



# THE ABRUZZO AND MOLISE HERITAGE SOCIETY

of the Washington, DC Area

Celebrating Italian Culture & Community since 2000

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

## AMHS NOTIZIARIO

November 2018



**Top:** AMHS President Ray LaVerghetta (left) and Treasurer Peter Bell (right), with Abruzzese artists Alberto Ortolano and Tania Buccini, September 8 concert at Casa Italiana Sociocultural Center.

**Bottom:** AMHS Immediate Past President Maria D'Andrea-Yothers presents on the tratturi and transumanza, September 23 meeting at Carmine's Restaurant. (photos courtesy of Maria D'Andrea-Yothers and Sam Yothers).

**NEXT SOCIETY EVENT:** AMHS General Society Lunch Meeting and Wine tasting, **Sunday, November 11, 2018** at 1:00pm at Casa Italiana. Lunch catered by Three Brothers Restaurant. *See inside for details.*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



*Dear members and friends:*

Here we are in the month of November, with the end of 2018 just weeks away. Our society has had a good year, sponsoring its bi-monthly Sunday afternoon presentations, sprinkling in other cultural celebrations, and supporting the events

of our sister organizations in the metropolitan area.

A short recap of activities just in the period since my last message will illustrate our organization's social and cultural engagement. The Society arranged a sparkling evening of classical music on September 8, performed by two outstanding musical artists from Abruzzo – the pianist Alberto Ortolano and the soprano Tania Buccini. Those fortunate enough to be there enjoyed beautiful music, wonderful Abruzzese artistry, and a fun reception following the performance. The Society then held its September General Assembly at Carmine's on September 23, at which time Immediate Past President Maria D'Andrea-Yothers delivered a very informative talk on the transumanza in Abruzzo and Molise. The presentation enabled us to learn more about that ancient tradition involving the seasonal movement of animals between flat and mountainous terrains. For more details on the meeting, see the article in this edition of the Notiziario. On October 8, a number of AMHS members attended the annual Columbus Day celebration in Columbus Plaza, outside Union Station in Washington, D.C. The AMHS joined several other local organizations (Lido Civic Club, National Italian American Foundation (NIAF), National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Knights of Columbus, and National Christopher Columbus Association) to lend support to the event. Some of our members also attended the NIAF Expo 2018, a daylong festival showcasing Italian products and vendors held in conjunction with the NIAF annual Gala in Washington, D.C. Some AMHS members also attended one or more of the multiple events celebrating Italian Language Week. There were two theater shows, consisting of a Roman comedy (October 13) and a Neapolitan comedy (October 14), which were organized by the Ente Gestore for Casa Italiana and featured Italian actors with credits both in Italy and abroad. The shows took place at Westbrook Elementary School in Bethesda, Maryland. The AMHS was proud to be an official sponsor of these presentations. A third event in recognition of Italian Language Week was a talk given by the Education Office Director of the Italian Consulate General in Chicago, Professor Sandro Corso. The topic of the talk, sponsored by the Italian Cultural Institute and held at the Chevy Chase Village Hall on October 14th, was "Spoken Italian today: regional language variation in Contemporary Italy."

Our social calendar continues with our November General Assembly meeting, which will take place at Casa Italiana on Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup>. The highlight will no doubt be our annual wine-tasting event, in which local winemakers, including AMHS members, will offer their products for our gustatory

delight. We will have one order of business to conduct first, however, as we will vote on the election of three new members to the AMHS Board. The candidates are: Andrea Balzano, Alfred Del Grosso, and Helina (Ellie) Zewdu Nega. I thank them for their willingness to be candidates for a position on the Board. At the same time, on behalf of the Society, I would also like to thank the Board members whom they are replacing, Sarah Scott, Jonathan Stern, and Lourdes Tinajero, for their service to AMHS.

Finally, I would like to remind the membership of a unique event that our organization is supporting: the Bella Italia Market, which will take place on December 1 and 2 at Casa Italiana. The event will provide a showcase for Italian products and services, and proceeds will help support the Italian cultural, language, and heritage programs that Casa Italiana organizes or sponsors. Please mark your calendars for this entertaining exhibition, which is free and open to the public.

In closing, I would like to express the hope that all of our members and friends enjoy the remainder of this year, especially the upcoming holidays, and that your interest in and support for the Society remain strong in 2019. Please remember those fellow members who have struggled with illness this past year, especially Antonio Bianchini and Nancy Hurst. Antonio and Nancy, as well as others, should be in our thoughts and prayers.

Best regards,  
*Ray LaVerghetta*

## UPCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

### AMHS ANNUAL WINE-TASTING ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2018

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

You should definitely not miss out on our most popular event of the year, which will be held Sunday, November 11, 2018, at 1:00 p.m. in Casa Italiana.

We are pleased to once again present our annual lunch and wine-tasting. Our wine-making members and friends will be bringing samples of their production to share with the attending members, friends and guests.

This year, the lunch will be provided by one of everybody's favorites, Three Brothers Italian Restaurant. The menu includes orecchiette with broccoli rabe in garlic and olive oil, sausage and peppers, rice, salad, bread, and dessert. Beverages are included.

And we owe a big thank-you to the Washington Winemakers who always help with this event, and especially to Jim Gearing, who is organizing the winemakers' participation. Based on previous years, there is sure to be a variety of wonderful home-made wines to be tasted (and possibly some limoncello too).





*The 2017 wine tasting event*

This year the many varieties of wines to taste this year, are being provided by winemakers including Osvaldo Barsi, Carlo Clinton, Jim Gearing, Stefano Di Girolamo, Jack Grimaldi, Darren Sabin, John Paul Maye and Wayne Witowski.

Before the winetasting begins, Tom Savage, a wine importer who is very knowledgeable about the wines of Abruzzo and Molise and the other regions of Italy as well, will give us a brief talk on those wines but also about his travels to Italy to explore the potential of these wonderful wines.

The program will begin with a brief AMHS general meeting at which time we will elect members of the board of directors (please read related article by the Nominating Committee about the candidates and the election).

***We will also have a unique raffle prize: Private Wine Class, donated by Total Wines, for a minimum of 14 to a maximum of 20 participants. The winner selects the class, tasting 8 Californian, Italian, or French wines. Tickets are \$20.00 for four (4) chances to win. This prize is valued at \$500.00. Special thanks to AMHS Board member Helen Free for contacting Total Wine for donation.***

Please make your reservations early to make sure you don't miss out on this fun event!! The deadline for paid reservations is November 9, 2018.

## FROM THE AMHS NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce three exceptional candidates for the AMHS Board of Directors: Andrea Balzano, Alfred Del Grosso, and Helina (Ellie) Zewdu Nega (please be sure to read their bios). If elected, these candidates will replace Sarah Scott, Jon Stern, and Lourdes Tinajero, whose terms on the board expire at the end of this year.

The election of the three board members shall take place during the general Society meeting on November 11. Additional nominations for office may be made in writing to the Nominating Committee, prior to the meeting, or from the floor during the meeting, after which the nominations will be closed

and elections will be conducted by secret ballot. The elected board members shall assume office on January 1, 2019, and they shall be installed at the January 2019 general Society meeting. Their term of office is for three years. *(Submitted by the AMHS Nominating Committee: Maria D'Andrea-Yothers, Joe Novello, and Lourdes Tinajero).*

## Meet the Three Board Candidates:



### Andrea Balzano

Andrea Balzano's grandmother was born in Bonefro in Molise. In the United States, she met and married Andrea's grandfather, who was from Missanello in Basilicata. During her first AMHS meeting in 2015, Andrea met a new member who was born in Bonefro and has subsequently confirmed through Ancestry.com DNA testing that they are cousins!

