



AMHS

# NOTIZIARIO

CELEBRATING ITALIAN CULTURE &amp; COMMUNITY SINCE 2000

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

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Tony Vaccaro (photo by Manolo Salas NYC 2017)

By Nancy DeSanti, 1st Vice President — Programs

The AMHS was recently very honored to present a virtual talk with a famous photographer who grew up in Molise, Tony Vaccaro, who came to us live from Long Island City, N.Y. Tony may well be the only man living who survived the Battle of Normandy and who also survived COVID-19.

We would like to thank Tony's daughter-in-law Maria, who has taken over organizing his archives and who kindly facilitated Tony's talk with us.

Tony is a member of the International Photography Hall of Fame. His pictures range from images of World War II to leading celebrities and fashion icons.

Tony may be best known for his photos taken in Europe during 1944 and 1945, and in Germany immediately following World War II. Later on, after coming to America, he became a fashion and lifestyle photographer for U.S. magazines such as Look and Life. Among his famous photographs are ones he took of President John F. Kennedy and actress Sophia Loren.

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continued on 9

PHOTOGRAPHER

**TONY  
VACCARO***Reminisces  
about his  
Amazing Life*

## What's Inside

- 02 President's Message
- 03 Famous Italian  
Children's Author  
Gianni Rodari Celebrated
- 04 Wines of Molise Featured  
In Live-Stream From Italy
- 05 Congratulations to the  
Three Board Members for  
the 2021-2023 Term
- 05 Vasto: Fount of Artistic Talent
- 10 Siamo Una Famiglia
- 12 Casoli
- 14 Santa Maria del Molise

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



### Dear members and friends:

The New Year — 2021 — is here! For many of us, it could not have come fast enough, as last year saw the start of the worst pandemic in over one hundred years — one that is not even yet fully behind us. If you are reading this message, then you made it through the pandemic — at least so far. Sadly, thousands of Italian Americans,

Italians, and others of many different nations were not as fortunate. If there's an outcome from 2020 for which we should be grateful as we begin the new year, surviving the pandemic is a good candidate.

Each year at this time, I like to think back on all the past year's events that our Society has sponsored and that our members have enjoyed. That exercise in nostalgia has a very different feel this time, in part because of the losses, sickness and difficulties of the past year and in part because we were able to hold only one in-person event. On January 26 of last year (it seems like such a long time ago) at Casa Italiana, Paul Paolicelli gave an interesting presentation to a nearly full house, talking about how Italians have changed America. I don't think anyone knew at the time that this very well-received lecture would be our last in-person event of the year.

Mr. Paolicelli's talk, while our last in-person meeting of 2020, was not the year's last AMHS event. We subsequently held five cultural events, as well as two general meetings, during the remainder of the year. Of course, all were in the virtual format. On the evening of April 25, AMHS members and friends took part in a lively discussion of the Italian-American film classic "A Big Night". The film deals with the efforts of two transplanted Italian brothers who struggle to adapt their Italian restaurant to the tastes of an American beach town in the 1950's. The discussion was moderated by Detroit-based filmmaker Jim Toscano. Then, on the evening of May 23, Mr. Toscano guided AMHS movie buffs in a discussion of "Saturday Night Fever." The classic American film depicts the difficulties of Tony Manero, a young Italian American growing up in Brooklyn, who tries to move past his problems at home and an uncertain future by immersing himself in the world of disco dancing.

On July 11, the AMHS sponsored a third film discussion, also moderated by Jim Toscano. The film, "My Cousin Vinny," has achieved something akin to cult status. It shows the pluck and skill of an Italian-American attorney (Vincent Gambini) who overcomes a lack of courtroom experience to help two clients in a desperate situation. Subsequently, with the generous assistance once again of Jim Toscano, our Society hosted another film discussion on October 3. We discussed and analyzed the Italian-American film "My Country". The film follows the adventures of two stepbrothers, one who lives in Chicago and one who lives in Rome. They travel to Molise together to bury the ashes of their father in his hometown. In addition to the presence of Jim Toscano, we had the great pleasure and good fortune to have the film's producer, director and lead actor, Giancarlo Iannotta, take part and guide us in our discussions. Mr.

Iannotta, of Chicago-based Molise Media, LLC, provided insights into the film's script, casting and origin. In this film, as well as in all the others, the virtual audience was able to tease out fundamental Italian values and compare protagonists' success in retaining them or adapting them while making their way in a new culture.

Our fifth cultural event took place on October 30, when we had a virtual private talk with Tony Vaccaro, who was born in Bonefro, Molise and who became a member of the International Photography Hall of Fame. Tony's pictures range from World War II to the world of fashion, and his amazing life provided many fascinating topics for discussion and questions.

In addition to the cultural events mentioned above, we were able to hold two general meetings on the same dates on which they were originally scheduled. On September 20, AHMS Executive Committee member Sonny Scafetta gave a virtual presentation on the careers of Italian-American baseball players with roots in Abruzzo. Sonny's talk was interesting and we learned some fascinating details about the link between our national pastime and some Italian-American athletes. We also held our annual wine tasting event on November 15. It was conducted by the virtual wine tasting experts Stephen Yanuck and Beth Dahlburg of Veni, Vini, Amici, and it featured wine producer Antonio Valerio of Campi Valerio in Monteroduni, Molise, who joined our meeting from Italy. The event was very informative and a lot of fun, and the wines sampled were outstanding.

As should be apparent, the Society in 2020 took advantage of the best format available to bring our community together in a socially distanced and safe way. I am grateful to our smart and enterprising Board members who worked to come up with such enjoyable events in the midst of a pandemic. Realistically, it appears that these virtual gatherings will continue to be our best option at least through the springtime of this year. Of course, we will keep you posted.

I would like to welcome to our Board its newest members: Frank Bonsiero, Jeff Clark and Mark Lino. Their talents will be valuable, and I thank them for their willingness to help lead our organization. You can read more about their election later in this *Notiziario*. I would also like to thank Rico Allegrino, Joe Novello and Joann Novello for their service to the Board. They brought with them great commitment and lots of experience, all of which was evident on many of the issues the Board tackled last year.

Finally, I remind you that it is not too late to donate to our scholarship fundraising campaign. You should have already received your envelope in the traditional mail. If not, please contact any member of the Board. As you likely recall, our Society now has to raise all of the funds for both of the scholarships that we award, as we no longer receive matching funds from NIAF or financial assistance from any external source. While we had to postpone or cancel multiple events last year, in which we lost the opportunity to raise funds on raffles, sales of merchandise, and revenue from general meetings, we were still able to award two scholarships to deserving Italian-American students, thanks to your generosity. Please keep up the great work in 2021.

*Regards,  
Ray LaVerghetta*



# Famous Italian Children's Author GIANNI RODARI Celebrated

By Nancy DeSanti

As part of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Gianni Rodari, Italy's most beloved author of children's books, the Embassy of Italy's Italian Cultural Institute hosted a virtual talk on November 24, 2020, featuring experts here and in Italy. Rodari remains the only Italian writer to have won the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Prize, awarded to him in 1970, one of the most important international awards relating to children's literature.

