



AMHS

# NOTIZIARIO

CELEBRATING ITALIAN CULTURE & COMMUNITY SINCE 2000

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

July/August 2021



*This was the happy scene at our last Ferragosto Picnic in August 2019.*

## WE'RE BACK!

*Join AMHS and CISC for the Ferragosto Picnic on August 15*

**By Maria D'Andrea-Yothers, Immediate Past President**

**A**fter more than a year, we are back for our first in-person event since the pandemic disrupted our lives in 2020. Please join AMHS for the return of our Ferragosto picnic, to be held at Ben Brenman Park, Alexandria, Va., from 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 15. This year, we are pleased to have the Casa Italiana Sociocultural Center (CISC) as a co-sponsor for this event.

The event is free and open to all, rain or shine. We have reserved a covered pavilion with 10 picnic tables and one charcoal grill. Within walking distance are a playground and enclosed restrooms. There is also ample parking.

AMHS and CISC will provide beverages (soft drinks, water, wine, and beer which, according to our ABC license, can only be drunk from kegs in plastic cups). We only ask members, friends, family to bring their own food, paper products and utensils. You may also want to bring lawn chairs and a personal portable grill, so long as it is charcoal only. We will be able to play some music on a “boombox,” so bring your favorite Italian songs. Bring your bocce sets too; while there is no “official” bocce court, we can make our own. We will have AMHS merchandise for sale (t-shirts, baseball caps, aprons, tote bags), and promotional materials about the CISC. We hope you will bring your family and friends to join the afternoon of fun and friendship. For additional details, please see the flyer on page 15. ■

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## AMHS NOTIZIARIO

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*Color copies printed courtesy of 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 15th 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.

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

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear members and friends:

Happy summer! The warm weather and little-by-little return to normal life are a welcome respite as we move into summertime. Our former, longtime routines somehow now feel strange, but I think that we'll all make the adjustment. It's great to embrace family and friends again and to be able to plan a summer get-away without taking undue risks or being irresponsible.

During the spring, the AMHS went about its business as usual. In early May, the AMHS Scholarship Committee announced the winners of its 2021-2022 academic year scholarships. Recall that every year the AMHS awards a \$4000 scholarship to two outstanding students who have demonstrated both academic excellence and an interest in Italian language and culture. This year's winners are Naomi Lebowitz and Cora Williams. The students, who both recently graduated from Annapolis High School, had sterling academic credentials and an abiding interest in all things Italian. Ms. Lebowitz graduated second in her class and will study neuropsychology and art history at Columbia University's Barnard College. She started her study of Italian in middle school and continued throughout her high school career, excelling each step along the way. Ms. Williams graduated in the top 5 percent of her class and plans to study social work at Belmont University. She also began studying Italian in middle school and continued refining her considerable skills all through her high school years. Both young women are very deserving and it will be exciting to have the chance to meet them in person in 2022.

As most of you know, Italy celebrates the founding of its republic on June 2. This year again I had the privilege of representing our Society at the reception held at the residence of Italian Ambassador to the U.S. Armando Varricchio and his wife on the evening of the 2nd. The Society's Representative to the Greater Washington D.C. Observatory of the Italian language, Maria LaVerghetta, also attended as my guest. The celebration marked the end of the Ambassador's five-year tenure as Italy's chief diplomat to the U.S., as both he and his wife flew back to Italy on the day following the reception. The Ambassador spoke eloquently of his time in Washington, the accomplishments of the Embassy during that period, and the deep feelings that Americans have for Italy and that Italians reciprocate for the U.S.

By the time you read this message, you will have had the chance to take part in the latest virtual cultural event sponsored by our Society. I refer to the June 12th discussion of the film documentary "Funke", which recounts the career and success of professional chef and pasta maker Evan Funke. If you're counting, this was the seventh film event that we have sponsored over the past year, sandwiched around conversations with world-famous photographer Tony Vaccaro and Abruzzese writer Michele Antonelli. The June 12th event featured AMHS's own Kirsten Keppel, who used her background in film, writing and teaching to interview the evening's special guest: the producer and director of the Funke documentary Gab Taraboulsy. Both Kirsten and Gab were excellent and I thank them for sharing their knowledge and giving their time. If you like good films and/or good pasta, I know that you enjoyed the presentation and that you learned quite a few things from it as well. Many thanks also go to Lourdes Tinajero, our Program committee member who was the inspiration behind the event, and to Peter Bell, who organized and hosted the online session.

