



# AMHS NOTIZIARIO

The Official Newsletter of the Abruzzo and Molise Heritage  
Society of the Washington, DC Area  
JANUARY 2014

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



## HAPPY NEW YEAR 2014



**Top** - AMHS winemakers Romeo Sabatini, Osvaldo Barsi, Joe Ruzzi, Bill Leali, Tony & Robert D'Onofrio, John Paul Maye and Nick Ferrante, with Father Ezio Marchetto, Pastor, Holy Rosary Church, and AMHS President Maria D'Andrea, at the AMHS general Society meeting & porchetta lunch, December 1, 2013. *(photo courtesy of Vera Holovchenko)*

**Bottom** - AMHS current and former officers Tony D'Onofrio, Dick DiBuono, Carmen Ciccone & Mario Ciccone, Lucio, Maria & Edvige D'Andrea, Ennio & Emma DiTullio, Elodio D'Onofrio and Nancy DeSanti, with Paul Anthony, Emcee, at the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of celebration for Holy Rosary Church at the National Building Museum. *(photo courtesy of Tony D'Onofrio)*

**NEXT SOCIETY EVENT:** Sunday, January 19, 2014, 6:00 p.m. Memorial service for AMHS Board member Joe Grano at Casa Italiana. Sunday, January 26, 2014, 1:00 p.m. at Casa Italiana. Professor Roberto Severino will give a talk on *The Life and Poetry of Gabriele D'Annunzio*. See inside for details

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Friends/Cari Soci ed Amici,



As 2013 comes to a close, and look back over the year, I cannot help but think to myself that we had one of our most successful years as an organization. We had wonderful programs throughout the year, as well as special events such as the lecture by Dr. Alison Luchs on Michelangelo's David-Apollo and the Ferragosto picnic. But I will say that one event

topped them all, and that was our December 1 general Society meeting where we had, in attendance, close to 140 people! Joe and Joann Novello outdid themselves again with the savory porchetta and roasted vegetables, and our Hospitality Chair Lynn Sorbara with her wonderful dessert, homemade Chantilly cream with cakes. We had gracious wine makers who shared with us some spectacular homemade wines, as well as grappa and limoncello. We also had important business to attend to, and that was the election of three members to the Board – Rocco Caniglia, Sergio Fresco and Lana Nardella - as well as the election of myself as President, Nancy DeSanti as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – Programs, Sarah Scott as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Membership, Maria Fresco as Secretary and Jeff Clark as Treasurer. Please be sure to read more about the December 1 general Society meeting elsewhere in the *Notiziario*.

The outgoing members of the Board and officers will be officially sworn in at the January 26, 2014 general Society meeting. With the elevation of Nancy DeSanti and Jeff Clark from the Board to 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Treasurer, respectively, I, as President, have the responsibility of appointing two persons to serve out the last year of their terms. I am very happy to report that Eileen and John Verna have both agreed to serve on the Board. I am also happy to report that Bruno Fusco has accepted my appointment to serve on the Board, to fulfill the one remaining year of Joe Onofrietti's term following Joe's resignation in early November. Eileen, John and Bruno's appointments are effective January 1, 2014.

We were all deeply saddened by the passing of a great friend and member of the AMHS Board, Joe Grano. At the wishes of his family, he will be buried in Pennsylvania. AMHS, along with the Italian Cultural Society, the Lido Civic Club, the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of D.C. and other organizations, are planning a memorial service for Joe in Washington, DC. The service will be held on Sunday, January 19, 2014, 6:00 p.m. at Casa Italiana. Additional details will be provided at a later date.

On a personal note, I am greatly honored to have been elected to serve a 2-year term as your President. I look forward to working with the Executive Committee – and to working with you to continue to grow as an organization and to bring you quality programs and events.

I would be remiss if I did not share with you a growing concern of the Executive Committee to find members who will serve as an officer or a member of the Board. Increasingly it seems that our well is running dry, so to speak. I recognize that we lead busy lives, that many of us work, have families and we have other activities to which we commit our time. The responsibility of serving in a leadership position is not so burdensome as to be unmanageable. I am very grateful to the newly elected officers and members of the Board who agreed to serve in 2014 – and to those who thoughtfully considered the requests of the nominating committee to serve in positions that were being vacated.

In order for us to survive as an organization, we need each and every one of us to give of our time and carefully consider what we do, the audience we reach and the messages we convey to the Italian American community in the Washington, DC area. This organization is very near and dear to my heart, as it is to all of you. So, when the nominating committee or I, as President, approach any of you about serving as an officer, please consider all the positive contributions you could make to our Society.

Before closing my year-end message, I want to encourage you to respond to the recent fundraising appeal from Dick DiBuono, chair of our Fundraising Committee and myself, regarding donations to the AMHS/NIAF Scholarship Fund. In the spirit of giving that is felt by all during this time of year, I hope that each of you will consider making a donation, in any amount, so that AMHS can fully fund two (2) scholarships, in the amount of \$4,000, next year.

In closing, I wish each and every one of you “Buon Natale e Buon Anno”. May the New Year 2014 bring peace and happiness to us all. I look forward to a successful 2014 for our Society.

Cordiali saluti,  
*Maria D'Andrea*

## MEET YOUR ELECTED OFFICERS FOR 2014

Congratulations to the officers and members of the Board who were elected at the December 1, 2013 general Society meeting: Maria D'Andrea, President; Nancy DeSanti, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President - Programs; Sarah Scott, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President - Membership; Maria Fresco, Secretary; Jeff Clark, Treasurer; and Board members Rocco Caniglia, Sergio Fresco and Lana Nardella. These individuals will serve on the Executive Committee along with Board members Peter Bell, Lucio D'Andrea (President Emeritus), Dick DiBuono (Immediate Past President) Bruno Fusco, Kirsten Keppel, Lynn Sorbara and Eileen and John Verna.

The following are bios for the officers and Board members elected in December. You can see bios and photos for all members of the AMHS Executive Committee on the AMHS website, [www.abruzzoandmoliseheritagesociety.org](http://www.abruzzoandmoliseheritagesociety.org)



**Maria D'Andrea, President**

Ms. Maria D'Andrea is proud to be a first generation Italian-American: her mother was born in Pacentro, Abruzzo and her father in Roccamandolfi, Molise. She has been an active member of the Society since it was founded by her father in 2000. She has served as a member of the Board, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President-Programs, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President-Membership and editor and co-editor of the *AMHS Notiziario*. In her professional life, Ms. D'Andrea is a Supervisory International Trade Specialist with the Office of Textiles and Apparel, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. She is responsible for domestic policy issues, and the textile and apparel trade portfolio for Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Oceania. Prior to joining the Department of Commerce, Maria worked on textile and clothing trade issues as a member of the Secretariat of the World Trade Organization in Geneva, Switzerland.

Maria dedicates her time and enthusiastic support to the Italian American community in the Washington, DC area, and enjoys travel and spending time with her friends and her very tight-knit family (four sisters, one brother, their spouses and 8 nieces and nephews). Most importantly, Maria is proud to carry forward the legacy of her father who served as the first President of the Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society.

**Nancy DeSanti, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – Programs**

Ms. Nancy DeSanti was born in Massachusetts and while growing up, lived in Athens, Greece for 4 years, and in Manila, the Philippines, for 3 years. For the past 11 years, she has been a legal specialist with Reed Smith LLP, a top-15 global law firm. Prior to that, she was an editor at The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., a legal publishing company. As the daughter of immigrants, Nancy appreciates and loves her heritage and is interested in Italian genealogy, history, culture and language. She is a member of the National Italian American Foundation and enjoys traveling to Italy each year. She lives in Alexandria, Virginia.