The webinar featured Grazia Gotti, president of the official Italian committee for Gianni Rodari's centenary, translator Antony Shugaar and illustrator Valerio Vidali.

In Italy, everyone knows who Rodari is. But in the U.S., practically nobody knows his name. During his lifetime, not one of his 30 books was published here. Now a small publisher in New York, Enchanted Lion Books, has brought out the first full English translation of "Telephone Tales," considered by many to be his masterpiece.



First published in Italy in 1962, "Telephone Tales" is a collection of 67 children's stories intended to be short enough that one could be read during a 20th-century pay phone call, as the Italian title, "Favole al telefono," suggests. In those days, a token (*gettone*) allowed the caller to make a short telephone call. The premise of the book is a father who was a traveling salesman calling home each evening to tell a story to his young daughter. The stories have enchanting titles such as "The Road to Nowhere," "The Planet of Truth" and "The Man Who Stole the Coliseum."



In World War II, Rodari was a member of the Resistance and joined the Communist Party. His brother was interned in a German prison camp. In 1948, he began publishing in the Communist newspaper *Unità* poems about the children of contemporary working-class Italy that in form closely resembled children's folklore. Rodari's poems in his collections, for example, "Little Book of Nonsense Rhymes," showed his ability to reveal the world's complexity and meaningfulness in the ordinary, small phenomena of life. By 1960 he had written enough material to publish his first book, "Nursery Rhymes in the Sky and on Earth."

On the centenary of his birth, October 23, 2020, Rodari was the subject of the "Google Doodle" logo on the search engine's homepage. The Google Doodle featured an onion, alongside Rodari's face, in a reference to his much-loved children's book "*Il romanzo di Cipollino*" (The Tale of the Little Onion).

For his contributions to children's literature, Rodari won many major awards throughout his life, and today his works have been translated into over 20 languages. During his lifetime, Rodari was popular at home and abroad, but he never caught on with English-speaking readers, in part probably because of his ties to the Communist Party. Perhaps the translation of "Telephone Tales" will change that. ■

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*"Gianni Rodari is known for his love of word play, nonsensical turns of phrase, and for looking at social justice issues with a fresh, playful perspective."*

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Gianni Rodari (1920-1980) is known for his love of word play, nonsensical turns of phrase, and for looking at social justice and equality issues with a fresh, playful perspective. The panel described his works for children as wildly inventive, sometimes funny, sometimes surreal, but always profound and timely. As Rodari famously said, "When they are little, children must stock up on optimism, for the challenge of life."

The panel discussed the relationship between words and pictures and explained the challenge, joy and provocation in translating and illustrating the work of such an influential and iconic figure. Vidali talked about the task of illustrating a book by an author whose books he remembered reading as a child, and he described how he came to do the whimsical, surreal drawings he envisioned as adding to the stories.

In one of the stories in the book, "Inventing Numbers," two children make up numbers and measurements on a whim. "How much does a teardrop weigh," one asks. The other answers, "Depends. A willful child's teardrop weighs less than the wind, but that of a starving child weighs more than the world."

Born in 1920 in Omegna, a small town on Lake Orta in the Piemonte region, Rodari came from a poor family. His father died when Gianni was 9 years old after contracting pneumonia rescuing a cat in a rainstorm. Rodari had a background in education and journalism before embarking on the career that would secure his place in the hearts of children in Italy and all over the world. Interested early on in children's education, he first taught at an elementary school before he transitioned to work as a newspaper reporter.



## Wines of Molise Featured In Live-Stream From Italy

By **Nancy DeSanti**, 1st Vice President — Programs

Although we were not able to meet in person at Casa Italiana for our annual wine-tasting due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we were together virtually for what turned out to be a joyful and informative event.

We were fortunate to have Stephen Yanuck and his partner Beth Dahlburg as our guides to lead us not only in a discussion of wines from Molise, but also to arrange a live-stream from Italy with Antonio Valerio of Campi Valerio in Monteroduni, Molise. Their enthusiasm and knowledge made for a delightful afternoon.



*Stephen Yanuck and Beth Dahlburg led the discussion on the selected wines from Molise.*

Our host, Stephen Yanuck, has conducted educational wine-themed lectures since 2018. Both Stephen and Beth have received certificates in wine education and are continuing their education and studies of the vines. Since March 2020, they have held monthly streaming tasting lectures. Their passion for wine and desire to bring good vibes to the world helped them become a 2020 Wine Spectator video competition finalist. You will find some very interesting information on their Vini Vini Amici website [veniviniamici.com](http://veniviniamici.com).

At the beginning of the event, we watched a video of beautiful scenes of Molise, and by the end, I think many of us were ready to hop on a plane (if we only could!).

Stephen and Beth went on to discuss three of the Campi Valerio vineyard's outstanding wines:

- 2019 Fannia Falanghina del Molise
- 2016 Calidio Rosso del Molise
- 2016 Sannazzaro del Molise Riserva

Stephen commented that he couldn't believe the wonderful quality of the wines at such a reasonable price.

The Italian portion of the event was live-streamed from Monteroduni, where Antonio Valerio's family has been making wine since 1836. Along with the 14 hectares of vineyards in Monteroduni, the family cultivates olive groves,

as well as raises cattle and sheep. Antonio commented that he knows "only" about 2,000 words in English, and so he spoke to us in Italian with an English interpreter on hand, but he definitely managed to convey his passion for the land and for making wine.

He told us that he left Molise for a time to study to become an architect. Stephen commented that many people who are interested in wine come from a background in engineering or architecture and they bring with them a background of meticulous attention to detail (Stephen and Beth both have scientific backgrounds and work at the Commerce Department's U.S. Patent and Trademark Office). Antonio agreed, comparing a building to a bottle of wine.

Naturally Antonio's return to Molise helped to enrich the local economy through his wine-making. With 60% of production being exported, his focus has been on quality and bringing an authentic return to native grape varietals and classic viticulture techniques. Antonio was asked how his wine gets on shelves, and he joked, "on airplanes." Actually, he said he has flown with some of his wine on planes to its destination.



Stephen noted that in starting a vineyard there, a search must be done to make sure there is no interference with archaeological ruins — an obstacle that not all vineyards have to deal with, for sure. In fact, one artifact discovered in Molise is now kept in the Louvre in Paris. Antonio explained that he is going to use amphora-style vessels instead of oak — one of their innovations, and yet going back to an ancient technique.

Antonio talked more broadly about the rich history and beauty of the region, noting that it has everything from beaches to skiing in the Apennines. He described this land as "a place



that must be cared for with heart and soul,” and he has been leading a renaissance in wine from Molise.

Antonio was pleased to hear of local connections with some of our members, through Maria D’Andrea-Yother’s father Lucio who is from nearby Roccamondalfi and Alfred DelGrosso’s cousin Giuseppe D’Andrea (no relation). Antonio noted that he has family members named D’Andrea, which is a common name in the region. As Stephen pointed out, this was an example of wine connecting people.