Stay tuned for forthcoming details regarding our upcoming Ferragosto picnic. It will be our first in-person event in over a year, and will take place on August 15th from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Park Pavilion (Ben Brenman) of the City of Alexandria. Our past celebrations of the Italian holiday have been a lot of fun, so please mark your calendars and keep an eye out for additional information.

Have a great summer!

Regards,  
Ray LaVerghetta

# MAXXI Launches Contemporary Art Museum in L'Aquila

By Nancy DeSanti

**M**AXXI L'Aquila, the long-awaited contemporary art museum in the region of Abruzzo's capital, was inaugurated by Italy's Culture Minister Dario Franceschini on May 28, 2021. The museum officially opened its doors on June 3. This new branch of Rome's national contemporary art museum is located in the restored 18th century Palazzo Ardinghelli.

In a dispatch from L'Aquila, our AMHS contact Goffredo Palmerini reported that the inauguration of the museum was also attended by Pierluigi Biondi, Mayor of L'Aquila; Marco Marsilio, President of the Abruzzo region; Giovanna Melandri, President of the MAXXI Foundation; Bartolomeo Pietromarchi, Director of MAXXI L'Aquila; and Sergey Razov, Ambassador to Italy of the Russian Federation.

The museum is under the management of Rome's Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI secolo. Palazzo Ardinghelli underwent extensive restoration, financed with the support of Russia, after L'Aquila's devastating earthquake in April 2009.

The project, stalled by the Covid-19 pandemic, has seen the complete renovation of the 18th-century Baroque building which was formerly the home of Culture Ministry offices.

MAXXI President Melandri has described the reopening of Palazzo Ardinghelli as symbolic of a "double rebirth," after the devastation of the earthquake and the suspension of time caused by the coronavirus lockdown. The project is described by MAXXI as offering the community "a new collective place, a platform of cultural creativity, open, shared, at the service of the relaunch of the city."

The opening exhibition, entitled *Punto di Equilibrio, Pensiero spazio luce da Toyo Ito a Ettore Spalletti*, will include eight new site-specific installations among 60 works from the MAXXI Collection.

The inauguration was live-streamed on the museum's social media channels, and Italian state broadcaster RAI 5 dedicated an evening program to the new museum.

In the early hours of April 6, 2009, a 6.3-magnitude earthquake struck L'Aquila and the surrounding area, killing 309 people, leaving 70,000 homeless and devastating more than 50



The long awaited MAXXI L'Aquila opened its doors on June 3, 2021. © Andrea Jemolo

villages in the Abruzzo region. AMHS members may recall that our Society raised over \$17,000 in monetary contributions to help the victims.

Palazzo Ardinghelli, badly damaged during the earthquake, was restored with a €7.2 million donation from the Russian government, agreed to during the G8 summit hosted in L'Aquila by Italy's then-Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in 2009. The idea to convert the palace into a contemporary art museum was backed by Franceschini, who in 2015 announced the Culture Ministry's collaboration with MAXXI and an annual government grant of €2 million.

If you would like to check out the types of events the museum is planning, or take a look at some

of the art works, go to [maxxi.archeoares.it](http://maxxi.archeoares.it). The events planned for this summer sound very interesting, including "We are the Thousand — Incredibile Storia di Rockin' 1000," "Disco Ruin — 40 anni di club culture italiana," and "Fellini — Io sono un clown."

MAXXI L'Aquila hopes to kickstart a cultural revival in the city. Partnerships are already in place with various institutions in the city such as the Gran Sasso Science Institute, the University of L'Aquila, the Academy of Fine Arts and the National Museum of Abruzzo. The public programs will include events with artists, talks, book launches and training courses. Admission for residents of L'Aquila and the wider Abruzzo region will be free for one year. ■

# Director Discusses His Documentary on Famous American Pasta Chef

By Nancy DeSanti, 1st Vice President — Programs

When AMHS member Lourdes Tinajero went to a film festival a couple years ago, walked into a theater and saw on the screen a big, bearded, bald-headed guy with tattoos standing in front of a gun case and heard the ominous sound effects, she thought she had walked into the wrong theater. It turns out she was in exactly the right place to see a film about a very unusual and talented pasta chef named Evan Funke, an American *sfogigno* with an outsized personality.

As a member of our program committee, Lourdes thought this was just the right film to discuss during an AMHS virtual program, so she reached out to the producer/director of that documentary “*Funke*,” Gab Taraboulsy, whom she had met at that May 2019 Washington International Film Festival.

Gab is definitely an *appassionato* of food, film and storytelling of edible arts. He said his interest in pasta no doubt goes back to his mother and grandmother, who thought pasta was the answer to everything and who took him to Italy several times when he was growing up.