**Sarah Scott, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Membership**

Ms. Sarah Scott is second-generation Italian-American; her mother's family is from Poggio Picenze, Province of L'Aquila, Abruzzo. Her father's career in the United States Navy enabled Ms. Scott to travel throughout Italy and live in Naples for several years. Although Sarah was born in Woodbury, New Jersey, she traveled extensively with her Navy family. Sarah most recently lived in Texas while completing a Ph.D. at the University of Texas at Dallas. She holds degrees in Economics, Finance, Political Economy, and Public Policy. She relocated to Washington, DC in May 2010 to work as an International Economist at the Bureau of Economic Analysis, which is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Her favorite activities are tennis and travel.

**Maria Fresco, Secretary**

Mrs. Maria Caminiti Fresco is a first-generation Italian-American born of Sicilian parents. Maria was very fortunate to visit Italy with her family growing up, learning Italian along the way and refining her language skills at Casa Italiana Language School and the University of Maryland/College Park (UMCP). Maria's connection to Abruzzo and Molise? Her husband, Sergio Fresco, one of the founding members of

AMHS. A graduate of UMCP, Maria worked previously as a classroom teacher, Enrollment Coordinator, and Assistant Director for Bright Horizons Family Solutions, an employer-based childcare company. She also volunteered for Festa Italiana and Villa Rosa Festivals over the years. Currently, she works for three churches in the Archdiocese of Washington: as a parish secretary at Holy Rosary Church in Washington, DC and the parish cook at both Sacred Heart and Ascension Churches in Bowie, MD. Favorite activities include cooking (of course!), reading, and party planning.

**Jeffrey (Jeff) Clark, Treasurer**

Mr. Jeffrey (Jeff) Clark grew up in Utah and has lived the last ten years in the District of Columbia. He works as chief financial officer for a small government contractor holding an MBA degree and CPA designation. He is the single father of three children, 24 and 17-year old sons, and a 21 year-old daughter who all live with him. In addition to the AMHS, Jeff is a member of the Lucchesi nel Mondo Tuscany Club, and in 2011 served as the Secretary of the Festa Italiana Foundation. He claims Italian heritage through his 6th great grandfather who was a native of Naples and immigrated to New Orleans in the early 1700s.

**Rocco Caniglia, Member of the Board**

Mr. Rocco Caniglia was born in the beautiful town of Orsogna in the Abruzzo Region, where on a clear day you can see the massive majestic Mountain Maiella touch the heavens. Rocco came to Washington as a young boy with his older sister. After high school, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and served with honor and distinction as a rifleman with the 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam. He was the recipient of the Purple Heart. After Vietnam, Rocco worked and owned his own construction business. Shortly after that, he started a very successful pizza restaurant, *Mama Mia's*, which he ran until recently, when he sold the business.

Rocco has been a member of AMHS since the very beginning in 2000. He has served as a member of the Board and later as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President-Programs. He is very grateful and proud to have been part of this great society and its members. Now that Rocco is retired, he is enjoying life to the fullest. Rocco enjoys playing cards with friends, his daily long walk in the park, his bi-yearly trip to Italy with Yoni and reading books especially about historical events. Most of all he loves to spend time with his three beautiful grandchildren; they surely brighten up his world.

**Sergio Fresco, Member of the Board**

Mr. Sergio Fresco is a first-generation Italian-American born of Abruzzese parents. His father hails from Lanciano, his mother from San Vito Chietino. Sergio was one of the founding members of the Abruzzo Molise Heritage Society, and later served as the organization's Programs Chair. A business graduate from the University of Maryland University College, Sergio has worked 20+ years as a Box Office Manager at the Verizon Center, Washington's sports & entertainment complex and home of the Washington Capitals, Wizards & Mystics.

Following in his paternal family's music traditions, Sergio is also a professional accordionist who works solo and band jobs

with Baltimore, MD-based Omni 1. Sergio is also very proud to have recorded 2 albums, "Dedicato a Voi" and "Accordion to Me." Sergio's hobbies include traveling, bike-riding, and making homemade fig jam with his wife Maria (if/when bees don't descend upon and invade their precious fig tree!).

#### **Lana Nardella, Member of the Board**

Mrs. Lana Barber Nardella was born in Rochester, New York. Her mother Laura Ciaccia Malsegna was born in Celano, Abruzzo. Her father Samuel Barber's family was from Villa Rosa, Sicily.

Lana received her degree in Art Education from Xavier University (formerly Our Lady of Cincinnati College). After teaching Art in Fairport, New York, she moved to Northern Virginia and worked at Northern Virginia Montessori School. For fifteen years she was an instructional assistant with Special Education in the Fairfax County School system.

Lana and her husband John Nardella (deceased February 2013) were married for 42 years and have two sons and a daughter: John Paul, Christopher and Ann Marie who have blessed them with 11 grandchildren.

Lana has enjoyed many trips to Italy and enjoys researching her family genealogy in Abruzzo. She appreciates the Italian culture, language and travel and the wonderful friends she has met through the AMHS.

(Photos and biographies for the entire AMHS Executive Committee can be found on the AMHS website, [www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org/officers.htm](http://www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org/officers.htm)).

## **NEXT SOCIETY EVENTS & ACTIVITIES**

### **JANUARY 26, 2013 GENERAL SOCIETY MEETING: THE LIFE AND POETRY OF GABRIELE**

**D'ANNUNZIO** by Nancy DeSanti, AMHS Board member

On Sunday, January 26, 2014, Professor Roberto Severino will give a presentation on *"The Life and Poetry of Gabriele D'Annunzio"*. D'Annunzio, who was born in Pescara, Abruzzo, is considered to be one of Abruzzo – and Italy's – most famous writers. Professor Severino will tell us about D'Annunzio's poetry, as well as the life and times of this fascinating man. Roberto Severino is Professor Emeritus, Department of Italian, Georgetown University and President Emeritus, American University of Rome. See the flyer elsewhere in the *Notiziario* for additional details and a reservation form for the meeting. Please be sure to join us, and reserve early!

## **RECENT SOCIETY EVENTS & ACTIVITIES**

### **WINE TASTING IS HUGE SUCCESS**

by Nancy DeSanti

The wine-tasting event on Sunday, December 1, 2013, turned out to be one of the most successful AMHS events ever.

About 137 members and their friends came, and \$1,800 was raised for the scholarship fund. And it's safe to say nobody went home hungry or thirsty.

But before all the merriment began, Romeo Sabatini, AMHS webmaster and scholarship committee chairman, gave a very interesting talk on winemaking in ancient Italy. He explained the categories of wine in ancient times—the imperial wines (top of the line, for the emperors), the patrician wines (pretty good wines, for those with money), and then the slave wines (bottom of the barrel, sometimes tasting like vinegar, for those with no money). In ancient times, sweet wines were preferred, and sometimes honey was mixed in.

After Romeo's informative presentation, we were looking forward to the wine tasting, but first it was time to serve the food. Ah, the food!! Much credit must go to Joe and Joann Novello. The day before, while Joann was preparing the 70 pounds of root vegetables late into the night, Joe was busy readying the 17 pork shoulders (143 pounds!!). Joann helped him prepare the spices to insert in the porchetta for the marinade. Joe has been making the porchetta for family and friends for about 4 years, with a recipe he "reverse-engineered" himself (Joe is an engineer, and that's what they do!!). Joe notes that he was born on a farm so hard work was the norm, but he says the fact that so many people had a great time made all the hard work worth it. The carving of the porchetta was handled by Nick Ferrante, who also donated the fresh rosemary, and Rocco Caniglia.