At the end of the event, there were two breakout sessions when we all had an opportunity to ask questions of Stephen or Antonio, who took questions in Italian or English.

A big thank you to AMHS Board Member Chris Renneker, who put us in touch with our speaker, Stephen Yanuck, to Maria D’Andrea-Yothers who did so much to help organize this event, and to Peter Bell for doing the hosting honors. And *grazie mille* to Antonio Valerio and his wonderful interpreter, Lucia. ■

## Congratulations to the Three Board Members for the 2021-2023 Term

Congratulations to the three members of the AMHS Board of Directors, who were voted in by mailed ballot: Frank Bonsiero, Jeff Clark, and Mark Lino. These individuals will be installed at the January 2021 virtual meeting of the Executive Committee. Board members serve a three-year term. We thank the members who voted, and we are grateful to Frank, Jeff, and Mark for agreeing to serve. They will be valuable additions to the Board and the Executive Committee. We look forward to formally introducing them at a future in-person general membership meeting.

Frank, Jeff, and Mark will replace Americo (Rico) Allegrino, and Joe and Joann Novello, whose service on the Board ended on December 31, 2020. We thank them for their dedication and service to the Society.

*Submitted by the AMHS Nominating Committee, Rico Allegrino, Peter Bell, and Maria D’Andrea-Yothers. ■*

## VASTO: *Fount of Artistic Talent*

The town of Vasto in the province of Chieti in the region of Abruzzo has been the birthplace of numerous accomplished artists. This is especially remarkable for a town of about 40,000 near the Adriatic coast. AMHS Executive Board member **Joseph “Sonny” Scafetta, Jr.**, whose father hailed from Vasto, has profiled several notable painters and writers with roots in his ancestral hometown.)

### Gabriele Smargiassi



Gabriele Smargiassi was born in the city of Vasto in the province of Chieti in the region of Abruzzo, Italy, on July 22, 1798. As a teenager, he wanted to be a priest like one of his uncles. However, his parents recognized his artistic talent and convinced him to try painting as a profession. By the time Gabriele turned 19 years old in 1817, his parents had scraped together enough money to send him to Naples to be trained in the private studio of Giuseppe Cammarano. Gabriele soon moved to the private studio of Anton Sminck van Pitloo for whom he worked painting rural landscapes in the evenings for the next seven years after completing his day classes in the Neapolitan Academy of Fine Arts, where van Pitloo was employed as the Professor of Landscape Painting.

In 1824, Smargiassi received a scholarship from the Academy to go to Rome to practice painting the ruins of that eternal city. When his scholarship funds ran out, he stayed in Rome rather than return to Naples. To support himself in Rome, Smargiassi gave private art lessons to the children of parents in high society. One of his students was Louis-Philippe, the future King of France. After four years in Rome, Smargiassi moved in 1828 to Zurich, Switzerland, but four months later relocated to Paris.

*After achieving success and recognition in Paris, Smargiassi spent the rest of his life as a painter and professor in Naples.*

Smargiassi achieved great success and international recognition in the French capital. In 1831, he was awarded the gold medal at the London Exposition. Upon his return to Paris, the French King bestowed upon him the prestigious Legion of Honor medal. The 33-year old Smargiassi then began to be patronized in Paris by the Salon of the Duchess of Saint Leu.

In 1837, his mentor, van Pitloo, died in Naples. The Neapolitan Academy of Fine Arts searched for a worthy candidate to succeed van Pitloo and convinced Smargiassi to return to Naples to fill the chair of Professor of Landscape Painting. Smargiassi accepted in 1838 with an understanding that he could maintain a private studio outside of the Academy, just like van Pitloo had done. The most notable patron of his studio was the Count of Aquila from Abruzzo, while his most successful students were Francesco Mancini, Alfonso Simonetti, Raimondo Scoppa, and the obstreperous fellow vastese, Giuseppe Palizzi (see below), who left the Academy in a huff in 1844.

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Smargiassi stayed in Naples for the rest of his life performing the dual roles of Professor of Landscape Painting and owner of a private art studio for 44 years. He died in Naples on May 12, 1882, about two months before his 84th birthday. He never married. His surviving paintings of rural landscapes remain in the main art galleries and the royal palaces of Europe.

**Sources**, both accessed September 26, 2020:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriele\\_Smargiassi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriele_Smargiassi)

<https://vastesiworld.org/listing/smargiassigabriele>

## Giuseppe Palizzi



Giuseppe Palizzi was born on March 19, 1812, in the town of Lanciano in the province of Chieti in the region of Abruzzo. He was named Giuseppe by his parents because he was born on the feast day of San Giuseppe. When he was three years old, his parents moved their family to Vasto which was a larger city on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. Here along the seacoast, he began to show his artistic abilities from a very early age.

After he turned 23 years old in 1835, Palizzi moved to Naples and enrolled at the Royal Institute of Fine Arts where he came into contact with the painters of the Posillipo School. There he presented historical landscapes at the yearly shows of the Institute. However, being intolerant of rules and expected manner-

isms, after nine years in Naples, the 32-year old Giuseppe pulled up roots and relocated to Paris in 1844. After a short period, he decided to move to the village of Bourron-Marlotte which was located on the edge of the forest of

Fontainebleau outside of Paris. This forest became the primary subject of his painting which developed in the direction of painstaking realism through the influence of the Barbizon School.

Giuseppe kept in communication by letter with his younger brother Filippo who had stayed back in Vasto. In his letters, Giuseppe shared with Filippo the results of his artistic explorations. For ten years, Giuseppe exhibited regularly at the Paris Salon. In 1854, he made a short trip to Naples to visit his friends there, followed by a short stay in Vasto to visit family members and to sketch local pastoral scenes outside of the city.

Before the year was up, he returned to Paris where he achieved great success with pastoral landscapes inspired by his stay in Vasto. His paintings from this period often included figures of humble laborers. In 1859, he was

*Palizzi is known for his nature paintings created in France and Italy. He later became intrigued by the newfangled art of photography.*

made a member of the Legion of Honor by the French Government. Three years later in 1862, he traveled to Rome to receive the Cross of the Knights of Saint Maurice and Saint Lazarus from the new Italian Government.

Upon his return to the Paris suburbs, Palizzi immersed himself in his work and dedicated himself to painting directly from nature. He also undertook intensive activities with various artistic organizations in the French capital. While doing so, he made contact with the main artists and intellectuals of the period. He was further intrigued by the newfangled art of photography and its ability to capture precisely the images of the operator.

Towards the end of his career, he befriended many painters of the impressionistic circle, but he declined to adopt their new style of painting, which, as he stated in one of his last letters to his brother, he considered "imprecise." A lifelong bachelor, Giuseppe died in Paris on January 14, 1888, about two months shy of his 76th birthday. His surviving paintings remain in the principal European art galleries and in private collections.

### Sources:

Vasto Domani at page 5, October, 1988.