Andrea works as a prospect development professional at World Wildlife Fund in DC, and previously worked for higher education, community development, and cause-related nonprofits, including Pomona College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Bennington College, Cornell University, Enterprise Community Partners, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, and Just Detention International. She also volunteers as a development and communications consultant and grant writer, helping small nonprofits to develop the skills and systems needed to build and sustain major giving programs. She has written articles for professional publications and attended Goddard College in Vermont and The Claremont University in California.



### Alfred Del Grosso

Alfred Del Grosso is a native Washingtonian who grew up in the Fort Washington area of Prince Georges County and currently resides in Kensington, Montgomery County. Following graduation from the University of Maryland, College Park he began work at the Food and Drug Administration. He

graduated from the American University with a Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry in 1991. He will be retiring from the government at the end of this year after over 42 years of service. He has been married to Diana Marks Del Grosso for 29 years, they have two children Adriana, 21, currently residing in Boulder, CO and Anthony, 19, currently a student at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA.

Al has been interested in Italian language and heritage for most of his adult life. He has taken Italian classes at Casa Italiana

and the Italian Cultural Society as well as studying independently. His Italian roots are in Roccamandolfi, Molise, from where his grandfather immigrated in 1911 and in the province of Avellino in Campania from where his paternal great-grandparents immigrated in the 1890s.

Al has been active in several professional, fraternal, cultural and religious organizations. He has been an AMHS member for several years and would be happy to serve the Society as a member of the Board.



### **Helina (Ellie) Zewdu Nega**

Helina Zewdu Nega is a native of Addis Abeba, Ethiopia. She left Ethiopia at the age of six to live in Rome, Italy until she was 15 years old. Although Helina was enrolled in an international school (St. Francis and Claire

International School) with the academic programs tailored to that of the American system, she also grew up speaking Italian and her native tongue of Amharic.

Helina has been living in the United States for 17 years and for past 12 years has called the Washington, DC area home. She has earned a Bachelors' Degree in Communications as well as a Masters' Degree in Public Administration. She is passionate about the non-profit sector, particularly when it comes to organizations that assist abused and neglected women and children as well as organizations that seek solutions to end poverty. As a result, she currently works for the [One Campaign](#), an international, nonpartisan, non-profit, advocacy and campaigning organization that fights extreme poverty and preventable disease, particularly in Africa.

Although Helina has spent the majority of her life in the United States, her love for her Ethiopian culture as well as that of the Italian culture has greatly influenced her life and has shaped her worldview.

Fun Fact: her favorite soccer team is AS. Roma and her favorite player (now retired) is Francesco Totti.

## **RECENT SOCIETY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **ON TOUR WITH ALBERTO AND TANIA**

*By Peter Bell, AMHS Member*

On Saturday September 8, AMHS members and their guests were treated to a concert at Casa Italiana by soprano Tania Buccini, accompanied by Alberto Ortolano on the piano. In their private lives they are husband and wife, having met in their home choir. Both were born in Abruzzo and currently live in Francavilla al mare (Chieti) and both teach their respective

talents in the local high school. They have performed both in Europe and in England for other groups of Abruzzese and that is what brought them to Washington and AMHS. This was their first visit to the Nations' Capitol.

While in DC they toured the US Capitol Building, attended legislative sessions of both the Senate and House, and toured the Library of Congress (LOC) Madison building. At the LOC, when the tour guide discovered they were Italian, he began pointing out all the Italian influences and features of the Grand Staircase and Central Hall. On that first day in DC, they even learned how to navigate the Metro system. The next day they visited several of the Smithsonian buildings, Arlington National Cemetery, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and saw a performance on the Millennium Stage. On Friday, they toured the White House and visited Ford's Theatre, its Museum and the House Where Lincoln Died. Tania shared that her favorite US Presidents were Kennedy and Lincoln, and on Saturday morning they visited the Lincoln Memorial.

Saturday night's concert was superb, beginning with Tania performing several short works by Francesco Paolo Tosti. Alberto explained that Tosti was born in Abruzzo and was a master of the ballad and is known for his distinctive style. Following Tosti, Tania performed works by Rossini, Mozart and Puccini. Alberto performed a solo piano work that was Liszt's paraphrasing of *Rigoletto* by Verdi, which has been called a great concert piece. Alberto followed this with another Liszt variation on Gounod's *Valzer dal Faust*. The concert closed with Tania performing *Je Veux Vivre* from Gounod's *Romeo and Juliette*. A reception with light refreshments followed. We also took the opportunity to wish two long-time AMHS members Happy Birthday, Maria Marigliano and Maddalena Borea.

We are grateful to Alberto and Tania for visiting AMHS and sharing their talents with us. We hope they can return in the future.



*Maddalena Borea & Maria Marigliano cut their birthday cake*



## SIGNIFICANCE OF SHEPHERD'S TRAIL FOR REGIONAL CULTURE AND ECONOMY EXPLAINED

By Nancy DeSanti

For our fifth program of the year, former AMHS President Maria D'Andrea-Yothers gave a fascinating and informative talk on the *transumanza* and *tratturi*, a phenomenon that has profoundly influenced the economy, culture and history of Abruzzo and Molise. The event, which was attended by 45 AMHS members and guests, took place on September 23, 2018, at Carmine's Restaurant, where we enjoyed a delicious lunch before Maria's talk.

So important is the *transumanza* that Italy has made a bid to have it added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) list of intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO's decision is reportedly expected in November 2019. (Note: An article by Lucio D'Andrea on the UNESCO bid appeared in the May 2018 *Notiziario*).

Our speaker Maria is AMHS Immediate Past President and a long-time member of the Society. She was our president during years when the Society expanded its membership and activities and became affiliated with the National Italian American Foundation. She is a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Italian-American: her mother was born in Pacentro, Abruzzo and her father in Roccamandolfi, Molise. Maria was recently appointed to the Board of the National Christopher Columbus Association, to serve a 3-year term. In her professional life, Maria is Director, Office of Textiles and Apparel, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. She is responsible for domestic and trade policy issues, and her country portfolio includes Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

As Maria explained using an informative Powerpoint presentation, the *transumanza* is the traditional twice-yearly migration of sheep and cows from the highlands to the lowlands, and back. The word literally means "crossing the land" (from the Latin *trans* meaning "across" and *humus* meaning "land"). The regional pastoral economy was based on the seasonal transfer of herds of sheep to the green pastures of the higher Apennines in Abruzzo and Molise in summer, and to the green plains of Puglia and Lazio in winter. The routes followed by the shepherds are known as *tratturi*.

Although the *tratturi* are not always visible, Maria explained that 5 main *tratturi* have been identified. They are generally about 360 feet wide and extend 100-200 miles, and the trails provided the layout for the nearby towns and villages.

So then Maria explained how the ancient *tratturi* (plural of *tratturo*) is one of the main features of the Molisani and Abruzzese landscape, an essential aspect of the regional identity. For example, numerous *tratturi* cross Molise from north to south, east to west, with each one offering rich and unique occasions for immersion in the culture and history of the region.