Next came the moment everyone was waiting for, when Romeo introduced the winemakers: Osvaldo Barsi, Tony D'Onofrio, Jim Gearing, Bill Leali, Cesare Mariggio, Sabatino Marigliano, John Paul Maye, Nick Ferrante, Joe Novello, Tony Ricci, Joe Ruzzi, Romeo Sabatini, Dominic Santini and Mike Stempihar. Each of the wines was superb, and there was even a chance to taste homemade grappa and limoncello.

The outstanding success of the event was due to the efforts of many people, including hospitality committee chair Lynn Sorbara, Peter Bell, Deno Reed, Edvige D'Andrea, Grace and Francesca Orfila and Sarah Scott. We were pleased to have Washington Post food writer Bonnie Benwick with us, especially since she wrote such a nice article last spring mentioning Joe Novello and the Washington winemakers.

It should be noted that at the beginning of the meeting, Father Ezio Marchetto said the prayer and then went on to make some heartfelt remarks about Joe Grano, a dear friend to many in the Society who passed away recently. God bless you, Joe, and may you rest in peace.

### **AMHS MEMBERSHIP**

by Sarah Scott, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President - Membership

As 2013 draws to a close, I am pleased to announce that our membership is now 276 and growing. Your AMHS volunteers have been working diligently to find new and better ways to increase and energize our membership. AMHS offers many enjoyable activities and opportunities for fellowship to its members and we want to remain active and viable by getting

the word out to like-minded people who are interested in preserving our Italian heritage in the Washington, DC area.

What better way to boost our membership and broaden our horizons to a larger audience than by promoting the benefits of AMHS via social networking sites? We have started using the World Wide Web by promoting our events with the gracious support of the very successful Passatempo Meetup, organized by Keith Gilbert. We have had several new people join our events through this outreach and are pleased with the outcome. Also, we recently launched our AMHS Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/abruzzomoliseheritagesociety>.

Through Meetup and Facebook, we can reach a new audience and provide an additional connection to our current members to make announcements, educate, and post pictures to share with our online friends as we enjoy fun events. Please feel free to join in the Facebook fun by hitting the "Like" button for our page!

#### ***New Members***

A warm welcome to our newest members: Madeline Bernero; Rita Giovenco; Helen Antonelli Free; Joseph Ruzzi, Sr.; and Joseph Ruzzi, Jr.

#### ***Birthdays and Anniversaries***

The following members celebrate birthdays and anniversaries in November and December. *Buon compleanno, buon anniversario e Auguri!*

#### ***Birthdays***

Jeffrey Petrino, Laura Pagliaro, January 2; Francesca Orfila, January 3; Carmela Ventresca, January 4; Delores Caniglia, January 5; Maria Latino, January 6; Rose Del Borrello, January 7; Marilisa Battistella, Emma Di Tullio, January 8; Diane Pasquino, January 12; Bob Hudson, January 15; Monica Reed, January 18; Steve Balducci, Frank Del Borrello, Jacqueline D'Erme, January 19; John Villilo, January 20; Cecilia Fiermonte, Lillian Dwyer, January 21; Teresa Scalzo, January 22; Bess Di Tullio, January 24; Margherita Amatucci, January 26; Mary Kitsos, Cheryl Mitchell, January 27; Geraldine Scott, January 31; Mauro Chiaverini, Roberto Di Tullio, Dora Marinucci, February 2; William Marmura, Madeline Bernero, February 3; Giuseppe Conte, February 4; David DeAngelis, Rev. Lydio Tomasi, February 6; Carmen Ciccone, Gayle Miller, February 8; Louis Sacchetti, Salvatore Tamburo, February 9; Stephan Carrier, Mark Lino, February 10; Sabatino Mazziotti, February 12; Olga DeSanti, February 13; Massimo Fuggitti, February 15; Roy Morton, February 17; Elisa DiClemente, February 18; Lana Nardella, Graziella Orfila, February 19; Antonio Ceresini, February 20; Francis Cunningham, Francesco Isgro, February 21; Emanuele De Marco, Gino Marinucci, John Tengler, February 22; Joe Marchegiani, Diana Del Grosso, February 23; Concettina Hudson, February 24; Luigi DeLuca, Lourdes Tinajero, February 25; Michele LaVerghetta, February 27; and Giuseppe Mastragelo, February 28.

Also I would like to *extend a happy belated birthday to Giuseppe "Pino" Cicala*, whose birthday was June 12.

#### ***Anniversaries***

Gaspare & Dolores Tirabassi, January 1; Ennio & Emma Di Tullio, January 5; Camillo & Gina Damiano, January 24; Joseph & Anna Marie Scavetti, January 25; Antonio & Liliana Ceresini, February 8; Bruno & Joanne Fusco, February 14.

### **SIAMO UNA FAMIGLIA**

#### **CONGRATULATIONS TO PINO CICALA**

On November 23, 2013, the Lido Civic Club held its Past Presidents Night at the Capital Hilton, at which time an award was given to AMHS member Pino Cicala. The award was made by J.P. McCusker, President of the National Columbus Celebration Association, and the photo of the award ceremony appeared in the Washington Post on December 1, 2013. Pino was recognized for his many years of promoting the celebration of Columbus Day, including on his AMICO website <http://italianamericancommunications.org/>. (submitted by Nancy DeSanti).

#### **AMHS WELL REPRESENTED ON THE HOLY ROSARY CHURCH PARISH COUNCIL**

Congratulations to AMHS members Silvio Colandreo, Nancy DeSanti, Bruno Fusco and Maria Marigliano who were elected to the Holy Rosary Church Parish Council. Many of you know Nancy and Bruno as past and present members of the AMHS Executive Committee, and Maria as organist and choir director for the Church. It is wonderful to see the four – who actively support the work and activities of AMHS and the Church - appointed to the Council. (submitted by Maria D'Andrea).

#### **IN MEMORY OF A DC LEGEND**



Joe Grano, an AMHS member and member of the Board of Directors, passed away suddenly on Sunday, November 24, 2013 at George Washington University Hospital. He was 68. The cause was complications from a stroke. Joe was born in the Bronx, New York; his parents were born near Cosenza, Calabria. Joe graduated from St. John's University (Queens, NY) with a bachelor's degree. He also attended St John's University School of Law, where he received his J.D. After receiving his law degree, Joe moved to Washington, DC. He began work as an attorney with the Board of Veterans Appeals. Presently, he is in solo practice. He has also taught English as a second language for a number of years. He created his own course called Discover Washington, where he taught American history, government and law to advanced English speakers and then arranged field trips to various sites in Washington, including the White House, the Capitol, the Supreme Court, and the National Gallery of Art. Since 2001, several times a year, he teaches U.S. history, government and law to international auditors and tax planners working for Ernst & Young, who will be working in the U.S.