<https://vastesiworld.org/listing/palizzi-giuseppe>, accessed September 25, 2020

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe\\_Palizzi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Palizzi), accessed September 26, 2020

## Francesco Paolo Votinelli



Francesco Paolo Votinelli was born on October 13, 1891, in Vasto. His father Domenico was a city guard and his mother, Rosalind Giosi, made pasta making instruments which she sold locally.

At the age of 17, Votinelli traveled to Naples where he boarded the ship "Indiana" which arrived at Ellis Island in New York on March 29, 1909. He found work as an apprentice to a tailor, and, in the evenings after work, he began to write poetry.

Votinelli also began to go to meeting places of the vastesi community in the city of New York. As a young bachelor, he began to be invited to feast day events for various saints, wedding ceremonies, and wedding anniversary parties. As his poetic ability became known, Votinelli was often asked to write a poem which he would recite at the event, earning him the nickname "l'origano" (the oregano) because he added "spice" to these occasions.

In one of these evening gatherings between friends, he recited a poem which would become his masterpiece "Vasto bello e terra d'oro"

*Votinelli became popular for his poetry recitals at various celebrations and gatherings. At one of these, he recited his masterpiece about his hometown of Vasto.*

(Vasto beautiful and land of gold). Encouraged by his friends, he self-published a small book of his poems with his masterpiece being the title of the book and the first poem in the volume. The book sold well in the vastesi community in New York and eventually in other vastesi communities in the United States, Argentina, Canada, and Australia. After a few years, his masterpiece became the worldwide hymn of vastesi recalling with sadness their home town which they had left many years ago.

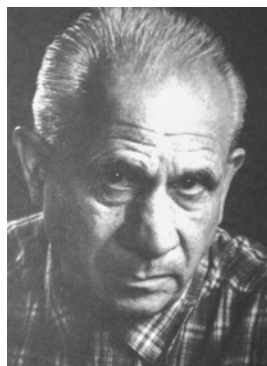
Due to the success of his little book of poems as well as his success as a tailor, he was able to afford to marry Maddalena Fasolino who was an emigrant from Sicily. They had two children. Then, Maddalena died in 1965. Left alone at the age of 74, Votinelli was pushed by an irresistible desire to see again the land of his birth. Thus, later in 1965 he moved back to Vasto where he spent the last four years of his life. He died there due to lung complications on November 14, 1969, and was buried in the local city cemetery.

#### Sources:

<https://vastesiworld.org/listing/votinelli>

<https://vastogallery.blogspot.com/p/Francesco-Paolo-Votinelli>

## Juan Del Prete



Giovanni Del Prete was born in Vasto on October 5, 1897. When he was 12 years old, he emigrated with his parents from Vasto and they settled in a district called La Boca in the capital city of Buenos Aires in Argentina. There he learned Spanish. The impressionable young boy fell in love with the neighboring district called Riachuelo and its brightly colored buildings. When he finished high school in 1915, Del Prete and his parents became naturalized citizens of Argentina. At the same time, Giovanni changed his given name to Juan.

During the time he was working with his father who was a boot maker, Juan began to teach himself abstract art and studied at the nearby Perugino Academy in his spare time. After seven years, he opened his own art studio at Vuelta del Rocha in the capital. The major part of his initial works was of the figurative type and included works with a landscape theme. In 1926, he had his first art exhibit under the auspices of the Friends of Art Association whose members were so impressed with his works that they conferred on him a scholarship so that he could continue to develop his talent abroad. After some hesitation about where to go, he finally decided in 1929 to go to Paris where he learned French.

Juan burst upon the art scene in Paris in 1930 when he participated in three exhibitions at the Salon of the Southern Independents, the First Exposition of the Latino-American Group, and the Zak Gallery, the last being a one-man show. In 1931, he had another one-man show at the Vavin-Raspail Gallery. In 1932, he became a member of the Abstraction Creation Group and had his works exhibited in the Salon of the New Realities and the Diana Castelucho Gallery. His production during this period included mostly colored geometric compositions. When Adolf Hitler came

to power in neighboring Germany in 1933, Juan feared that there would be another war in Europe so he left Paris to return to Buenos Aires.

After he reopened his art studio in the capital city, his production may be characterized principally by experimentation in a variety of modernist styles. Also, he met Eugenia Crenovich (1905-1990) who was another painter. They wed in 1937 and formed a significant artistic pair in Argentina. The couple had no children. After the wedding, Juan began to develop a new and personal nonfigurative style which he called Futucubism which was a blend of Futurism and Cubism. As a result of this development, he was regularly invited to exhibit his latest works at the Biennale in Venice.

*In 1977, Del Prete donated 107 paintings to the Vasto Art Museum where they may still be seen.*

On April 11, 1977, he embarked on the Italian ship Marconi with 107 of his paintings bound for the port of Vasto so that he could donate them to the Vasto Art Museum where they may still be seen. After his return to Buenos Aires, he continued to work for another ten years until he died there on February 14, 1987, at the age of 89.

#### Sources, both accessed September 26, 2020:

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juan\\_Del\\_Prete](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juan_Del_Prete)

<https://vastesiworld.org/listing/del-pretejuan>

## Filandro Lattanzio



Filandro Lattanzio was born in Vasto on November 21, 1908. When he was only ten years old, his father sent him after school to go to work with a blacksmith who taught Filandro the rudiments of design. However, health problems did not permit him to do heavy work, so he stopped the apprenticeship when he turned 14 and was legally allowed to quit school. A local poet, Romualdo Pantini, took an interest in the teenager and set him on a long and fruitful artistic path. For example, Pantini once took

young Filandro on a long walk to the nearby community of Monteodorisio to see some works by the painter, Francesco Paolo Michetti, in the house of the wealthy Suriani family.

Basically self-taught, Filandro completed his first works in a figurative style in the early 1920s. In 1925 at the age of 16, he sold his first painting entitled "The Cliff of Scaramuzza" to the Marchesa Pignatelli of Naples. In 1928 at the age of 19, he was drafted into the Italian Army. His military service in Florence, where he was stationed, allowed him to become

.....  
continued on 8



# VASTO: *Fount of Artistic Talent*

▼ *Continued from page 7*

acquainted with the great Renaissance painters, as well as with the local painters of the Macchiaioli School. After he was discharged from the army in 1930, he returned to Vasto where he took part in various exhibitions and sold more works to tourists to earn a living.

In 1935, he moved to Rome where he familiarized himself with the innovations of the Roman School while he continued to exhibit in national shows.

In 1940, he was recalled into service by the Italian Army and was sent to France. When Italy switched sides from the Axis Powers to the Allies in September 1943, the Nazis

took the men of his unit as prisoners of war, first to Belgium, then to Holland, and finally to Germany, where the unit was freed in May, 1945.