Gab was interviewed from his home in Los Angeles on June 12, 2021, by AMHS member



Evan Funke with his handmade mattarello which he uses to make world-class pasta.

Credit: Eric Wolfinger



“*Funke*” director Gab Taraboulsy poses in his *Cinecitta’* tee shirt with his own hand crafted mattarello.

Courtesy of Gab Taraboulsy

Kirsten Keppel, who is a documentary filmmaker herself. In 2011, Kirsten represented our Society at *Molisani nel mondo* in Campobasso, Molise, 10 minutes from her great-grandparents’ villages of Riccia and Jelsi. Kirsten also gave us a talk in March 2019 on her documentary film, “*Ringraziamenti: The St. Joseph’s Table Tradition*,” which won an award from the National Italian American Foundation.

As Kirsten noted, the beginning of the film grabs your attention. It’s different and extraordinarily effective in capturing the audience’s attention. In the opening scene, you hear Funke’s booming voice and watch as he opens his “pasta case” (not a gun case!).

As Kirsten pointed out in the interview with Gab, there are two major themes beautifully interwoven in this documentary — the skill and beauty of making diverse, authentic pasta and the huge, passionate personality of a chef and pasta advocate.

Gab explained that before making the Funke documentary, he had been working on short-form culinary film-making. But he decided he

wanted to tell a longer story, and he thought Evan Funke’s comeback would be a great start — how in his turbulent early career, after his first restaurant went under, he went from radio silence and falling off the map, to roaring back with the hugely popular restaurant Felix in Venice, California (Esquire Magazine rated it the best new restaurant in America in 2017).

Gab said Evan’s point of view is that pasta is an art form, a craft. He can make 188 out of the 365 documented shapes of pasta. (He says the first kind of pasta he ever made was agnolotti, and he can tell his agnolotti from every other in the world). Their idea was to slow down the magic trick and build in a studio what they imagined a pasta lab to be. He said they spent 4 days filming every imaginable shape of pasta.

Many of the scenes were shot in Italy. One of the wonderful people in the film is an Italian woman named Nunzia Caputo, who surely holds the world record for making *orecchiette*, the little ear-shaped pasta. This remarkable woman is in her sixth decade of making *orecchiette* in Arco Basso, in her Bari Vecchia neighborhood in Puglia. Gab explained that he found Nunzia

through Evan, and he learned that she is a local celebrity with her own YouTube videos (including a great one of her trip to New York). Asked how fast she made the pasta, Gab said “stop watches don’t go that fast!” And he said even more amazing is that Nunzia would watch Italian soap operas and talk on the phone meanwhile. Now that’s impressive!!

Gab commented that the scenes of Nunzia, the Bologna pasta school maestra Alessandra Spisni, and Davide Occhi making a *mattarello* (the long, wooden pasta rolling pin) by hand are all rituals that really bring you into the Italian culture. When Kirsten asked Gab how the making of the film affected him personally, he noted that he has begun taking Italian lessons and that he has a deeper appreciation of the culture of Italy, culinary and otherwise.

*Gab said the 90 days he thought he would spend making the film turned out to be 2 years.*

During the interview, Gab showed off his beautiful hand-made *mattarello* which he got in Bologna, and which he said is now sold out online. He said the day before they planned to shoot scenes at the *mattarello* factory of Davide Occhi, they asked if they could come the following day. Evan brought along his *mattarello*, which Davide confirmed had been hand-made by his father.

While in Bologna, they also shot scenes at *La Vecchia Scuola Bolognese*, founded in 1993 by Alessandra Spisni and billed as the only school in the world that trains *sfoglini* (pasta makers). Evan said Alessandra would tell him to keep rolling the dough until you could hold it up to the window and see the San Luca Church across the way. It’s no wonder she has trained thousands of students from all over the world at her school and is known as the “Queen of Pasta.” Evan named one of the dishes he would later make at his restaurant *ragù bolognese vecchia scuola*.

Gab said the 90 days he thought he would spend

on the film turned out to be 2 years. In making the documentary, the 400 hours they shot had to be cut down to 90 minutes, and Gab says he owes a huge debt of gratitude to his partner Alex Emanuele, who did the editing. To whittle the film down that much, he said Alex “always had a next move, and maybe a move after that.”

So Kirsten asked Gab if he could tell us about a favorite scene that was left on the cutting room floor. He said that would be the scene where Evan goes hunting for truffles with a truffle hunter and his dog. Off they went into the woods after a rain, hunting for the elusive truffles. The dog finally finds one, earning a “bravo, bravo” and a big hug from his owner. A poignant scene is where Evan holds the truffle in his big hand and says, “it’s like finding gold!” Gab played these scenes for us sharing his computer, and it was really one of the highlights of the interview. He noted that the name of the truffle hunting town is Savigno, just outside of Bologna, and there’s a marquee restaurant there called Amerigo Dal 1934 which has gorgeous murals commemorating truffle hunting dogs of generations past.