Joe was a “larger than life” figure in the Washington, DC area who fought passionately for causes in which he believed, such as the fight to preserve Rhodes Tavern, built in 1799 and at the time the oldest commercial structure standing in downtown Washington (unfortunately, an unsuccessful fight), DC voting rights and giving the proper recognition to the 19th-century “Artist of the Capitol”, Constantino Brumidi. Brumidi was perhaps Joe’s most fervent and passionate cause. In 2000, Joe and several individuals interested in the U.S. Capitol Building and Italian art formed The Constantino Brumidi Society. Joe was its chair for 13 years. In 2005, the Society, along with other groups, successfully urged Congress to honor Brumidi, in the Rotunda of the Capitol, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of his birth. The Society also urged the Congress to award Brumidi the Congressional Gold Medal; legislation to do so was passed by Congress in 2008 and signed by former President Bush that year. The Medal was formally presented on July 11, 2012. Joe’s latest effort, before his passing, was to get enough Congressional support to get a Resolution passed to have the Postmaster General issue a Brumidi commemorative stamp. At the time of his passing, Joe’s “fight” was still ongoing, a fight that will hopefully continue by the Italian American community in the Washington, DC area - with the support of the Embassy of Italy. This would be a fitting legacy for Joe Grano, activist and friend to the entire Italian American community. A service to commemorate Joe’s life will be held on Sunday, January 19, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in Casa Italiana. All are welcome. *(submitted by Maria D’Andrea).*

## THE HOLY ROSARY CHURCH CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

*by Nancy DeSanti and Maria D’Andrea*

On Sunday, December 8, 2013, Holy Rosary Roman Catholic (Italian) Church in Washington, DC celebrated its Centennial. As stated by Rev. Lydio F. Tomasi, C.S., Ph.D, Chair of the Centennial Committee stated “a serendipitous coincidence has Holy Rosary’s centennial in December 2013 . . . to showcase our Italian heritage in the final month of the Year of Italian Culture”. Furthermore, Father Tomasi stated “From its humble beginnings in 1913 in a rented house, Holy Rosary has expanded its Roman basilica-style facilities and matured over the decades to become in 2013 not only an inclusive church but also a gathering place for all ethnic groups and transnationals on the move”. There could not have been a more fitting tribute to this dynamic and beautiful parish than to celebrate with a High Mass and a Gala.

The centennial festivities began Sunday afternoon at 4 p.m. on December 8, 2013, with a Mass celebrated by Cardinal Donald Wuerl. Hundreds of parishioners and guests braved the icy rain, and the church was so full that Casa Italiana was needed to handle the overflow crowd.

The church, decorated with so many flowers, may never have looked so beautiful.

Papal Nuncio Carlo Maria Viganò was in attendance, along with Italian Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and Samuel Alito, officials of the Scalabrinian Missionaries, and former Holy Rosary Pastor

Charles Zaroni (Pastor Emeritus Father Lydio Tomasi’s predecessor), among others. The Knights of Columbus Honor Guard escorted the procession of the clergy.

A special mention should be made of the outstanding musical accompaniment for the Mass. The inspired singing of the Holy Rosary Choir, directed by Maria Marigliano, who was also the organist, was surely a highlight of the centennial celebration. And when the choir sang the “Ave Maria,” there might not have been a dry eye in the house. To complement the beautiful singing during the Mass, there was music from 4 trumpeters and trombonists, 2 violinists, and a viola player.

Cardinal Wuerl had warm words of praise for Holy Rosary and gave his warm wishes to the parish. After his homily, the Cardinal added greetings in Italian. Holy Rosary Pastor Ezio Marchetto delivered stirring words summing up the accomplishments of the 100 years while looking forward to the new century.

Following the High Mass, a Gala was held at the National Building Museum, a fitting place for such a momentous occasion – the facility looked absolutely gorgeous. Over 750 people were in attendance to enjoy a wonderful evening of fine food, music and tributes to the Church and its benefactors. Paul Anthony, a local radio and TV broadcaster, was the master of ceremonies. The invocation was given by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, and welcoming remarks were provided by Rev. Lydio Tomasi, C.S., Ph.D, Centennial Committee Chair, and Italian Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero, Centennial Honorary Chair. The first of two highlights of the evening were performances by Jose Sacin and Melissa Jean Chavez who sang the Italian National Anthem (“Fratelli d’Italia”) and the “Star-Spangled Banner”, respectively and the musical interlude by Bel Canto Virtuosi from the award-winning Riberbend Opera Company and Michael Amante, Virtuosi member and Gala Star, who sang selected short scenes from Italian opera repertoire highlighted thrilling arias and rousing passages that took our minds and hearts back to Italy.

The second highlight of the evening was recognition of Honoree Robert A. Facchina, the “Gift of the Century” donor who was awarded the Commendatore Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana (“knighthood” from the Italian Republic). Mr. Facchina’s history to Holy Rosary Church dates to its earliest beginnings, as his Italian ancestors, who were skilled artisans, established the National Mosaic Company in the Washington, DC area. They completed the mosaic work and terrazzo flooring not only in Holy Rosary Church but also in major public buildings throughout the Washington, DC area including the Library of Congress, the old U.S. Department of Commerce and the Franciscan Monastery.

It was an exceptional evening enjoyed by all! AMHS members in attendance were proud to represent our Society at such a grand, historical event.



## **“BRAVO” THE LIDO CIVIC CLUB**

*by Lucio D’Andrea, AMHS President Emeritus*

For some years, the Order Sons of Italy (OSIA) Heritage Lodge of Fairfax, VA, made a financial contribution to Mantua Elementary School in Fairfax as a demonstration of the Lodge’s commitment to promote the teaching of Italian in the Fairfax County school system. These donations were used to help defray the costs of supplies, such as books, that the school system had been unable to provide. As a member of the Lodge, I was part of the delegation that has visited Mantua annually to present the donation and to witness first-hand the Italian classes. Because of financial constraints, the Lodge was not able to continue making an annual donation. Therefore, I approached Phil Finelli, President of The Lido Civic Club of Washington, DC, for help, knowing of The Lido Club’s long-standing reputation to help Italian causes, especially the promotion of Italian language. Phil said “no problem there Lucio”! The Lido Civic Club made a generous donation towards the school’s purchase of Italian language dictionaries. On November 14, 2013 Phil, my wife Edvige and I presented the donation to the Principal of Mantua, Mrs. Jan-Marie Fernandez and the Italian program teachers, Marina Afentakis, Analisa Iervolino and David Lorenzi. The school was, needless to say, very thankful for The Lido Club’s generous donation.



**AMHS members Lucio & Edvige D’Andrea and Phil Finelli, President, The Lido Civic Club of Washington, DC with the Principal and instructors of the Italian Language Program at Mantua Elementary**

The Italian program at Mantua Elementary School is half an hour of Italian twice a week. All students from kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade are taught Italian. The instruction is done in Italian only. The school teaches the language and culture of Italy. The curriculum is based on the Standards of Learning (SOLs) and World Language standards. It is the only on-going Italian language program in the Fairfax County school system. Currently about 950 children are learning Italian at Mantua. Edvige and I have been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm demonstrated by the students and the teachers when we have observed them in the classroom.

## **500 YEARS OF ITALIAN AMERICAN HISTORY**

*by by Lucio D’Andrea*

On October 30, 2013, the Library of Congress released a 310-page book titled *“Explorers Emigrant Citizens - A Visual History of the Italian-American Experience from the Collections of the Library of Congress”*. It covers contributions of Italian and Italian Americans, from Christopher Columbus to today. The authors of the book, Linda Barrett Osborne and Paolo Battaglia, have selected 500 images related to the history of Italian Americans from the Library of Congress’ holdings on photographs, letters, films and sound recordings. It is one of the best books I have seen on the Italian emigrant experience, to the point that I recommended the Society acquire a copy and that it be made available to members. The book would make a terrific gift for family and friends who cherish their Italian heritage. Parts of the book cite experiences of Abruzzesi and Molisani. Anyone interested in borrowing the book contact me directly, [ldandrea1933@yahoo.com](mailto:ldandrea1933@yahoo.com), or (703) 490-3067.

## **ADVENTURES IN PUGLIA**

*by Nancy DeSanti*

October is a wonderful time to visit Puglia - the weather is sunny and a balmy 65° to 70°. The stores offer all kinds of discounts, and there aren’t many visitors around (there were only small groups of Germans, British and Japanese, very few Americans). So in October 2013, I went to Puglia for the first time, with a group of mostly National Italian American Foundation members (mostly from New York and New Jersey) and OSIA Fairfax, Va. Lodge officer Joe La Marca and his wife June.