At first, Lattanzio returned to his family home in Vasto. However, in 1948, he moved to Chambéry in the province of Savoy in France. There the 39-year old painter met and married Helene Castex. The couple had no children. Their frequent visits to Paris led him to undertake what he called his "Cubist" adventure which, in turn, led him to adopt an artistic, impressionistic style. During his 20 years of living in France, he constantly sold paintings shown in national exhibitions. In 1968 at the age of 59, Lattanzio decided to return permanently to his beloved home town of Vasto where he opened a studio in Via Adriatica and began a new expressive period painting local landscapes with a nostalgic mood. He also dedicated himself to religious themes. Two of his most important religious works are "The Madonna of the Seven Sorrows" and "Saint Anna".

Lattanzio died in Vasto on January 13, 1986, at the age of 77. Two years later, his widow donated to the Vasto City Art Museum 20 of his unsold paintings, including his self-portrait, shown here from 1933, when he was 24 years old.

**Sources**, both accessed September 26, 2020:

[www.vastogallery.blogspot.com/2017/04/filandro-lattanzio](http://www.vastogallery.blogspot.com/2017/04/filandro-lattanzio)

[www.vastesiworld.org/listing/lattanziofilandro](http://www.vastesiworld.org/listing/lattanziofilandro)

## Pietro di Donato



Pietro di Donato was born on April 3, 1911, in West Hoboken (now Union City), New Jersey. He was the eldest of eight children born to his parents, Geremio and Annunziata Cinquina di Donato, who had emigrated from Vasto. Geremio worked as a brick layer. On March 30, 1923, four days before Pietro's 12th birthday, Geremio was killed when the wall of a building where he was working collapsed on him. After his father's

funeral, Pietro quit the seventh grade to join a building trade union in order to help support his family. He kept his union membership his entire life. When his mother died a few years later, Pietro became fully responsible for his seven siblings.

During a strike, Pietro wandered into a library and discovered the works of the Italo-French novelist, Emile Zola, who inspired him to write about his own experiences in the Italian immigrant community. He then started to take evening classes in construction and engineering at the local city college. After Pietro earned promotions and after some of his younger siblings also began to work, the eight children were able to move to Northport on Long Island.

After the Italian immigrants Sacco and Vanzetti were executed in Massachusetts in 1927, Pietro was motivated to join the Young Communist League and began writing in

his spare time. In March 1937, Esquire magazine published Pietro's blue-collar, proletarian, short story "Christ in Concrete" about Italian-American construction workers during the Great Depression. Pietro expanded the short story into a full-length novel which landed on best-seller lists in 1939 and was chosen for the Book of the Month Club.

When Italy and Germany declared war on the United States in December 1941, Pietro registered as a conscientious objector and was sent to work as a forester in a Quaker camp in Cooperstown, New York. There he met Helen Dean whom he married in 1943, in a ceremony performed by New York City Mayor Fiorello La Guardia. After the war ended, the couple moved to the town of Setauket on Long Island where they had two sons, Peter Jr. and Richard. In 1949, Pietro's novel was adapted into the film "Give Us This Day" which won an award at the Venice Film Festival later that year.

In 1958, Pietro published his second novel "This Woman" which was a sequel to "Christ in Concrete." In 1960, he published his third novel "Three Circles of Light" which was a prequel to "Christ in Concrete." Later that same year, he published a biography "Immigrant Saint: The Life of Mother Cabrini" which became a selection of the Catholic Book Club and the Maryknoll Book Club. Two years later, he published another biography "The Penitent" about the killer of 12-year-old Maria Goretti. Pietro's next book-length work was "Naked Author" which was a collection of short stories that appeared in 1970. His last published article was "Christ in Plastic" which was printed in Penthouse magazine in 1978 about the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro, leader of the Christian Democratic Party in Italy. It won an award from the Overseas Press Club. Pietro died of bone cancer on January 19, 1992, at the age of 80 in Stony Brook on Long Island. His last unpublished novel "The American Gospels" appeared posthumously in 2000.

**Sources:**

Contemporary Authors, volume 101 at pages 141 and 142 (1981).

Voce Italiana, at page 3 (July 2011).

<https://vastesiworld.org/listing/1911>, accessed September 25, 2020.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pietro\\_di\\_Donato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pietro_di_Donato), accessed September 30, 2020. ■



# PHOTOGRAPHER TONY VACCARO REMINISCES ABOUT HIS AMAZING LIFE

▼ *Continued from page 1*

Tony told us about his fascinating life. He was born in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, but when he was a young boy, his family pulled up stakes and went back to Italy — specifically, the town of Bonefro, in Molise. With the outbreak of World War II, and to avoid being drafted into Mussolini's army, Tony came back to America but within a few months, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and fought in Normandy and elsewhere in Europe (he was later awarded the French Legion of Honor). After the war, Tony remained in Germany for a time, married a model in Finland and began working professionally as a photographer. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Tony shared many wonderful stories with us. Among them was the one about Sophia Loren. She had an appointment to come to Tony's penthouse in Manhattan for a photography session, so Tony said he was taking a shower and preparing for her to come at the appointed hour. When he heard a knock at his door half an hour before the appointed time, he assumed it was the New York Times newspaper boy, so he got out of the shower, wrapped a towel

around himself, and answered the door. And there was Sophia, who exclaimed, "Tony! *Sempre pronto!!*" The picture he took, of a young Sophia lounging on a divan in a white gown with white fur trim, is truly beautiful.

Another of Tony's famous photographs is the one he took of Enzo Ferrari. On the appointed day, he arrived at Ferrari's home to take his photograph, not knowing that the man's only son had been killed in an accident just an hour before. Instead of sending him away, Enzo Ferrari allowed him to take his picture, and the remarkable photo he took is haunting.

Tony once went to photograph Pablo Picasso, who ended up inviting Tony to stay for a while. So he ended spending 51 days with the



▲ *Marimekko Logs, Helsinki Finland 1963* by Tony Vaccaro, Tony Vaccaro Studio



◀ *Kiss of Liberation. St. Briac Sur Mer, France 1944* by Tony Vaccaro, Tony Vaccaro Studio

world-famous artist, who apparently was lonely after his wife's death and liked Tony's company.

During his early career, Tony was in Paris and lacked the money to leave a tip in a restaurant. He got take-out and sat on a bench near Notre Dame Cathedral where he struck up a conversation with Marcel Marceau, the famous French actor and mime artist. They became close friends. Tony called Marceau "one of the finest human beings" he ever met. A museum named after Tony was inaugurated in Bonefro in 2014. Tony says he plans to return to the town to celebrate his 100th birthday. He sang a song for us about his town, which he loves and where he said he may even retire someday.

During Tony's remarkable life, just a few months ago, at the age of 97 years young, he

survived COVID-19 (he says his secret to a long life is red wine, chocolate and eggs). And, keeping up with the times, Tony has many followers on Instagram.

If you are interested in watching the movie about Tony's life, it's called "Underfire: The Untold Story of Pfc. Tony Vaccaro." It tells the story of how, during World War II, Tony played two risky roles, serving as a combat infantryman on the front lines, as well as a photographer who shot 8,000 photographs. Literally, he had a gun in one hand and a camera in the other.