Back in L.A., as Evan finally gets ready in the film to open his restaurant, Kirsten noted the diversity of the clients — a Japanese man who is first in line on opening day, a hockey player, and an Italian who said the food reminded him of home. Gab noted that Evan has developed a big social media following, so people come to his restaurant from all over the world.

Kirsten noted that Evan Funke’s Felix Trattoria is one of the most popular restaurants in Los Angeles. And her last question was whether he planned to open a restaurant on the East Coast — like maybe in Washington, D.C.? Gab said he knows that Funke is a “hungry entrepreneur” who has plans to expand, so maybe a restaurant in D.C. is in the cards.

We thank our audience for joining us, including Kirsten’s 16-year-old family member in Italy who stayed up until 3 a.m. to watch the program and who is himself a budding *pastiao* (see article on p. 8). We also thank Kirsten for her terrific interview, and Lourdes Tinajero for connecting us to Gab. Thanks also to program committee members Chris Renneker and Maria D’Andrea-Yothers, and to Peter Bell for hosting the meeting. And of course, a big thank you to Gab, who was just amazing. ■



## The AMHS Shop

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

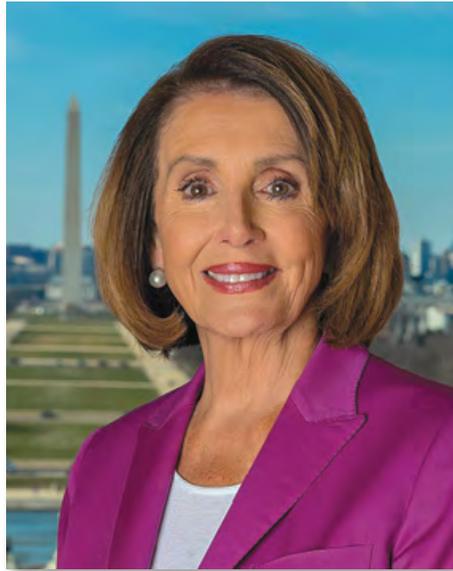
The proceeds from merchandise sales go toward the AMHS Annual Scholarship Fund. We thank you for your patronage! If you have any questions regarding AMHS merchandise, please contact Michele LaVerghetta, (410) 707-4611.

# The Politically Talented D'Alesandro Family

## Part III - Nancy Pelosi

By Joseph "Sonny" Scafetta, Jr.

Nancy Patricia D'Alesandro was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on March 26, 1940. Her paternal grandparents, Tommaso Giovanni D'Alesandro and Maria Foppiano Petronilla, had emigrated from the community of Montenerodomo (population 673 in the 2017 Census) in the province of Chieti in the region of Abruzzo. Her father was Thomas John D'Alesandro Jr. who was a U.S. Congressman at the time of her birth. Her mother was Annunciata Lombardi who had emigrated from the city of Campobasso (population 49,230 in the 2017 Census) in the province of Campobasso in the region of Molise. Nancy was the youngest of six children and the only girl. In June 1958, she graduated from the Institute of Notre Dame, an all-girls Catholic high school, in Baltimore. In June 1962, she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Trinity College in Washington, D.C.



Nancy Pelosi (nee D'Alesandro).

Credit: U.S. House of Representatives official photo

sworn in on June 9, 1987, in the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. She has won every biennial election for her home district since 1988.

In January 2001, Nancy was elected as the House Minority Whip and, in January 2002, she was elected as the House Minority Leader. The Democrats took control of the House after the midterm elections in November, 2006 so, when the House convened on January 3, 2007, she was elected as the 52nd Speaker. Nancy became the first woman, the first Italian American, and the first Californian to hold that position. She served until January 3, 2011, when the House flipped back to Republican control. She then stepped down to become House Minority Leader again. However, Democrats regained control of the House after the 2018 midterm elections, so she resumed the Speakership on January 3, 2019, and currently holds that position. ■

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*Nancy became the first woman, the first Italian American and the first Californian to hold the position of Speaker of the House.*

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After graduation, while interning for Senator Daniel Brewster of Maryland, she met Paul Frank Pelosi whom she married in the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore on September 7, 1963. They have five children: Nancy Corinne, Christine, Jacqueline, Paul Frank Jr., and Alexandra. After their wedding, the couple moved to New York City where Paul Pelosi worked. After six years there, the couple relocated in 1969 to San Francisco where Paul found work with his older brother, Ronald, who was a member of the City Board of Supervisors.