Little did I know I was in for a big treat. Puglia is truly a beautiful region. It’s the “heel of the boot” with the Adriatic Sea on the eastern side and the Ionian Sea on the western side. One thing you should know about Puglia is that it’s the land of olive trees - in fact, about 60 million of them (yes, you read that right!!). The huge trunks look like elaborate sculptures and we were told that up until a few years ago, “olive tree rustlers” used to uproot big trees and sell them to wealthy landowners in the North. In Italy, 37% of the olive oil is produced in Puglia (and 30% in Calabria), and the olive oil from Puglia is said to be of high quality. There are also lots of almond trees, with many pastries made with almonds, and almond milk is used in coffee. And there are so many fig trees that apparently nobody bothers to buy figs since they can pick them anywhere (same thing with the prickly pears).

After flying from Rome to Brindisi, it was a short ride to Lecce. We stayed a couple of days in Lecce, which has been called “the Florence of the South” because of the beautiful architecture and art. From the 15th century on, it was considered one of the most important cities of Southern Italy.



**Lecce Amphitheatre**

Lecce, in addition to being full of beautiful palaces, churches and elegant stores, is known for its Roman amphitheatre which is right in downtown Lecce in the Piazza di Sant'Oronzo, named after the city's patron saint. Centuries ago, gladiators fought in this amphitheatre, because that was the entertainment of the day. But we learned that they didn't "fight to the death," that was only for slaves (captured in war) and wild animals (such as two elephants or a tiger versus a lion). Sometimes the amphitheatre was filled with water so sea battles could be reenacted. During the Roman era, some 20,000 spectators would fill the stone seats of the amphitheatre. One can only imagine the crowds watching these spectacles centuries ago, whereas nowadays the crowds consist of passersby on their way to the many restaurants, bars and stores nearby (with creative names such as the made-up name "Ragazzzeria" for young people). Also nearby was a museum featuring an exhibit of paper Mache figures such as the Madonna and saints, using the lightweight material that allows them to be carried more easily in processions.

We learned that the name Lecce is derived from the Latin word "leccis," which is a kind of oak tree. The city is nearly surrounded by walls dating from the 1500s and it has a vibrant night life and almost 100 churches. The most famous is the baroque Basilica of Santa Croce. It features fanciful statues of animals, dragons, undersea creatures, shells, birds, flowers and angels. The Basilica was completed in 1695 after work by three generations of architects and artisans.

We found out that the Romans' famous Appian Way (the main road between Rome and Southern Italy) ended in Brindisi, but the column marking the end of it somehow wound up in Lecce in the piazza honoring Sant'Oronzo, the patron saint and first bishop of Lecce who was martyred during Emperor Nero's reign.

The most famous native son of the province of Lecce may be Aldo Moro, the Prime Minister of Italy who was born in Maglie, and who was kidnapped and assassinated in 1978 by the Red Brigades after being held for 55 days - which even now is being written about (it's the subject of a new book, "*I 55 giorni che hanno cambiato l'Italia*").

After spending 2 days in Lecce, we moved on to Bari, the capital of Puglia and a big port city. We learned that Bari has been very important since the Middle Ages, when it was the junction between East and West. In fact, some of the Crusades to the Holy Land to conquer Jerusalem were launched from Bari, and also Otranto and Trani.



**Bari Lungomare**

Bari is a city of contrasts. Until 10 years ago, it was called the most dangerous city in Italy. The joke was that if you walked into Bari Vecchia (the old quarter, which resembles a maze), you would come out with no clothes, and they said people used to need a police escort to go to church!! Then about 10 years ago, the army and carabinieri came in during "Operazione Primavera" and a lot of people were arrested, some left voluntarily (for example, to go to Montenegro across the Adriatic to open a casino) and some were paid to leave.

Nowadays, Bari has a famous opera house (Teatro Petruzzelli) that was featuring Giuseppe Verdi's last opera "Falstaff" during the Verdi bicentennial month of October. And there are beautiful wide avenues lined with palm trees, such as the Via Sparano, where you can find top designer stores such as Gucci, Prada, Louis Vuitton and Hermès. Bari is thought to be the final resting place of St. Nicholas, the city's patron saint, and many visitors (especially around Christmas time) come to see the Basilica of San Nicola which is dedicated to this famous saint. The basilica was built in the 11th century after the Saint's relics were brought to Italy from what is now Turkey.

There's a lively music scene too, and one Sunday night, we saw the street band *Sembianze Umane* playing in the street in front of the Armani store. They just happened to be playing "Tu vuo fa l'Americano" (before they even knew they had some in the audience). And Bari has a beautiful waterfront area known as the *Passeggiata Lungomare*. Walking nearby one afternoon, we came across a wedding party taking pictures in the middle of the piazza. The wedding party looked stunning - and the bridesmaids' *stiletto* shoes really sparkled in the sunlight!!

We were surprised to see that within the city is a Swabian castle that really looks beautiful at nighttime. The area is now a major nightlife district. Bari, a city of 370,000, is truly a city with a soul. There are the street musicians playing a violin, or a saxophone on the steps of a church. In Bari, card games remain very popular, especially *sette e mezzo* at Christmas time. *Briscola* and *tressette* are played in the back rooms of bars, in homes, and sometimes in the street. For the last few years, card playing in bars was banned in an attempt to stop



the gambling. Nevertheless the popularity of the card games continues, and if you take a stroll through *Bari Vecchia* (the old quarter) with its narrow winding streets and passageways, you will see the women making pasta (especially orecchiette) at tables outside, and the men gathered on the corner playing cards.

The Barese dialect is considered one of the more difficult dialects to understand for an Italian. For example, *andiamo* (let's go) is "sciamunscin" (pronounced shahmoonsheen). Huh?

The dialect spoken in some towns in the Salentina area is sometimes called Grico because its roots go as far back in history as the time of the ancient Greek colonization of Southern Italy in the 9th century B.C., and this dialect is considered by linguists to be the last living trace of the Greek elements that once formed the Magna Grecia.

Although Puglia does not see a lot of visitors from the United States, the British are busy visiting and buying up property - Sean Connery and Helen Mirren among them. But this beautiful region is well worth seeing. I'm ready to go back. Sciamunscin!! (*To be continued*)

## ITALIAN AMBASSADOR CHARMS AUDIENCE

by Nancy DeSanti

As the Year of Italian Culture 2013 winds down, it was fitting that the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) featured Italian Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero as the speaker at its Frank J. Guarini Public Policy Forum, held on Capitol Hill on November 14, 2013.

Five members of Congress attended the conference – Representatives Bill Pascrell and Pat Tiberi (co-chairmen of the Italian-American Congressional Delegation), Tom Marino, Rosa DeLauro and Kerry Bentivolio. Representatives of several corporate sponsors attended, as did AMHS members Francesco Isgro, Pino Cicala, Carmelo Cicala, and this myself.

NIAF's Mark Valente, in his familiar role as emcee, introduced John M. Viola, NIAF's president, who welcomed the attendance of the members of Congress and who commended the Italian-American Congressional Delegation for being a moderate, centrist group working hard to find solutions to our nation's problems. Rep. Tiberi then introduced Ambassador Bisogniero, noting that the ambassador speaks excellent English (he joked that the Ambassador "speaks better English than some of my constituents").

Ambassador Bisogniero began by noting that Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta had just come to Washington and had a private luncheon with President Obama at the White House, and Italian Senate President Pietro Grasso recently met with Vice President Joe Biden. Italy, the Ambassador said, stands side by side and shoulder to shoulder with the U.S., from Afghanistan to Kosovo and other trouble spots around the world. When America is reaching out looking for friends on some tough issues, he said, "Italy delivers."