Since Tony's talk was so popular with our members, we arranged a chance to participate in an event marking Tony's exhibition opening just prior to his 98th birthday. The November 20 event was hosted by Tony's Santa Fe gallery reps, Sid and Michelle Monroe. Their Monroe Gallery website [monroegallery.com](http://monroegallery.com), is a wonderful online showcase of Tony's famous photographs.

We would like to thank AMHS Board Member Andrea Bolzano for making the connection with Tony. Andrea knows one of Tony's cousins, Antoinette Silvestri-Kellaher, who is from Bonefro and is related to him. We were very pleased to have some of Tony's friends and relatives from as far away as Australia join us for this wonderful event. We would also like to thank Peter Bell for his expertise in hosting the Zoom event.

The following are excerpts of Antoinette's remarks on her cousin Tony:

"I had heard stories and seen pictures that Tony had taken in Bonefro of all walks of life. He had some of my mother, relatives, and cousins. But where were my pictures?

"Once having my own children and losing my parents, I resumed my search for MY photographs leading me right back to Tony.... I finally realized that the readings I was doing about Tony Vaccaro were really what I needed to expand my feelings of being part of the Bonefro community that will always remain dear to my very being. *È stata una lunga strada, maestro. Finalmente saremo insieme!*" ■



# SIAMO UNA FAMIGLIA

## Maria D'Andrea-Yothers Joins CISC Board of Directors

Our AMHS Past President Maria D'Andrea-Yothers is the newest member of the board of directors of the Casa Italiana Sociocultural Center, Inc. (CISC). She will be joining a talented group of AMHS members already on the board — Francesco Isgrò (president and CEO), Joe Lupo (emeritus), Jim Cocco (treasurer), Liz DiGregorio, Willy Meaux and Tom Sweeney. AMHS Vice President Nancy DeSanti is the CISC's executive administrative assistant.

In addition, AMHS member Roberto Severino (chairman emeritus of Georgetown University's Department of Italian Studies) is on the board of directors of the Casa Italiana Language School (CILS), of which Joe Lupo was formerly the director.

*Maria joins others AMHS members who contribute their talents and energy to the Casa Italiana Sociocultural Center.*

Lourdes Tinajero) have been responsible for the Marconi Project of oral histories of members of our Italian-American and Italian community in the Washington, D.C. area. Eventually these histories will be available in the new museum. Among those interviewed for the project are AMHS Past Presidents Omero Sabatini, Lucio D'Andrea and Ennio DiTullio.

Congratulations to Maria, and a big thank you to all of our hard-working members who contribute so much to our wider community. ■

## Anna Arista Sabatini Dies in Italy

By Nancy DeSanti

AMHS Past President Omero Sabatini has informed us of the sad news regarding the passing of a close family member in Italy.

He said: "Anna Arista Sabatini, sister-in-law of Past President Omero Sabatini, died at L'Aquila on November 30. She held a law degree, but after she married chose to devote all her time to her family and charity work. She was predeceased by her husband Bruno, and is survived in Italy by her daughter Beatrice, her son-in-law, and three grandchildren. May God receive her in His vast Paradise."

Anna's husband Bruno, Omero's older (and only) brother, passed away in Italy in January 2020 at the age of 92. He was a well-known medical doctor and poet. Bruno was born in Secinaro in the province of L'Aquila in Abruzzo. He passed away in the San Salvatore hospital in L'Aquila where he was an esteemed doctor for many years until his retirement in 1993.

The AMHS extends our deepest condolences to the Sabatini family. ■



Palmer Demeo, Sr.

## Condolences to The Demeo Family

By Maria D'Andrea-Yothers

The Society wishes to extend its condolences to the family of AMHS member Palmer Demeo Sr., who passed away on September 1, 2020 as a result of heart disease complications. Palmer's parents were from Castellonoro and Penitro in Formia, Italy. He enjoyed many fun large Italian gatherings with his family here in the United States as well as in Canada. Palmer, his wife Emilia and his children (Palmer Demeo Jr., Marisa Demeo, and Priscilla Demeo) were frequent participants of the Society's general membership meetings and the Ferragosto picnic.

*Palmer and his family were frequent participants in AMHS events.*

Even with the pandemic, the family was able to celebrate a beautiful Mass of Christian Burial at Holy Family Catholic Church in Dale City and a religious and Army military service at the burial site. ■



## AMHS Membership

By Lynn Sorbara, 2nd Vice President, Membership

As of December 15, 2020, the Society has 241 members. We would like to remind you that the option to renew your membership online has been simplified. We now have a new drop-down box under Membership, on the AMHS website "Renew Your Membership", at [www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org/renew-your-membership/#myaccount](http://www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org/renew-your-membership/#myaccount) From here, you enter your email address and password. If you've forgotten your password, you can request that it be emailed to you). Your membership profile will populate, and you are given the option to renew, upgrade, or update your billing. We would also like to remind you that membership renewals are automatically sent via email. We appreciate your support of AMHS events and activities. Should you have any questions regarding membership, please email me directly at: [drlynnrose@yahoo.com](mailto:drlynnrose@yahoo.com).

### NEW MEMBERS

*A warm welcome* is extended to: Alexa Conti, Abby Cuvillo, David Andrew DeAngelis & Karen DiGiovanni DeAngelis, Anita E. DiPietro, Peter DiGiovanni, Rev. Frank Donio, Giancarlo Iannotta, Benjamin O'Hara, Anthony Vincent Scillia, and Gino Silvestri.

#### BIRTHDAYS

##### Compleanni a Gennaio

Jeffrey Petrino and Carmela Ventresca, January 2; John Iademarco, January 5; Americo Allegrino, January 8; Abraham Avidor, January 12; Carla DiBlasio, January 17; Monica Palenski Reed, January 18; Jacqueline D'Ermes, January 19; Lena Lupica, January 22; Bess DiTullio and Karen Kiesner, January 24; Nonna Noto, January 26; Angela Puglisi, January 28; and Mariadina Di Gennaro, January 30.

##### Compleanni a Febbraio

Roberto DiTullio and Dora Marinucci, February 2; Rose Silvestri Canahl, February 5; Robert Baldassari, February 7; Patricia Badia-Johnson and Carmen Ciccione, February 8; Louis Sacchetti, February 9; Stephan Carrier and Mark Lino, February 10; Joseph Breda, February 12; Angela Catigano, February 13; Julie Finigan-Dal Forno and Ashland Robertson, February 14; William Sansalone, February 16; William Anthony Meaux, February 17; Elisa DiClemente and Andrea Balzano, February 18; Lana Nardella, February 19; Francesco Isgro and Tom Sweeney, February 21; Gino Marinucci, February 22; Jana Monaco and Diana DelGrosso, February 23; Lourdes Tinajero, February 25; and Michele LaVerghetta and Caridad de la Vega, February 27.

#### ANNIVERSARIES

##### Anniversari a Gennaio

None.

##### Anniversari a Febbraio

Sam & Maria (D'Andrea) Yothers, February 11; Rocco & Yoni Caniglia, February 14; and Michael & Dena DeBonis, February 15.

#### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Category	# of Persons
Associate (Couple)	4 x 2 = 8
Associate (Individual)	34
General (Couple)	52 x 2 = 104
General (Individual)	82
Honorary	7
Scholarship	2
Student	6

Total Membership: 243

### Give the Gift of MEMBERSHIP!

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

## THIS IS YOUR NOTIZIARIO

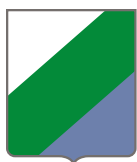
By Carmine James Spellane, Editor

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

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

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

The AMHS is making new efforts to engage our current members and add more to our ranks. A vibrant Notiziario is part of that. As our society approaches its 21st anniversary, let's all help ensure a bright future for our mission to celebrate "all things Italian." ■



# CASOLI

PROVINCE OF CHIETI, REGION OF ABRUZZO

By Nancy DeSanti

The picturesque small town of Casoli, in the province of Chieti, is situated on a foothill of the Maiella mountain, at the base of which runs the Aventino River, a tributary of the Sangro. The town has approximately 5,901 inhabitants, known as Casolani.

In October 2020, Casoli was one of the 6 towns added to the list of “*Borghi più belli d’Italia*.”

Casoli is located in the valley of the Aventino River, on top of a hill dominated by a medieval castle. Its territory is part of the Nature Reserve of Lake Serranella, which is fairly large (66 square kilometers) and includes many small hamlets. This reserve is one of the last wetlands of Abruzzo and extends between the Adriatic coast and the Maiella massif.

The origin of town goes back to the year 1000 A.D., but settlements have been recorded from the 4th century B.C. Among its feudal lords were the Orsini, Colonna, Crispiano and d’Aquino families.

It was the ancient settlement of Cluviae, a city of the Caraceni tribe, that was the territory most probably conquered by Lombards in the 6th century. The medieval name “castri de Casule” was first recorded in 878 A.D. in a manuscript conserved in the Abbey of Monte Cassino.

In the 14th century, the town was controlled by the powerful Orsini family, who fortified the Norman castle, Castello Masciantonio. Casoli later became known as the place where the Abruzzese poet Gabriele d’Annunzio once found refuge.

Following Italy’s entry into World War II, an internment camp was set up in Casoli by the fascist government to imprison foreigners and anti-fascists. The camp operated from July 1940 to September 1943. The Luogo della Memoria “Campo di concentramento di Casoli” was visit-



The Castello Ducale

ed by Italian President Sergio Mattarella.

Also during the war, the Castello Ducale served as an Allied base to better manage the operations on the mountainside which involved British troops and the famous Italian Resistance unit, the Majella Brigade.

The original 14th century church and castle dominate the town center, perched on the top of the hill. During succeeding centuries, the town developed downhill until the 1950s. The more modern development continues at the foot of the hill, including a new shopping center. The original town on the hilltop still thrives and has become an idyllic stop-off point for boutique shopping and patisseries, as well as some traditional festivals. The height of the town, with the Maiella mountains as a backdrop, makes for amazing views, even as far as the Costa dei Trabocchi. A short drive from the town is the lake of Casoli, or Lago Sant Angelo — great for fishing, walks and picnics. ■

## What to See

- Castello Masciantonio — the Norman castle with a tower and fortified ducal palace, which also has a museum. The room that housed Gabriele d’Annunzio is of particular interest for a poem (dithyramb) written in thanks by d’Annunzio on the wall.
- Church of Santa Maria Maggiore — one of the Orsini chapels from the 14th century which in the 17th century became an actual church.
- The church of Santa Reparata, with an altar and a triptych of 1506.

## Important Dates

- **October 8** — Feast of Santa Reparata, the patron saint
- **December 7** — Bonfires “Fuochi della Concezione”

## Sources:

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

[www.italyheritage.com/regions/abruzzo/chieti/casoli.htm](https://www.italyheritage.com/regions/abruzzo/chieti/casoli.htm)

[abruzzoholidayinformation.com/casoli.html](https://abruzzoholidayinformation.com/casoli.html)

[europe remembers.com/destination/casoli-concentration-camp](https://europe remembers.com/destination/casoli-concentration-camp)

[www.campocasoli.org](https://www.campocasoli.org)

[borghipiubelliditalia.it/2020/10/26/6-nuovi-borghi-entrano-nellassociazione-ottobre-2020-2](https://borghipiubelliditalia.it/2020/10/26/6-nuovi-borghi-entrano-nellassociazione-ottobre-2020-2)



## CASOLI

PROVINCIA DI CHIETI, REGIONE ABRUZZO

Translated by Ennio DiTullio

I pittoresco paesino di Casoli, in provincia di Chieti, è situato ai piedi del monte Maiella, alla base del quale scorre il fiume Aventino, affluente del Sangro. Il comune conta circa 5.901 abitanti, noti come Casolani.

Nell'ottobre 2020 Casoli è stato uno dei 6 comuni aggiunti alla lista dei "Borghi più belli d'Italia".

Casoli si trova nella valle del fiume Aventino, sulla sommità di una collina dominata da un castello medievale. Il suo territorio fa parte della Riserva Naturale del Lago di Serranella, che è abbastanza grande (66 chilometri quadrati) e comprende molte piccole frazioni. Questa riserva è una delle ultime zone umide d'Abruzzo e si estende tra la costa adriatica e il massiccio della Maiella.

L'origine del paese risale all'anno 1000 d.C., ma si hanno insediamenti a partire dal IV secolo a.C. Tra i suoi feudatari c'erano le famiglie Orsini, Colonna, Crispino e d'Aquino. Era l'antico insediamento di Cluviae, città della tribù dei Caraceni, che fu il territorio più probabilmente conquistato dai Longobardi nel VI secolo. Il nome medievale "castri de Casule" è stato registrato per la prima volta nell'878 d.C. in un manoscritto conservato presso l'Abbazia di Monte Cassino.

Nel XIV secolo il paese fu controllato dalla potente famiglia Orsini, che fortificò il castello normanno, Castello Masciantonio. Casoli divenne in seguito noto come il luogo dove un tempo trovò rifugio il poeta abruzzese Gabriele d'Annunzio.

Dopo l'entrata dell'Italia nella seconda guerra mondiale, a Casoli fu allestito un campo di internamento dal governo fascista per imprigionare stranieri e antifascisti. Il campo operò dal luglio 1940 al settembre 1943. Il Luogo della Memoria "Campo di concentramento di Casoli" fu visitato dal Presidente italiano Sergio Mattarella.

Anche durante la guerra il Castello Ducale servì da base alleata per gestire al meglio le operazioni in montagna che coinvolgevano le truppe britanniche e la celebre unità della Resistenza italiana, la Brigata Majella.