We learned about how, from the pre-Roman era up until just a few centuries ago, ancient Italians traveled these trails from

season to season. The transporting of livestock, the principal mainstay of the population, was based on this rigorous journey from the cool mountain pastures of Abruzzo to the hot and humid Apulian plateaus.

Undertaken mainly by the Samnites since the 6th century B.C., the practice of transhumance enjoyed a period of resurgence under the Romans, who expanded the *tratturi* "grid" to better connect the Empire's urban centers. Many of the *tratturi* run next to the stone-paved ancient Roman roads. In those ancient times, they were provided for under edicts of the governors. Although they were unsafe during the Middle Ages and fell somewhat into misuse for a while during the Middle Ages, the trails were restarted by the Benedictine monks in response to the need by Europe's leading wood producers. Surprisingly, these green trail ways are still almost entirely intact today. Nowadays, tourists, hikers and nature lovers can walk the same ancient paths that shepherds once followed with their herds.

As Maria showed in her interesting presentation, shepherds take about 3 weeks or more to reach their destination. It's a hard life - a life that is mostly isolated, spent living out in the open or in tiny enclosed stone "homes" for 11 months out of the year. Maria noted that many of these shepherds are Macedonian and they are accompanied by the Abruzzo sheep dog - a mastiff which is one of the best protectors of sheep in the world.

At the end of Maria's presentation, she read the English translation of the poem "*I Pastori*" by the famous Abruzzese poet Gabriele D'Annunzio, and then AMHS Past President Omero Sabatini read the poem in Italian and offered his thoughts on the significance of the poem.



Maria & Omero

## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS HONORED AT COLORFUL UNION STATION CEREMONY

By Maria D'Andrea-Yothers, Immediate Past President and Member, Board of Directors, National Christopher Columbus Association

AMHS was well represented at the annual ceremony to honor Christopher Columbus held at Union Station in Washington, DC on October 8. The colorful and impressive ceremony took place in front of the statue of the great explorer erected in 1912.

The ceremony began with a musical prelude by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, followed by the posting of the colors by the U.S. Armed Forces Color Guard and the Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Color Corps.



**Maurizio Greganti, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Italy**

The annual event was organized by the National Christopher Columbus Association (NCCA) in collaboration with the National Park Service and with the involvement of many fraternal, civic and cultural associations including the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF), the Lido Civic Club, the Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society, the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Knights of Columbus (various councils). A proclamation by President Donald Trump and was read. Comments were provided by Peter Davio, Vice President, NCCA; Jeff Jones, Supervisory Park Ranger; Minister Maurizio Greganti, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Italy; and Christina Fraile, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Spain.

Another highlight of the event was the announcement of the winner of the National Youth Columbus Essay contest, which is jointly sponsored by NIAF and the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. This year’s winner was Francesca Testen, who wrote on the topic “Advantages and Disadvantages of Working Relationships Between Foreign Parties”. NCCA President J.P. McCusker presented the award certificate to the recipients

Some of the speakers touched on the controversy surrounding the Columbus Day holiday and statues and decried the revisionist history being pushed nowadays. The facts have been gathered by the NCCA in a website *The Truth About Columbus* and the audience was urged to educate themselves to help counter the false narratives. These speakers also noted that Columbus Day is the embodiment of Italian-American pride.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of 24 floral wreaths and the singing of “God Bless America.” Such a fitting tribute to the Great Discoverer!!

## **AMHS MEMBERSHIP**

*By Lynn Sorbara, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Membership*

I am pleased to report that there are 255 members of AMHS. Thank you for your continued support of the Society’s programs and activities. We have wonderful events planned for the rest of the year and your membership makes them all possible!

As a reminder, with our automated system, you will receive email reminders when it is time for renewal. If you do not have email, you will receive a reminder by regular mail. Please pay attention to these various reminders. Thank you.

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

James Cocco, Michael and Antonietta McDonald, Ashland Robertson, and William Sansalone.

### ***Birthdays***

#### ***Compleanni a Novembre***

Eileen Verna, November 1; Rev. John V. Di Bacco, Jr., November 2; Tony D’Ambrosi, November 3; Rita Carrier & Michael DeBonis, November 4; Joseph D’Amico, November 5; Luciana Caleb & Sergio Fresco, November 8; Rocco Caniglia, Kate Fazioli & Joseph Ruzzi, Jr., November 9; Massimo Mazziotti, November 11; Antonio Bianchini & Emilia DeMeo, November 12; Maryann Martella, November 13; Gabriel Battista, November 14; Jonathan Stern, November 17; Edvige D’Andrea, Joseph D’Andrea & Dena DeBonis, November 19; Betsy Ruzzi & and Ross Cameron, November 21; Roger McClure, November 22; Cindy Savage, November 23; Christina Iovino, November 25; and Amelia DiFiore, November 30.

#### ***Compleanni a Dicembre***

Rosalie Ciccotelli, December 2; Domenica Marchetti, December 3; Alfred DelGrosso, December 4; Marlene Lucian, December 6; Yoni Kay Caniglia & Roger Martella, December 7; Frank Bonsiero, December 8; Stephen diGirolamo, December 9; Trudy McCrea, December 10; William Lepore, December 12; Maria D’Andrea-Yothers, December 13; Cathy Branciaroli, December 16; Domenico Conti, December 18; Palmer DeMeo, December 19; Elodia D’Onofrio & Carmine Spellane, December 20; Anna Isgro, December 21; Claire DeMarco, December 22; Danila Tomassetti, December 24; Brian Pasquino, December 25; Michael Savino, December 26; and Margot DeRuvo Gilberg & Father Charles Zanon, December 29.

### ***Anniversaries***

#### ***Anniversari a Novembre***

Anthony & Jacqueline D’Erme, November 21; and Joseph & Gloria D’Andrea, November 22.

#### ***Anniversari a Dicembre***

Ray & Michele LaVerghetta, December 11; and David and Cristina Scalzitti, December 27.



## SIAMO UNA FAMIGLIA

### AMHS PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTER MARRIED IN BALTIMORE



The daughter of AMHS President Ray LaVerghetta, Gabriella LaVerghetta, was married at Corpus Christi church in Baltimore on October 6. Gabriella, known to family and friends as Gabby, married William (Will) Pittinos in an afternoon ceremony, officiated by Ray's cousin Monsignor Richard LaVerghetta, who is pastor of St. Joan of Arc parish in Marlton, New Jersey. Will's family, spread across the country, arrived in Baltimore several days before the wedding. The early arrival was not just to begin festivities early but also to ensure that the two families could get to know all the aunts, uncles, and cousins on both sides. The biggest celebration, of course, followed the wedding and took place at the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore. It was clear over the course of the three days that the two families could not have been happier about the union of Gabby and Will.

Gabby's Maid of Honor was her sister Maria, an AMHS member and the Society's representative to the Greater Washington DC Observatory of the Italian Language. Will's brothers Merc and Andrew were his Best Men.