Speaking about the economic front, he noted that exports to the U.S. will help Italy get out of its economic crisis, but jobs are needed too. Italy exports not only fashion and wines, as you would expect, he noted, but also high-tech items. As examples, he cited the modules of space stations where the astronauts live and work, and components for the Boeing 737 Dreamliner which are made in Puglia (but not the lithium batteries which caught fire—these were made in Japan, he pointed out, not Italy!!).

The ambassador noted that there are now 30,000 U.S. students studying in Italy, not to mention all the tourists visiting Italy. And in this country, 80,000 people are studying Italian.

Regarding culture, Ambassador Bisogniero noted that of course Italy is a powerhouse for culture, having 5,000 museums and 40 UNESCO World Heritage Sites (more than any other country). He said that this Year of Italian Culture 2013 has been a remarkable success with 300 events in 60 U.S. cities, focusing on art, science, fashion, and cinema. He noted that 2013 is the bicentennial of the great Giuseppe Verdi and he pointed out that an orchestra from La Scala will be performing at Strathmore Music Center on December 4, 2013. Also, Expo 2015 in Milan, on "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" so far counts more than 130 countries participating, and the Ambassador said he expects a strong American presence.

Looking to the future, Ambassador Bisogniero noted that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is being negotiated between the European Union and the United States, to lower trade barriers, and he said he hopes the talks will conclude successfully by the end of 2014 (*a side-note offered by AMHS President Maria D'Andrea – her team at the U.S. Department of Commerce is playing a critical role in these negotiations to lower barriers affecting clothing and textile trade, a "win-win" for the U.S and the EU.*).

The Ambassador concluded his remarks by stressing the need to promote the teaching of the Italian language and strengthening the AP Italian program.

Rep Pascrell gave the closing remarks, thanking Ambassador Bisogniero for his informative talk and praising him for the wonderful job he has been doing. He also called on the various national Italian-American organizations to work more closely together, thus increasing their clout.

## FINDING STEFANO

by Teresa Scalzo, AMHS Member

In September, my cousin, aunt and I took our dream trip to find our family's roots in Santo Stefano di Camastra. Santo Stefano is a small town about ninety minutes west of Palermo that is famous for its ceramics. It is built high on a cliff overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea.

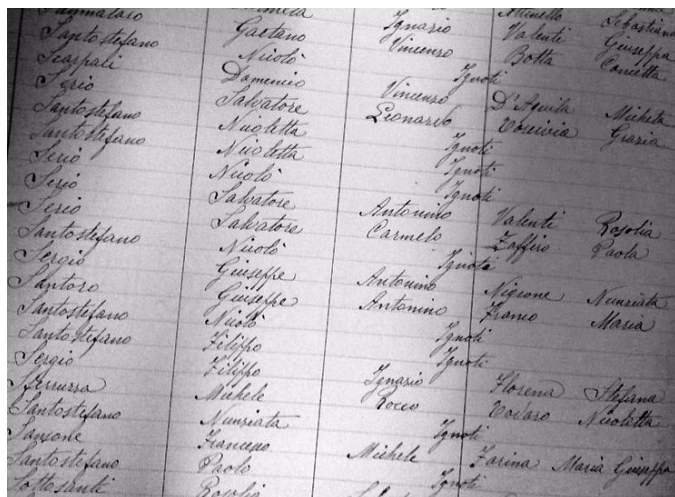
We booked a room at the lovely *I Colori Dell'Arcobaleno* (colors of the rainbow) and asked our host for help. He sent us to the town hall, which is where the records are kept. We were very nervous because the last primary name we were looking for is Stefano, which is the name of the town and

everyone told us that it wasn't a "real" last name. We called the trip "Finding Stefano".

The women at the Town Hall were incredibly helpful. All of the records are handwritten in huge books. We learned that my grandfather's last name had actually been Santostefano, not Stefano. When we found my grandfather's birth certificate, they sent us to the local church, which had his baptism record. Unfortunately, there was a big festival that weekend that they were planning so the priest only had time to find this document. Then, we went back to the town hall to find out about my great grandfather.

We knew he worked in the olive groves and that he died at a young age, but we did not know much more. We found his birth and death certificates and were able to learn the name of the street he lived on. They only record street names and not house numbers in the town. We then went to the cemetery to find his grave, but were very disappointed. In the 1950's, the town decided that the cemetery was too small and moved everyone who was buried into an underground mausoleum but they did not have any markers to identify people. The man in charge of the cemetery told us that what had happened in Santo Stefano was not unique in Sicily.

Finally, we searched for my great great grandfather and the secret to our name was revealed. From approximately 1820 until the early 1900's, a large number of babies were abandoned at La Chiesa della Madre, one of the churches in town. The nuns took care of the children and tried to find parents for them. When a child was left at the church, it was recorded in the birth records as parents being "Ignoti" (unknown) and given the town's name as his or her surname. The woman in charge of the records showed me the pages of births during this time period. Almost one in three children had unknown parents and named after the town.



Birth records of Santo Stefano di Camastra

We now know the history of our family and hope to return for more details. I've read a lot about the tragic history of Sicily but this was an up-close and personal look into the difficulties they have had through history.

## GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY SUMMER ABROAD – L'AQUILA, ITALY

submitted by Maria D'Andrea on behalf of Prof. Laura Benedetti, Department of Italian, Georgetown University

The Georgetown Community Based Learning Summer Program in L'Aquila, Italy offers students an opportunity to combine intensive language and culture study with community based learning. The capital of the Abruzzo region and home to a major state university and numerous cultural institutions, L'Aquila is struggling to recover from the 2009 earthquake that killed hundreds of people, displaced most of the inhabitants and destroyed many historical buildings. The course *2009 and Beyond: Stories of Loss and Rebirth* focuses on the many publications that have explored this event from different vantage points. All participants will enroll in ITAL-299-62: *L'Aquila, 2009 and Beyond: Stories of Loss and Rebirth*. Classes are held at the University of L'Aquila. This course is based on the reading and discussion of publications that deal with the history of L'Aquila and the political, social and cultural implications of the 2009 earthquake and its aftermath.

Georgetown University welcomes participation in this program from all qualified Georgetown and non-Georgetown students. The program requires that participants have completed four semesters of intensive Italian (or have taken a placement test) prior to departure and have a minimum 2.7 GPA. Students must sign a language pledge to speak only in Italian with the other members of the group during their stay in Italy. This course has a community-based learning (CBL) requirement, as organized by the Center for Social Justice. CBL is an academic course-based pedagogy that involves work with marginalized and underserved individuals or group that is structured to meet community-based needs. In order to satisfy the CBL requirement, students will work at the Mensa di Celestino, a center that provides meals and assistance to the local population as well as housing and counseling for single mothers.

The program cost for summer 2014 will be published soon. The application deadlines are December 6, 2013 and February 3, 2014. To learn more about this program, see <http://studyabroad.georgetown.edu>. Georgetown University contacts for this program are Sara Skillman, Summer Programs Administrator, Office of International Programs, [oipsummerabroad@georgetown.edu](mailto:oipsummerabroad@georgetown.edu); and Prof. Laura Benedetti, Department of Italian, [lb227@georgetown.edu](mailto:lb227@georgetown.edu).

## FROM THE REGIONAL CORNER

### CASTROVALVA, PROVINCE OF L'AQUILA, ABRUZZO

by Nancy DeSanti

Translated by Maddalena Borea, AMHS Member

The remote mountaintop village of Castrovalva may be small, but it has put itself on the map lately when its residents made an unorthodox tourism video that has become a You Tube hit.

