-moliseheritagesociety@gmail.com) to my attention. As editor, I will carefully review each submission and edit as needed. Please understand that publication of any article is subject to space available and the appropriate nature of the content, but we will make every effort to use your work and photos.

The AMHS is making new efforts to engage our current members and add more to our ranks. A vibrant Notiziario is part of that. As our society approaches its 20th anniversary, let's all help ensure a bright future for our mission to celebrate "all things Italian." ■





## AMHS NOTIZIARIO

Carmine James Spellane, EDITOR  
Nancy DeSanti, CONTRIBUTING WRITER  
Maria D'Andrea-Yothers, PUBLICATIONS MANAGER  
Romeo Sabatini, ITALIAN LANGUAGE EDITOR

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# 2020 CALENDAR of EVENTS

**The AMHS 20th Anniversary Celebration**, scheduled for June 14 at Casa Italiana, has been **POSTPONED**. It will be rescheduled for a date to be announced.

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

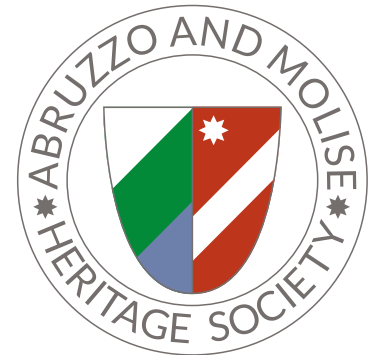
**Ferragosto Picnic**  
1:00pm | Fort Ward Park  
Alexandria, VA

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

**General Society Meeting**  
1:00pm | Location TBA

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

**Annual Wine Tasting**  
1:00pm | TBA



[www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org](http://www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org)



THE ABRUZZO AND MOLISE HERITAGE SOCIETY  
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