Gabby, an AMHS scholarship winner in 2012, graduated from the University of Maryland with a major in Journalism and a minor in Italian. She received a Master's degree in International Media from the American University in 2013. She currently works as a digital strategist for a political consulting firm in Washington, D.C. Will, her new husband, graduated from Lake Forest College in Chicago, Illinois, where he studied Spanish and English. He earned a Master's degree in International Relations from American University, and currently works at the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The couple, who reside in Washington, D.C., enjoy hiking, biking, baseball, and reading. They are excited to begin their new life together and their

families are just as excited for them. *(submitted by Ray & Michele LaVerghetta).*

### AMHS OFFICER LYNN SORBARA TO BE HONORED BY THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF ITALIAN AMERICAN WOMEN (NOIAW)



We are pleased to announce that AMHS officer Lynn Sorbara will be honored as one of the *Three Wise Women* by NOIAW in January 2019. Lynn will be recognized for her illustrious career in the medical field.

Lynn is currently the Program Director for the Cancer Biomarker Research Group in the Division of Cancer Prevention of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In this role, she oversees the Biomarker Reference Laboratory cooperative agreement grants, the Lung Collaborative Group projects, the EDRN Industry Forum. She is the lead Program Director for a new Consortium for Early Cancer Assessment using Liquid Biopsy of the representative Program Director for the NCI Innovative Molecular Analysis Technologies (IMAT) and Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Programs. Her portfolio also includes grants focused on biomarkers for hematopoietic malignancies and new technologies for cancer detection. Congratulations Lynn! *(submitted by Maria D'Andrea-Yothers).*

### WELCOME TO THE FAMILY, MILES STERN!



Congratulations to AMHS Board member Jon Stern and his wife, Katie, on the birth of their son Miles Henry, who was born on Sunday, September 23 at 9:59 a.m. He has been getting plenty of attention from his older sister, Ella, who loves to help take care of him! *(submitted by Jon Stern).*

## UPDATE: GoFundMe FOR SIMONE DE MAGISTRIS SCHOOL, CALDEROLA, ITALY

By Elizabeth DiGregorio, AMHS member

*In the March 2018, we were made aware of a young Italian student who was studying in Virginia and who had organized a GoFundMe project to help an earthquake-ravaged school in Le Marche. We want to provide you an update on the project and to let you know that if you contributed, your donation was well spent.*

This past winter, Matteo Ferramondo, an Italian student at the George C. Marshall High School in Falls Church, Virginia and his team mate, Gianmarco Starke, created a GoFundMe page to raise funds for students of Calderola, Italy. The Simone De Magistris middle school, located in Le Marche region of Italy, was severely affected by the 2016 earthquakes. Much of the original school is still inaccessible, the student life still disrupted and many of the students continue to suffer from anxiety and loss of hope.

Matteo visited the school in October and the news is uplifting. While the school is still being rebuilt, the students are having classes in a make-shift warehouse. School is in session, the classes are full, and extra-curricular activities are in full swing. The students are ready to tackle another school year and Matteo's GoFundMe account raised more than \$1,174 which was spent to purchase sporting equipment for the gym and English books for the school library. The equipment and books benefited about 150 students. Among the sports gear are vests, goal nets, numerous soccer balls, volleyballs, and basketballs, gym equipment, and books, such as "Scholastic First Biographies: President Pack" and "Wonder" by R. J. Palacio.

Matteo reports, "During my visit to the temporary school building, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade class was in the gym using the soccer vests we donated. The 6<sup>th</sup> graders were reading from the English books we donated, and I was able to visit with the students and tell them about our project. He adds, "for me, this visit wasn't just the end of the project, but also a first-hand experience on what are the consequences of an earthquake and how, even after 2 years, there is so much work left to do."

Many of you contributed to the project. Here is proof that your donations were well spent and that they are making many students happy. Fabiola Scagnetti, Director of the Simone De Magistris school wrote to Matteo "...the students enjoyed meeting you. In addition to demonstrating a good example of community engagement, it also encourages the children of Calderola to have hope in their future." The newly rebuilt school is scheduled to open in January 2019.

Here are some pictures documenting the happy students at the Simone De Magistris school:



## ADVENTURES IN ABRUZZO, 2018

By Joann Novello, AMHS Board Member

Ah, the wonders of Italy: delicious food, unique wines and spirits, incomparable culture, breathtaking natural beauty, a lovely climate, and the warm citizenry. This past summer, Joe and I took a trip to Italy that allowed us to experience these wonders in abundance.

The highlight of our vacation was a reunion with our daughters and their families in Joe's hometown, Montazzoli, Provincia di Chieti, Abruzzo. Before and after this special time, though, we visited a number of other places around the boot, many of which we had never traveled to before: Chioggia, the "little Venice;" Trieste, where coffee is king; Ferrara, with the impressive Este Castle; Ravenna and its sparkling mosaics; the newly opened FICO Eataly theme park in Bologna; Gubbio, truly "la citta del silenzio;" Assisi, home to Saint Francis and pilgrimage destination to countless faithful; Spoleto, the current setting of the RAI TV series "Don Matteo" (formerly filmed in Gubbio) and seat of the arts Festival dei Due Mondi which began shortly after our departure; Belluno, gateway to the Dolomites; Lucca, the walled Tuscan city that gave the composer Puccini to the world.

We flew round trip to and from Venice, so that we could spend time with my Zia Emma, my mother's older sister, soon to turn



99! She lives with her daughter, my cousin Anna, in Spinea, just outside Venice. While we visited, we were fortunate to celebrate the completion of one month in the life of Samuele, Anna's first grandchild, and Zia Emma's first great grandchild.



*Little Samuele, family, and "milestone" cake*

Of course, because we were so close, we had to make a quick visit to *La Serenissima* and to the island of Murano to see a glass blowing demonstration and for Joe to purchase another glass piece for his collection.



*Confetti display in Sulmona*

smaller, more remote cities, towns, and villages have incredible sites and precious works of art, so wonderfully preserved, especially in the churches. And they are virtually undiscovered by tourism, another plus. Sulmona has the *Corso Ovidio* for a leisurely stroll from our bed and breakfast, *La Magnolia* (thanks to AMHS members Amy and Matt DiFiore for this recommendation), through parks, past monuments, churches, and confetti filled shops, leading to the medieval aqueduct and the large Piazza Garibaldi. At the recommendation of our hosts, Salvatore and Giovanna, who treated us like family by meeting special breakfast requests and calling us back to pick up forgotten items, we ended the first day with dinner at *I Biffi*, a typical local restaurant featuring grilled meats and vegetables. We also made sure to pay a visit to the Pelino Confetti Factory and Museum before leaving the next morning to head into the Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo.

As we enjoyed these other places, Abruzzo called to us, especially to Joe, who was anxious to get to his home territory, where he felt most relaxed and familiar. There were many places (and there still are so many more) that we had never explored, so we took the time to do so. A few days in the city of Sulmona, birthplace of the poet Ovid and famed for its production of confetti, was a must for us. It is always amazing to me that these



Our first stop there was at the Lago di Scanno, where, before going up the hill to the old town of Scanno, we witnessed boaters enjoying the beautiful lake. We wandered through the narrow, picturesque streets, where we came upon a young lady in a shop being fitted for the local traditional dress (which we had just seen memorialized in a statue in the piazza), most likely for some upcoming town festival. As so typical of the people we met, she kindly consented to having her picture taken.

Shortly thereafter, Joe struck up a conversation with some friendly gentlemen sitting on a bench along one of the streets. They were happy to share their views on life and the world situation! We visited several churches and found in one an unexpected delight: a stunning mechanical *presepio*, or nativity scene, complete with running water, depicting the village of Scanno and its villagers, wearing the traditional dress, engaged in daily functions, such as weaving, carpentry, and cooking.