Castrovalva is a *frazione* (administrative subdivision) of Anversa degli Abruzzi in the province of L'Aquila. The town clings to the top of a steep slope on a knife-edge ridge. The valley of the Sagittario River can be seen below the cliff. Taking the autostrada between Avezzano and Pescara until emerging from the tunnel Galleria San Domenico, the town seems almost inaccessible. In fact, it has only 19 year-round residents, although the population swells to over 200 during the summer. (In the early part of the 20th century, the town had 400 residents.) Many of the houses have been restored in the best of local traditions and turned into holiday homes.

The first mention of the fortified village is in the 11th century. Castrovalva's heyday came in the Middle Ages when it was on a *transumanza* (transhumance, the traditional twice yearly migration of sheep and cows from the highlands to the lowlands, and vice versa) that wound through the Abruzzo mountains. In 1930, the town was depicted in a famous lithograph print drawn by the Dutch artist M.C. Escher.

Recently, the town's permanent population of 19, many of whom are over 80, came up with an idea to lure visitors to their village with a video in which they all dance to the 1970s disco hit "Hot Stuff" by Donna Summer. As the music kicks in, two local men in their 80s are sitting in the piazza with one tapping a walking stick and the other playing a guitar. Local women appear singing and dancing against a backdrop of alleyways with cobblestones and stunning views of the dramatic gorge over which the village is perched.

Since being posted on YouTube, the video has drawn interest from Italian newspapers and TV stations and even overseas media. It can be viewed at <http://video.repubblica.it/divertimento/l-aquila-tutto-il-paese-balla-con-donna-summer/139456/137997>

#### What to See

- Scenic overlooks of the Sagittario river valley

#### Important Dates

- First Sunday in July: Feast of Madonna delle Grazie

#### Sources:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castrovalva\\_\(Abruzzi\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castrovalva_(Abruzzi))  
<http://greenholidayitaly.com/2012/10/28/castrovalva-an-ancient-village-on-a-cliff/>

### **CASTROVALVA, PROVINCIA DI L'AQUILA, ABRUZZO**

Il centro di montagna che si chiama Castrovalva sarà piccolo, ma recentemente è diventato famoso, grazie ad un video turistico eseguito da alcuni suoi abitanti, che ha portato la cittadina a YouTube.

Castrovalva, frazione di Anversa degli Abruzzi, in provincia di L'Aquila, è letteralmente appesa all'orlo di una rupe, dalla quale guarda la pittoresca vallata del fiume Sagittario, che vi scorre sotto. A guardarla dall'autostrada, tra Avezzano e Pescara, e fino alla fine della Galleria San Domenico, Castrovalva sembra inaccessibile, e forse per questo ha solo 19 residenti. Durante i mesi estivi, però, il numero degli

abitanti cresce e supera i 200. Nella prima parte del ventesimo secolo superava i 400 abitanti. Di recente le case sono state restaurate e trasformate in case di villeggiatura.

La storia ci dice per la prima volta di questo piccolo centro nell'undicesimo secolo come di un luogo di passaggio per le pecore, durante i loro pascoli stagionali, attraverso le montagne degli Abruzzi. Nel 1930, poi, venne rappresentato in una litografia eseguita dall'artista olandese M.C. Escher.

Recentemente la popolazione effettiva di 19, quasi tutti nella ottantina, ha creato un video allo scopo di attirare turisti. Vi si vedono gli abitanti ballare allegramente al suono della canzone "Hot Stuff" di Donna Summer, e vecchietti seduti davanti a un negozio, che portano il tempo col loro bastone ed altri che suonano la chitarra. Le donne cantano e ballano sullo sfondo di vicoli dai pavimenti di pietra e con una magnifica vista del fiume, al di sopra del quale riposa il villaggio.

Da quando è apparso su YouTube, il video ha colto l'attenzione di giornali e stazioni televisive, ed anche all'estero. Si può vedere a

<http://video.repubblica.it/divertimento/l-aquila-tutto-il-paese-balla-con-donna-summer/139456/137997>.

#### Attrazioni del luogo

- Il magnifico panorama della vallata del fiume Sagittario

#### Date da ricordare

- Prima domenica di luglio: Festa della Madonna delle Grazie.

### **CASACALENDA, PROVINCE OF CAMPOBASSO, MOLISE**

by Nancy DeSanti

Translated by Maddalena Borea

The town of Casacalenda is a rather small municipality about 25 kilometers northeast of Campobasso. It has about 2,528 inhabitants, known as Casacalendesi.

Casacalenda has pre-Roman origins and its historical importance was noted by the Greek historian Polybius who mentioned a battle in 217 B.C. between the Roman army based in Kalen (the original name of Casacalenda) and the Carthaginian military commander Hannibal based in Gerione, which is now a hamlet of Casacalenda. Legend has it that Hannibal parked his elephants just up the road from Casacalenda in this Second Punic War. (The Second Punic War, which lasted from 218 to 203 B.C., involved about three-quarters of the total population of the Punic-Greco-Roman world and few people living in the Mediterranean area were able to escape it. Historians say virtually every family in Rome lost one or more members in the swath of destruction brought down on them by Hannibal and his Carthaginian armies).

The town's original name is possibly derived from the Latin word Kalendae or Kalends, which was the first day of the month in the Roman calendar.



In succeeding eras, not much was known about the town until medieval times when there was a succession of feudal lords who were listed in the "*Catalogo dei baroni sotto Guglielmo II*" beginning with the first feudal lord Giuliano di Castropignano. One of the most important nobles of that time was Riccardo Caracciolo, who bought the Castle of Casalchilende.

In more recent times, from the end of World War II until the 1970s, the town's population dropped considerably due to emigration abroad. Many emigrants chose to go to Canada, especially Hamilton, Montreal and Toronto. There is even a Casacalenda Association in Montreal. In the U.S., there are many Casacalendesi in Cleveland, Ohio, and East Greenwich, Rhode Island.

#### What to See

- Church of St. Mary the Major, also called "ad Nives"
- Palazzo of the Dukes of Sangro
- Casacalenda tower
- Ancient bridge dating back to the time of Hannibal (between Casacalenda and Guardialfiera)

#### Important Dates

- January 17: Falò
- March 19: San Giuseppe
- June 12: Sant'Onofrio, the patron saint
- June 30: Il Giro del Cigno
- September 22: Pellegrinaggio
- December 13: Santa Lucia
- December 31: I Bufù

#### Sources:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casacalenda>  
<http://molisecitta.it/comuni/casacalenda.html>  
<http://www.casacalendacomune.it/>

### **CASACALENDA, PROVINCIA DI CAMPOBASSO, REGIONE MOLISE**

Casacalenda è un piccolo comune, a circa 25 chilometri da Campobasso. Conta 2.528 abitanti, conosciuti come Casacalendesi.

Ha origini preromane, e la sua importanza storica fu riportata dallo storico greco Polibio, il quale parla di una battaglia del 217 Avanti Cristo, fra l'esercito romano, con base a Kalen, nome originale di Casacalenda, e l'esercito guidato dal cartaginese Annibale, con base a Gerione, oggi frazione di Casacalenda. Secondo la leggenda, Annibale avrebbe posteggiato qui i suoi elefanti, durante la seconda guerra punica. Tale guerra durò dal 218 al 203 Avanti Cristo, coinvolse tre quarti della popolazione Greco - Romana, e, solo pochi gruppi riuscirono a sfuggirla. La storia ci racconta che ogni famiglia romana fu virtualmente decimata dall'orda di distruzione guidata da Annibale e dal suo esercito cartaginese.