La chiesa e il castello originali del XIV secolo dominano il centro della città, arroccati sulla cima della collina. Nei secoli successivi, la città si sviluppò in discesa fino agli anni '50. Lo sviluppo più moderno continua ai piedi della collina, compreso un nuovo centro commerciale. La città originaria sulla collina prospera ancora ed è diventata un idilliaco punto di sosta per boutique e pasticcerie, oltre ad alcune feste tradizionali. L'altezza del paese, con le montagne della Maiella a fare da sfondo, regala panorami sorprendenti, anche fino alla Costa dei Trabocchi. A breve distanza dalla città si trova il lago di Casoli, o Lago Sant'Angelo, ottimo per la pesca, le passeggiate e i picnic. ■

## Attrazioni del luogo:

- Castello Masciantonio — il castello normanno con torre e palazzo ducale fortificato, che ospita anche un museo. Di particolare interesse la sala che ospitò Gabriele d'Annunzio per una poesia (ditirambo) scritta sulla parete in ringraziamento da d'Annunzio.
- Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore — una delle cappelle Orsini del XIV secolo che nel XVII secolo divenne una vera e propria chiesa.
- La chiesa di Santa Reparata, con un altare e un trittico del 1506.

## Date da ricordare:

- **8 ottobre** — Festa di Santa Reparata, patrona
- **7 dicembre** — Falò "Fuochi della Concezione"

## The AMHS Shop

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

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

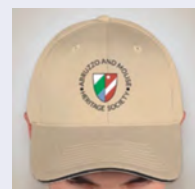
**Buon Appetito Chef's Apron** **\$20.00**

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

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

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

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



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

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

We offer merchandise through these outlets:

- At bi-monthly AMHS general society meetings;
- Using the order form on the AMHS Shop website (pay by check).

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



# SANTA MARIA DEL MOLISE

PROVINCE OF ISERNIA, REGION OF MOLISE

By Nancy DeSanti

The beautiful small town of Santa Maria del Molise is located at the foot of the Matese mountains in the southern Apennines and is known for its beautiful waterfalls (cascate). It has approximately 653 inhabitants.

This year, as part of its “ti amo Italia” campaign, the Ferrero brand Nutella featured on its jars (vasetti) a scene of each of the 20 regions of Italy, and for Molise, it selected Cascade di Santa Maria del Molise. (For Abruzzo, it picked Gran Sasso).

The municipality consists of two different centers: Santa Maria, mostly covered with vineyards, and originally a Samnite and later a Roman settlement; and Sant’Angelo in Grotte, which rose in the Middle Ages on a mountain surrounded by forests and dependent for its economy on pastures and livestock.

Most likely the Samnites and Romans settled in the more fertile plain. Later on, when the danger of invasions increased, the inhabitants moved to a higher position on the hill of Sant’Angelo in Grotte. In the 12th century, it was a fiefdom of the Santangelo family; it then passed to the Caldora and Di Sangro families. In the 20th century, the municipality was moved from Sant’Angelo to Santa Maria, down in the plain.

One of the interesting sights is the Church of



Two panoramic views of Santa Maria del Molise.

San Pietro in Vincoli. Dating from the second half of the 14th century, its walls depict the seven “Opere di Misericordia” (Works of Mercy): “Dar da mangiare agli affamati” (to feed the hungry), il “Dar da bere agli assetati” (to give drink to the thirsty), il “Vestire gli ignudi” (to clothe the naked), “Ospitare i pellegrini” (to give shelter to travelers), “Visitare gli infermi” (to visit the sick), “Visitare i carcerati” (to visit the imprisoned) and finally, “Seppellire i morti” (to bury the dead). ■



One of the small canals in the town.

## What to See

- Waterfalls (cascate)
- The Parish Church of San Pietro in Vincoli, almost completely covered in frescoes dating back to the 14th century, representing “Works of Mercy.” Also the beautiful paintings in the crypt show a view of the city of Bethlehem.

## Important Dates

- **May 1** — Feast of Santa Maria, San Filippo and San Giacomo, with a fair of goods and livestock and fireworks afterwards



# SANTA MARIA DEL MOLISE

PROVINCIA DI ISERNIA, REGIONE MOLISE

Translated by Ennio DiTullio

**L**a bellissima cittadina di Santa Maria del Molise si trova ai piedi dei monti del Matese nell'Appennino meridionale, ed è nota per le sue bellissime cascate. Ha circa 563 abitanti.

Quest'anno, nell'ambito della sua campagna "ti amo Italia", il marchio Ferrero Nutella ha presentato sui suoi vasetti una scena di ognuna delle 20 regioni d'Italia e per il Molise ha selezionato le Cascate di Santa Maria del Molise. (Per l'Abruzzo, ha scelto Gran Sasso).

Il comune è costituito da due diversi centri: Santa Maria, in gran parte ricoperta di vigneti, originariamente un insediamento sannitico e poi romano; e Sant'Angelo in Grotte, che sorgeva nel Medioevo, su un monte, circondato da boschi e dipendente per la sua economia da pascoli e bestiame.

Molto probabilmente i Sanniti e i Romani si stabilirono nella pianura più fertile. Successivamente, quando aumentò il pericolo di invasioni, gli abitanti si trasferirono in una posizione più alta sul colle di Sant'Angelo in Grotte. Nel XII secolo feudo della famiglia Santangelo, passò poi alle famiglie Caldora e Di Sangro. Nel XX secolo il comune fu trasferito da Sant'Angelo a Santa Maria, in pianura.

Uno dei luoghi interessanti è la Chiesa di San Pietro in Vincoli. Risalente alla seconda metà del XIV secolo. Le sue pareti raffigurano le sette "Opere di Misericordia": "Dar da mangiare agli affamati," il "Dar da bere agli assetati," il "Vestire gli ignudi," "Ospitare i pellegrini," "Visitare gli infermi," "Visitare i carcerati" e infine, "Seppellire i morti." ■



Cascate di Santa Maria del Molise su un vasetto di Nutella.

## Attrazioni del luogo:

- Cascate
- La Chiesa Parrocchiale di San Pietro in Vincoli, quasi completamente ricoperta da affreschi del XIV secolo, raffiguranti "Opere di Misericordia". Anche i bellissimi dipinti nella cripta mostrano una veduta della città di Betlemme.

## Date da ricordare:

- **1 maggio** — Festa di Santa Maria, San Filippo e San Giacomo, con successiva fiera delle merci e del bestiame e fuochi d'artificio

## Sources:

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## AMHS NOTIZIARIO

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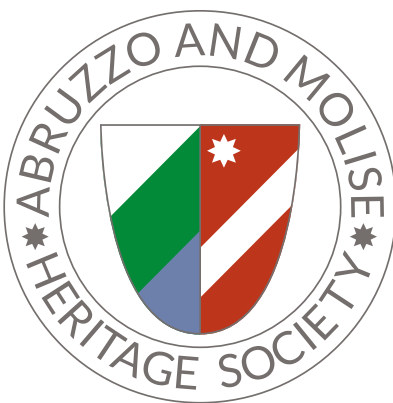
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# 2021 CALENDAR *of* EVENTS

As we went to press, there is still no definite schedule for Casa Italiana to reopen, nor is it yet safe to hold gatherings in restaurants. The AMHS will be bringing you more virtual meetings over the next few months. Details will be forthcoming, so please check your email for details. We will provide adequate notice of events and send all necessary links.



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