*Lago di Barrea*

We went on to Lago di Barrea, a lake created by the damming of the Sangro River, having a unique aspect of the smaller and shallower section of the lake appearing green and the larger and deeper looking green. Much to our good fortune, we found lodging in the family run Hotel Lago Verde, right on the edge of the lake and at the foot of the town. We were just in time for *pranzo* in the hotel's restaurant, where over the course of the next few days, we enjoyed a number of local, home cooked specialties, including the pasta *fusillone* and *scamorza al forno* (baked cheese) and homemade breakfast treats. Our hosts

Carmelo, his wife, Wilma, their daughter, Adele, and son, Antonio could not have been nicer or more helpful. They recommended a hike around part of the lake, where the wildflowers were in abundance and where we met Wilma and Adele taking their own advice. Joe also encountered another local, also named Giuseppe, with whom Joe shared his appreciation of the beauty of the lake and surroundings. As promised, there was a little snack bar half way through our trek where we ordered a drink and pizza, and the hostess kindly treated us to homemade, still warm pastry tarts.

We climbed the steep hill to the charming town, topped by the *castello* with spectacular views, and meandered through the crooked streets, stopping to appreciate and photograph some of the lovely spots. In fact, we found out later that we took a picture of the flower festooned house right next door to the home of AMHS member Stephen DiGirolamo!

Before leaving the area, we explored another interesting town in the area, Rivisondoli, best known as a ski resort but also a pleasant place to visit in the summer, with views of the mountains and a number of pretty churches. By this time in the trip, my motto had become, "There's always another church to see and admire!"

Closer to familiar ground, we checked into the *Castel di Septe* Hotel, a restored castle surrounded by the countryside of *Montepulciano d'Abruzzo* vineyards and olive groves, just outside the town of Mozzagrogna. Close to Lanciano, this fairy tale like refuge, with lovely gardens complete with swans gliding in a pond, served as a good base from which to visit that city. In walking around the area near the *castello*, Joe stopped to chat with some local farmers, who had something to say about the restoration of the castle. Apparently, the owner added a prohibited third floor to the building; despite this violation, he suffered no consequences and was allowed to continue construction! In typical Italian fashion, he took a chance and got away with it, much to the disgust of the locals. They were also unhappy with the increased traffic and the loud music that came from various festivities held at the site. On the other hand, the hotel and conference space provided space for local businesses and industries, many of which have international connections, to host expos and meetings for clients and colleagues.

During our stay, the *Castel di Septe* was the setting for a wedding reception and for a First Communion party, and we witnessed the wedding photographer taking pictures of the newlyweds with a drone as they kissed atop one of the turrets. The hotel restaurant was being utilized for the receptions, so we went into Mozzagrogna for *pranzo* that day. We enjoyed another typical local meal, this time including *raffiche*, a pasta similar to *cavatelli*, but without the ridges. There were few others in the restaurant; several tables were watching the World Cup soccer game, and another was commemorating the birthday of the family matriarch. As Joe and I finished our meal, the *tifosi* had left; only we and the celebrating family remained. When the waiter arrived to serve birthday cake and spumante, he led a rousing rendition of "*Tanti Auguri!*" Of course, we joined in. I witnessed a woman, most likely the daughter of the birthday celebrant, whisper something to the waiter. He then served us cake and bubbly, as well, and the

family came to our table to talk to us! Where else but in Italy—or, more specifically, in Abruzzo--would this happen? The people truly live up to their motto, "*forte e gentile.*"

The next day, we toured Lanciano, another marvel of well-preserved churches and old buildings, including the *Basilica della Madonna del Ponte* and the pilgrimage Church of the Eucharistic Miracle. As we walked through the streets, some of which followed the *cammino* of the Apostle Thomas, we could smell the tantalizing aromas of the mid-day dinner being prepared in the kitchens of Lanciano. That made us very hungry, but where to eat? Asking hoteliers, merchants or citizens encountered on the street for their advice about places to dine served us well throughout the trip. In fact, the recommendation by a local of *Ai Vecchi Sapori* ("old flavors"), a restaurant known for its "*cucina tipica*," was a great one. *Pranzo* was one of the highlights of our day: the food was fantastic, from the *cannolo con asparagi* to the *coniglio in umido* to the *maiale in crosta con frutta di bosco*. The meal was unhurried and relaxing, served in a cool, outdoor space, a treat after a long morning of sightseeing. My mouth waters now just thinking about it!



*Lanciano: Joann and Joe Novello at "Ai Vecchi Sapori"*

Next on our itinerary, which we were pretty much improvising as we went along, was a visit with Joe's cousin, Don Domenico Scotti, the retired bishop of Trivento, a small diocese in Molise. He now lives in the family homestead in Villa Alfonsina, close to the coast. He and his sister, Malvina, who over the years worked with him as *perpetua*, or housekeeper, took us to *pranzo* at *L'Aragosta* in the beach resort of Casalbordino, where we feasted on seafood, some fried and some roasted, all delicious. We especially enjoyed *rospo*, a white fish which is a local specialty.

Because our attempt to find a hotel in Casalbordino was unsuccessful, from there we decided to drive to Montazzoli, a day ahead of schedule. This was the only time during the entire month that we were unable to find a hotel at the last minute, but beach stays are in high demand in the summer months, so we shouldn't have been surprised. Montazzoli was one of the few places where we made an advanced reservation because the hotel there, *La Collinetta*, is very small and we wanted to be sure of a roof over our heads. Joe always joked that we could stay in the garage that he inherited from his parents, but, with



its dirt floor and who knows what inhabitants, it was not a true option! To reach our destination, we traveled over some rather harrowing roads, both steep and poorly maintained. And we had thought the *autostrada* was tough! The GPS mistakenly led us down a country road with blackberry brambles that covered over the car. When the dirt road abruptly ended, we knew that we had made a mistake. I had to get out of the car and direct Joe to back down the hill so that we could locate the right route. But that experience made our arrival in Montazzoli all the more welcome to us.

*(The adventures will be continued in the next issue, with highlights of our visit to Montazzoli and to Pescara.)*

## FOCACCIA, CHIZZE, FUGASSA, PIZZA SCIMA, THICK OR THIN . . . REGION BY REGION, FOCACCE ARE DELICIOUS!

By Elizabeth DiGregorio



Bite into a slice or wedge of focaccia and you are channeling the Ancient Greeks, Etruscans, pilgrims traveling to or through Italy during the Middle Ages and artists of the Renaissance. From *panis focacius*, (bread + hearth) the Latin term for dough flattened

over a stone slab, covered in ashes, and baked in the hearth comes today's soft, leavened focaccia.

Originally, it was unleavened, used as "disposable plates" for soldiers, sailors, and travelers who needed quick, nutritious, easily transportable and long-lasting provisions. The flat disk would serve as a dish, holding a variety of toppings, from salty fish to olives, herbs, cheeses and then, in true ecological fashion, be eaten so there would be no waste. Ultimate recycling!