È possibile che il nome di questo centro risalga alle parole latine Kalendae, o kalends, che veniva a significare il primo giorno del mese del calendario romano. Successivamente,

poco si seppe di Casacalenda, fino ai tempi medievali, quando la cittadina venne governata da varie Signorie, che vennero annoverate "Nel Catalogo dei Baroni sotto Guglielmo II". Il primo Feudatario fu Giuliano di Castropignano. Uno dei più importanti nobili di quel tempo, Riccardo Caracciolo, comprò il castello di Casalchilende.

In tempi più recenti, dalla fine della seconda guerra mondiale agli inizi degli anni settanta, la popolazione è drammaticamente calata di numero, a causa delle grandi migrazioni verso le Americhe. Molti casacalendesi si trovano a Toronto ed a Montreal, dove esiste anche un circolo, chiamato "Casacalenda Association of Montreal". Nell'America del nord molti si sono stanziati nell'Ohio, a East Greenwich e nello Stato di Rhode Island.

#### Attrazioni del luogo

- Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore, anche chiamata "Ad Nives"
- Palazzo dei Duchi di Sangra
- La torre di Casacalenda
- L'antico ponte che risale ai tempi di Annibale, fra Casacalenda e Guardialfiera.

#### Date da ricordare

- 17 Gennaio: I falò
- 19 Marzo: la festa di San Giuseppe.
- 12 Giugno: Sant'Onofrio, Santo Patrono
- 30 Giugno: Il Giro del Cigno
- 22 Settembre: Pellegrinaggio
- 13 Dicembre: Santa Lucia
- 31 Dicembre: I Bufù

### **FROM THE ABRUZZO AND MOLISE CORNER**

*submitted on behalf of Bob Woolley, AMHS Member*

AMHS member Bob Woolley received some recent interesting posts from Lamberto Badia, President, Abruzzo Tours ([www.abruzzotour.com](http://www.abruzzotour.com)), which could be of interest to our membership:

#### ***Abruzzo Food and Wine Tour 2014***

Abruzzo Tours just published its new "Food and Wine Tour" for the year 2014 (September 28 to October 8). Next year's tour will include the "best of Abruzzo" and also some new places, including Agnone in Molise (home of the bells), Fara San Martino (Pasta DeCecco etc.), Roccascalegna (incredible castle) and the British War Cemetery in Torino di Sangro.

#### ***Abruzzo and Molise Seen from the Sky***

"Abruzzo and Molise seen from the Sky" is a vintage documentary, directed by Folco Quilici with text by Ignazio Silone, broadcast on RAI TV in 1970, taken from the series "Italy seen from the Sky". This 4th of the 14 documentaries of the series focuses on Abruzzo and Molise, showing the rugged territory, solitary hamlets and ancient architecture of these two mountainous regions. The documentary was restored in 2006. The video (36 minutes in length), in Italian, has the Italian and English language text underneath. The video can be viewed at <http://www.italyheritage.com/learn-italian/movies/quilici-abr-ol.htm>



The  
Abruzzo and Molise  
Heritage Society  
Of the Washington, DC Area



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



*Gabriele D'Annunzio*

❧ LUNCHEON MEETING ❧

***“The Life and Poetry of  
Gabriele D’Annunzio”***

***Presented by  
Professor Roberto Severino***

**WHEN:** Sunday, January 26, 2014

**TIME:** 1:00 PM

**LOCATION:** Casa Italiana  
595 Third Street, NW | Washington, DC

**MENU:** Lunch will be catered by Pasta Plus Restaurant, owned and operated by AMHS members Massimo & Sabatino Mazziotti (*note: menu to be provided at a later date*). Beverages, mixed green salad and dessert are included.

**COST:** \$20.00 for members; \$25.00 for non-members.

**PAID RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED  
NO LATER THAN JANUARY 23, 2014.**

**PROGRAM:** Interested in learning more about the man who has been called Abruzzo’s most famous writer? Then you are invited to come and hear Georgetown University Professor Emeritus Roberto Severino talk about the eccentric poet, writer, journalist and soldier who lived an unconventional lifestyle. The controversial D’Annunzio, who was influential in the development of Italian fascism, was born in Pescara, Abruzzo.

Professor Severino, a poet himself, will tell us about D’Annunzio’s poetry, as well as the life and times of this fascinating man. AMHS members, guests and friends – please be sure to join us!

For information call Joe Novello (301) 927-4766 or Dr. Lynn Sorbara (301) 926-7792  
All are welcome!

✂----- Return with Payment

**Reservation for AMHS General Society Meeting on Sunday, January 26, 2014**

Please make check payable to AMHS.

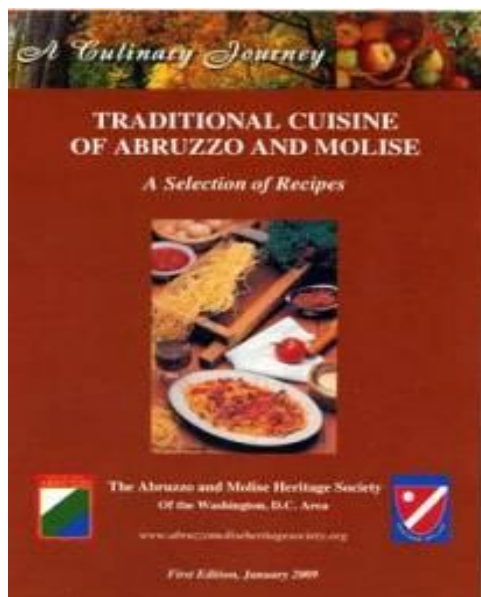
Send to AMHS, c/o Joe Novello, 7035 Hunter Lane, Hyattsville, MD 20782

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GUEST(S): \_\_\_\_\_

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**Ship to: Name:**

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Please add \$4.50 for Postage & Handling for each Polo Shirt.  
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## December 1, 2013 AMHS Lunch/Meeting



**Top** – AMHS member and wine master Romeo Sabatini, presenting "*A Brief Survey of Wine in Ancient Italy*"; a gathering of almost 140 people enjoying the porchetta lunch.

**Center** – AMHS members Joe Novello and Nick Ferrante, porchetta masters, with AMHS members Joann Novello, Rocco Caniglia and Edvige D'Andrea – testing the meat (è buonissimo!); Lynn Sorbara, AMHS Hospitality Chair, giving directions in the kitchen, with AMHS member Peter Bell in rapt attention.

**Bottom** – AMHS member Francesca Orfila helping to serve salad; AMHS member Kirsten Keppel collecting raffle tickets; and Joann Novello and Edvige D'Andrea hard at work in the kitchen. (photos courtesy of Vera Holovchenko).



The  
Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society  
4669 Lawton Way, #104  
Alexandria, VA 22311



**Printed courtesy of Mr. Jason Voss**  
**Thank you, Jason**



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#### **AMHS NOTIZIARIO** Publication

Romeo Sabatini, Editor  
Maria D'Andrea, Co-editor  
Nancy DeSanti and Joann Novello, Contributing Writers

**AMHS NOTIZIARIO** is published by-monthly from January through November. The deadline for the submission of articles and ads is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding publication of the issue. Please send submissions via e-mail to Maria D'Andrea, [uva051985@comcast.net](mailto:uva051985@comcast.net). All submissions may be edited for clarity and become the property of AMHS. Publication of submissions is at the discretion of the Editors. Content of articles published is the sole responsibility of the author. You may choose to receive your issues of the **Notiziario** by electronic mail (email) only. Not only will this save on paper and postage, you will get your copy much more quickly. If you wish to select this preference for online delivery of the latest AMHS news and information, please contact Maria D'Andrea by email at [uva051985@comcast.net](mailto:uva051985@comcast.net) or by phone at 703-998-6097. This will provide you the opportunity to confirm your email address, which we have for most AMHS members. Thank you for considering this option.

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