Versions of focaccia style breads are found throughout the Mediterranean. The Slow Food Dictionary to Italian Regional Cooking list 15 different versions of focacce (plural of focaccia). While they all share the basic common ingredients, the Italian imagination takes over and the regions put their spin on the final product. The toppings vary from region to region. Sometimes the name changes, some are savory, some are sweet, some are filled with cheese or vegetables. But all are delicious and reflect Italy's regional pride.

Most focacce are made with a high-gluten (hard) flour, but some regions use flours that are common to their area, such as, ceci-bean, corn, chestnut, cake flour, and flour into which mashed or riced potatoes are added. Some type of fat along with water helps bind the flour and produce the crisp crust. Lard was the fat of choice, but now butter and good olive oil lead the way. The best quality olive oil is required to spread over the dough and fill those yummy indents that give focaccia its classic look. Salt, to Italians, evokes centuries of salt wars and bread with and without salt distinguishes one region from another. Focaccia contains salt in both the dough and for the final touch after it is baked. Good table salt works for the dough

and coarse salt, like Maldon, sprinkled on top of the fresh out of the oven product is *delizioso*.

If travelling to Italy is in your future, you will find that focaccia is part of a large repertoire of flat breads. The thinnest is pizza, then schiacciata, and finally the highest of the flats, focaccia.

Here is a sampling of focaccia diversity:

Abruzzo and Molise have a rich focaccia history. Molise alone sports more than 12 different recipes for making the flat bread. It is considered "*cucina povera*" but it also forms an integral part of feast days, holidays, and showing the fruits of the seasons, such as figs, grapes, and olives. A few interesting focacce from the Abruzzo-Molise area are:

*Pizza scima*: a focaccia made with flour, water, salt, extra virgin olive oil, Trebbiano d'Abruzzo white wine, wild fennel seeds, and baked in a wood-stoked oven. It is a signature dish of the Trabocchi Coast (Ortona to San Salvo) which is dotted with the trabocchi, or fishing machines, on piles in the Adriatic. The adjective "*scima*", literally stupid, is a dialectal expression that comes from "*acime*" and stands for "*azzimo*", meaning unleavened. The top is traditionally scored into small squares.

*Pizza di mais*: A corn focaccia that was traditionally prepared "*sotto la coppa*", that is under an iron lid covered in burning coal embers. The pizza is topped with vegetables and boiled pork meat.

*Pizza assettata*: "*Assettata*" means seated in dialect, and that's because the bread does not use any yeast. Seasoned with fennel and chili pepper, the thin flatbread is made with flour, water and extra virgin olive oil. It's excellent paired with local cheeses, in particular with a local *caciocavallo* produced since ancient times in the areas of Agnone, Capracotta and Vastogirardi, near Isernia. It's also commonly eaten with *stracciata*, a fresh stretched curd cheese made with cow's milk.

If your Italian journey takes you beyond Abruzzo-Molise, here are a few focacce to sample:

Liguria: Focaccia di Recco (cheese filled focaccia), focaccia di Voltri (thin dough coated with corn flour and baked on a hot plate, and focaccia Genovese (also called *fugassa*) most closely resembles the focaccia we experience in the US.

Emilia Romagna: In Emilia, focacce called *chizze* are made, stuffed with slivers of parmesan and then fried in lard. In Bologna, it is called Crescentone. Bits of lard are added to the dough.

Tuscany: In Pistoia they make *necci*, focaccias of chestnut flour. Chestnut flour is also used in the focacce of Garfagnana.

Umbria: The local focaccia is called "*al testo*". It is cooked on a *testo*, or disk that in the past was made from river gravel. Today, the *testo* is made of cast iron.

Lazio: In Gaeta, the focaccias are called *tielle* and often dressed in the famous Gaeta olives, the color of red wine, small and aromatic.

Sicily: Messina has *focaccherie*, focaccia shops; Catania *schiaacciate* filled with cheese, anchovies, onions, and tomatoes and black olives; Syracuse and Ragusa call stuffed focaccia *scacce*.

**The** cooler weather may have you looking through recipes and firing up the oven. Winter is a great time to experiment with focaccia recipes. There are a lot of recipes online and in cookbooks. A few key tips for making focaccia: use the best ingredients possible, slowly mix in the flour with a wooden spoon, use the tips of your fingers to make the indents, spoon rather than brush the extra virgin olive oil into the indents and a blue or black steel baking sheet will give you a nice, crisp, dark crust.

Our own Domenica Marchetti has a great recipe in her book, *The Glorious Vegetables of Italy*. Find more at [www.domenicacooks.com](http://www.domenicacooks.com). For the full article of focaccia including a lot more tips and recipes <https://lacuisineus.com/you-say-focaccia-i-say-focacce/>

Several sources were used for this article, notably *Why Italians Love to Talk About Food: A Journey Through Italy's Great Regional Cuisines, From the Alps to Sicily*, by Elena Kostioukovitch; *The Slow Food Dictionary to Italian Regional Cooking*, Slow Food Editore; *Celebrating Italy*, Carol Field, and [www.gamberorosso.it/it/food](http://www.gamberorosso.it/it/food)

Elizabeth DiGregorio is a AMHS member. She contributes to the blog *Kitchen Detail* <https://lacuisineus.com/> dedicated to food and travel. Many of the articles explore Italy's food, people and places to visit.

## FROM THE REGIONAL CORNER

### ABBATEGGIO, PROVINCE OF PESCARA, REGION OF ABRUZZO

By Nancy DeSanti

One of Abruzzo's beautiful small towns, Abbateggio, is located in the province of Pescara. The town has approximately 310 inhabitants, known as Abbateggiani.



*Abbateggio panorama*

Abbateggio is situated along the northern slopes of the Majella, along the road leading from Scafa to Caramanico Terme in a panoramic position with an all-around view from the Gran Sasso mountain group to the Adriatic and is also included in the Majella National Park.

Documents show that the history of the town's existence goes back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In the course of centuries, it belonged, among others, to the celebrated Orsini and Farnese families.

Based on mixed agriculture, the town's economy involves keeping livestock and growing crops such as grain, olives, vines and fruit trees. Cheese and honey are also produced. The town calls itself "*Paese del Farro e del Premio Parco Majella*."

The charm of Abbateggio is its narrow lanes and stone houses, the Abbateggio Parish Church of San Lorenzo and the Abbateggio Sanctuary of the *Madonna dell'Elcina* which was built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century after a local from Abbateggio saw a vision of the Virgin Mary in a tree.

The church is named after the Abbateggio's patron saint of San Lorenzo and on August 10 there is a celebration that honors the patron of Abbateggio. On September 7, 8 and 9, there is another festa where Abbateggio honors the Madonna del Carmine, the Madonna dell'Elcina and of course San Lorenzo. The procession is called "*Processione delle Conche*" where the women of Abbateggio carry vessels (*conche*) filled with flowers on their heads.

Although there is much to see in Abbateggio, for visitors wanting to take a side trip, the nearby Cusano district of the comune is home to the ruins of an ancient castle and other early medieval buildings.

#### What to See

- Church of S. Lorenzo
- Sanctuary of Madonna dell'Elcina, where, according to the tradition, the Virgin Mary appeared on a tree
- The typical tholos, shepherds' huts in dry stone in the Majella National Park

#### Important Dates

- January 17: Feast of St. Anthony
- Last Sunday in July: Maiella Park Literary Award
- August 10: Feast of San Lorenzo, the patron saint
- August: San Lorenzo grain feast
- September 7-9: Feast of the Madonna dell'Elcina

Sources:

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbateggio>  
<https://www.italyheritage.com/regions/abruzzo/pescara/abbateggio.htm>  
<https://www.comune.abbateggio.pe.it/>

### ABBATEGGIO, PROVINCIA DI PESCARA, REGIONE ABRUZZO

Translated by Maddalena Borea, AMHS Member

Abbateggio sorge nei pressi della Maiella, sulla strada che da Caramanico Terme conduce a una magnifica vista panoramica della cima del Gran Sasso e del Mare Adriatico.



Fa parte del Parco Nazionale della Maiella, e la sua storia, da documenti attendibili, risale al decimo secolo. Lungo questi secoli fù feudo di Feudatari importanti, come gli Orsini e i Farnese.

La sua economia è basata sull'allevamento di animali e sull'agricoltura. Famosi sono i suoi oli, i vini e la coltivazione del farro. La cittadina chiama se stessa "Il Paese del Farro e del Premio Parco Maiella."

La bellezza del villaggio viene dalle sue case di pietra e dal suo Santuario, dedicato alla Madonna dell'Elcina, costruito nel quindicesimo secolo, dopo che un abitante del luogo ebbe una visione della Vergine fra i rami di un albero. La chiesa porta il nome del Patrono, San Lorenzo, ed ogni 10 agosto la comunità fa una grande festa in suo onore. Poi il sette, l'otto e il nove settembre si fa un'altra grande festa per onorare la Madonna del Carmine, la Madonna dell'Elcina e, naturalmente, San Lorenzo. Per queste occasioni si fanno grandi processioni, chiamate "Processioni delle Conche", durante le quali le donne del luogo trasportano recipienti pieni di fiori.

Sebbene ci sia tanto da vedere ad Abbateggio, molti turisti hanno la possibilità di visitare la vicina Cusano e le sue rovine di antichi castelli.

#### **Attrazioni del luogo**

- Il Santuario di San Lorenzo
- Il Santuario della Madonna dell'Elcina, la quale sarebbe apparsa fra i rami di un albero
- I rudimentali ripari dei pastori sotto le secche pietre della Maiella, nel Parco Nazionale della Maiella

#### **Date da ricordare**

- 17 gennaio: Festa di Sant'Antonio
- L'ultima domenica di luglio: Premio letterario del Parco della Maiella
- 10 agosto: Festa di San Lorenzo, Santo Patrono
- Mese di Agosto: Festa del grano di San Lorenzo
- Settembre 7-9: Festa della Madonna dell'Elcina

### **MONTECILFONE, PROVINCE OF CAMPOBASSO, REGION OF MOLISE**

*By Nancy DeSanti*

The picturesque small town of Montecilfone is located about 40 kilometers northeast of Campobasso. The town has approximately 1,366 inhabitants, known as Montecilfonesi.

On the top of a hill surrounded by olive trees, Montecilfone enjoys a beautiful view on the Biferno Valley, from the Punta Penna lighthouse southwards to the Gargano and northwards to the Majella mountain area.

The town was settled by an Albanian Christian group, under the leadership of Giorgio Castriota Skanderberg, seeking refuge after the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1456 and the advance of the Muslim armies. The population still speaks an Albanian dialect.



*Montecilfone panorama*

The town's medieval origins include belonging at one time to Count Francesco di Montagano. He sold some of his property to develop the Università di Guglionesi, a small but important agricultural center, in 1442. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by an earthquake in 1456. In 1506, the area became a haven for Albanians escaping from the Ottomans who had invaded the Balkans. The Albanians were invited to repopulate the area.

Earthquakes are nothing new to this area. Montecilfino was in the news this summer when at least nine earthquakes rocked southern Italy in two hours on August 16, prompting frightened residents to sleep outdoors. Italy's national seismology agency reported that the strongest quake measured 5.1 on the Richter scale, and that jolt was followed in rapid succession by eight more tremors, with the strongest measuring at 4.4.

The epicenter of the quakes was Montecilfone. Civil protection officials say a boy was slightly hurt after leaping off a balcony in fear, but no injuries are blamed directly on the quakes. Molise Governor. Donato Toma says some buildings suffered cracks, but fortunately no major damage occurred.

#### **What to See**

- Church of San Giorgio

#### **Important Dates**

- April 23: Feast of San Giorgio
- June 23: Feast of Sant'Antonio di Padova
- August 8: Sagra
- August 14: Festival Albanese
- November 11: Sagra delle Taccuzzelle e Fagioli

Sources:

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montecilfone>  
<http://www.molisecitta.it/comuni/montecilfone.html>  
<https://www.enchantingitaly.com/regions/molise/province-campobasso/montecilfone.htm>  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/italy-earthquake-latest-today-magnitude-molise-montecilfone-richter-scale-a8495366.html>

## MONTECILFONE, PROVINCIA DI CAMPOBASSO, REGIONE MOLISE

*Translated by Maddalena Borea*

Questa cittadina si trova a circa quaranta chilometri da Campobasso, e conta 1.366 abitanti, chiamati Montecilfonesi.

Dalla cima di una collina, circondata da ulivi, gode la bellissima vista della valle del Biferno, del Faro di Punta Penna, del Gargano e del complesso montuoso della Maiella.

In tempi remoti fù abitata da un gruppo cristiano albanese, che alla guida di Giorgio Castriota Skanderberg, vi cercò rifugio, dopo il crollo dell'impero romano d'Oriente nel 1456 e le invasioni ottomane. Ragon per cui la popolazione di oggi ancora parla un dialetto albanese.

In tempi medievali uno dei Signori di Montecilfone fù il Conte Francesco di Montagano. Questi vendè alcune sue proprietà per costruire una scuola di Scienze Agrarie, che fù più tardi distrutta dal terremoto dell'anno 1456.

Più tardi, nel 1506, la città diventò asilo di altri albanesi che fuggivano dagli Ottomani, che avevano occupato i Balcani. Gli Albanesi furono invitati a ripopolare Montecilfone.

Tragicamente quest'area è spesso teatro di terremoti. L'ultimo dei quali, verificatosi lo scorso agosto, della durata di due ore, costrinse i cittadini a dormire fuori.

Il tremore più intenso misurava 5,1 della Scala Richter, seguito da diversi altri tremori, il più intenso dei quali di 4,4 con epicentro Montecilfone. Fortunatamente l'ultimo terremoto non ha causato molti danni.

### Le attrazioni del luogo

- La Chiesa di San Giorgio

### Date da ricordare

- 23 Aprile: Festa di San Giorgio
- 23 Giugno: Festa di Sant'Antonio di Padova
- 14 Agosto: Festival Albanese
- 11 Novembre: Sagra di taccuzzelle e fagioli

## SHOW YOUR AMHS PRIDE, JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

*By Sarah Scott, AMHS Board Member*

We are excited to offer AMHS merchandise for sale at upcoming events, on the AMHS Shop (<https://www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org/amhsshop/#!form/shopping>), or using the order form on the next page of this newsletter.



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**SPECIAL THANKS** to Romeo Sabatini, for stepping in as Editor for the *AMHS Notiziario* in January 2017. This will be his last issue as Editor. Romeo has always played an integral role in the publication of this bi-monthly newsletter. Romeo will be replaced as Editor by AMHS Secretary Carmine James Spellane. Romeo will, however, continue to help us with the checking of Italian translation of articles.

Please be sure to thank Romeo when you see him at an AMHS event!



## THE FOUNDING OF THE ABRUZZO AND MOLISE HERITAGE SOCIETY ("Remembering our Roots")

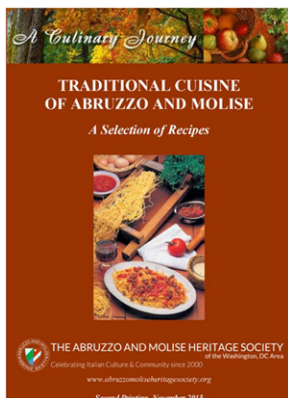
In 1999, Lucio and Edvige D'Andrea, long-time members of Holy Rosary Church, along with Lucio's brother Joseph D'Andrea, attended the "*Primo Congresso Mondiale di Molisani di Nord America*" (the First World Congress of Molisani in North America). The Congress was an occasion for Molisani in Canada to celebrate their success and achievements. Lucio, Edvige and Joe were impressed and inspired by what they saw. It prompted Lucio and Edvige to explore the possibility of establishing a heritage society in the Washington, DC area. Lucio was born in Roccamandolfi, region of Molise and Edvige was born in Pacentro, region of Abruzzo-both immigrated to the United States in the late 1940s. They wanted to celebrate their Italian heritage by focusing on the regions of their birth.

To launch the Society, Lucio sought the help of Father Charles Zanoni, who was Pastor of Holy Rosary at that time. He agreed to place a notice in *Voce Italiana*, inviting readers to respond to the idea of establishing an Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society. The response was encouraging. A core group of Abruzzesi and Molisani that Lucio and Edvige had come to know in their encounters at Holy Rosary Church and Casa Italiana was asked to join this initiative, namely Mario Ciccone, Ennio DiTullio, Tony D'Onofrio, Sergio Fresco, Gloria Sabatini, and Omero Sabatini. They all shared a common purpose for the creation of a Society, namely to appreciate, promote, and perpetuate a common cultural heritage.

In June 2000, the inaugural meeting of the Society was held at Casa Italiana. Present were about 70 potential members including Joseph D'Andrea, President at the time of the Molisani Societies in the United States, Father Charles Zanoni, and First Counselor of the Embassy of Italy, Giampaolo Cantini. From a modest beginning, the Society has grown in size, and has pursued a host of activities and programs, becoming one of the most highly regarded Italian-American organizations in the Washington, DC area.



*"Founders Day". From left to right: Ennio DiTullio; Giampaolo Cantini, First Counselor, Embassy of Italy; Joseph D'Andrea; Lucio D'Andrea; Mario Ciccone; Gloria Sabatini; Tony and Elodia D'Onofrio; and Sergio Fresco.*



**“Traditional Cuisine of Abruzzo and Molise: A Selection of Recipes”,**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Printing illustrated, November 2015

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# THE ABRUZZO AND MOLISE HERITAGE SOCIETY

of the Washington, DC Area

Celebrating Italian Culture & Community since 2000



2017 Wine Tasting Event

## ❧ LUNCHEON MEETING ❧

### *AMHS Lunch Meeting Winemakers' Tasting*

**When:** SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2018

**Time:** 1:00 p.m.

**Location:** Casa Italiana  
595 Third Street, NW  
Washington, DC

**MENU:** Lunch catered by Three Brothers Italian Restaurant. Menu includes orecchiette with broccoli rabe in garlic and olive oil, sausage and peppers, rice, salad, bread, and dessert. Beverages are included.

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

We encourage you to pay online, using Visa or Mastercard, at [www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org](http://www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org) (see icon on the home page for "Upcoming Events"). Paid reservations must be received by November 9.

Please join us for our most popular event of the year, the annual wine tasting event. The meeting will commence with a brief AMHS business meeting, to include election of members to the Board of Directors. Following the lunch, our wine-making members and friends will have samples of their production to share with attending members, friends and guests. There will be a brief talk by AMHS member Tom Savage, with International Cellars, on the wines of Italy. **Special raffle prize: Private Wine Class at Total Wines (\$500.00 value), \$20.00 for four (4) chances to win! Proceeds benefit AMHS.**

For questions on the program, please contact Nancy DeSanti (703) 967-2169. For questions about reservations, please contact Maria D'Andrea-Yothers (703) 473-4033.

✂-----Return with Payment

### PAID RESERVATIONS for AMHS General Society Meeting on Sunday, November 11, 2018

Please make check payable to AMHS.

Send to AMHS, c/o Peter Bell, 328 8<sup>th</sup> Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20002

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Check Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## SEPTEMBER 23, 2018 GENERAL SOCIETY MEETING



**Top left:** AMHS President Ray LaVerghetta addresses the audience.

**Top right:** AMHS members Helina (Ellie) Zewdu Nega and Eileen Verna catch up.

**Middle left:** AMHS members Stephen diGirolamo, Elisa DiClemente, and Antonietta McDonald enjoy a laugh and great conversation before lunch.

**Middle right:** Maria & Michele LaVerghetta.

**Bottom left:** AMHS Past President Omero Sabatini reads the poem "I pastori".

**Bottom right:** AMHS member Sonny Scafetta asks a question about the tratturi and transumanza. *(photos courtesy of Sam Yothers).*



## BUCCINI-ORTOLANO CONCERT AND COLUMBUS DAY 2018



**Top left:** Tania Buccini and Alberto Ortolano perform on September 8 concert at Casa Italiana Sociocultural Center.

**Top right:** AMHS member Maria Marigliano presents the artists with flowers at the conclusion of their performance.

**Middle right:** AMHS members Elisa DiClemente (with grandchildren Luca & Sofia DiClemente), Edvige & Lucio D'Andrea, Maria D'Andrea-Yothers, Nancy DeSanti, and Francesco Isgro support the October 8 Columbus Day celebration at Union Station.

**Bottom (left):** The Knights of Columbus leave the ceremony.

**Bottom (right):** The statue of Christopher Columbus, at Union Station – the backdrop for the Columbus Day celebration. *(photos courtesy of Maria D'Andrea-Yothers and Sarah Scott).*



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### **AMHS NOTIZIARIO**

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*Color copies printed courtesy of Todd Tomanio & Sydnee Patterson, TransPerfect Document Management, Inc.*

**AMHS NOTIZIARIO** is published bi-monthly from January through November. The deadline for the submission of articles is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding publication of the issue. Please send submissions via e-mail to Carmine James Spellane, [cjsn@verizon.net](mailto:cjsn@verizon.net). All submissions may be edited for clarity and become the property of AMHS. Publication of submissions is at the discretion of the Editor, however content of articles that are published is the sole responsibility of the author.

You may choose to receive the **Notiziario** by electronic mail (email) only. This will save on paper and postage and will allow you to get your copy more quickly. If you wish to receive the newsletter by online delivery only, please contact Maria D'Andrea-Yothers by email at [uva051985@comcast.net](mailto:uva051985@comcast.net); phone, (703) 473-4033. Thank you for considering this option.

The **AMHS Notiziario** is an official publication of the Grant and Scholarship Fund Inc. of the Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society of the Washington, DC area, doing business as The Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society of the Washington, DC area, a non-profit, non-partisan, non-sectarian society legally incorporated in the District of Columbia.

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