In 1976, Nancy was elected as a Democratic National Committee Member from California. In January 1977, she was elected as the party chair for northern California. In 1981, she was elected to head the California Democratic Party. In 1984, she served as the Chair of the San

Francisco Democratic National Convention Host Committee.

On February 1, 1987, her Congresswoman, Sala Burton, died in office. Nancy decided to run for the position. On April 7, 1987, she won the Democratic primary and, on June 2, 1987, she won the special election to fill the vacancy. She was

**Sources, all accessed August 1, 2020:**

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nancy\\_Pelosi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nancy_Pelosi)

[www.geni.com/people/Tommaso-G-D-Alesandro/6000000](http://www.geni.com/people/Tommaso-G-D-Alesandro/6000000) (link expired)

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenerodomo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenerodomo) (link expired)

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

## 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 your story. 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.

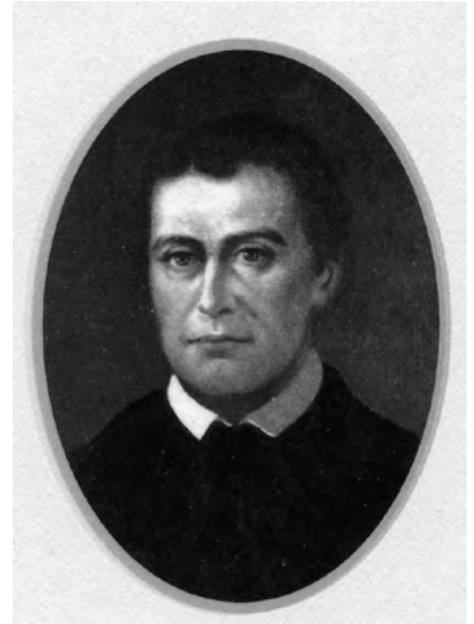
The AMHS is making new efforts to engage our current members and add more to our ranks. A vibrant Notiziario is part of that. As our society approaches its 21st anniversary, let's all help ensure a bright future for our mission to celebrate "all things Italian." ■

## GEORGETOWN'S SECOND FOUNDER: FR. GIOVANNI GRASSI'S *News on the Present Condition of the Republic of the United States of North America*

**F**ather Giovanni Antonio Grassi, Society of Jesus, (1775-1849) was the ninth President of Georgetown College, and pioneered its transition to a modern university, earning the title of Georgetown's Second Founder.

Grassi documented his experiences and impressions gathered during his seven years' sojourn in the United States (1810-1817) in a book written when he went back to Italy on a delicate church mission, never to return because of unexpected health issues. Prompted by his fellow Italians he wrote a book about the nascent nation across the ocean entitled *Notizie varie sullo stato presente della repubblica degli Stati Uniti dell'America Settentrionale scritte al Principio del 1818 (Various News on the Present Condition of the Republic of the United States of North America Written at the Beginning of 1818.)*

that brought Grassi to Georgetown. Grassi was born in Schilpario, Bergamo, then part of the Venetian Republic. While still a novice in the Society of Jesus, he was sent in 1801 to Russia, where he completed his studies and was ordained a priest. In 1804 he was told by his superior to prepare to go to China as a missionary, sailing from London. Unable to find a passage on an English ship he embarked on a Portuguese ship that took him to Lisbon where he would wait two long years before receiving approval to continue his trip to China. Under the impending threat of a French invasion of Portugal, he was instructed to leave that country and sail to England. There, he taught Italian and Latin at Stonyhurst College, while awaiting permission to go to China. Finally in 1810 permission came, but it was immediately rescinded with instructions to go to America, where he arrived on October 26 of the same year.



A portrait of Rev. Giovanni Antonio Grassi, president of Georgetown University from 1812-1817, artist and date unknown.

Credit: Wikimedia Commons

*The three sections of the Notizie examine, albeit succinctly, innumerable aspects of the young American Republic.*

The three sections of the *Notizie* examine, albeit succinctly, innumerable aspects of the young American Republic. Section 1 very briefly describes its climate, agriculture, products, commerce, population, the War of 1812, the institution of slavery, public life, education, arts and sciences, technology, government structure and politics. Section 2 dwells on the various religious sects that existed in the United States. Section 3 describes the condition of the Catholic Church in the United States. Abundant notes by Professor Severino at the end of each section give additional information and clarification on peoples and events mentioned in Grassi's book.

The English translation, the first done in its entirety, is preceded by a detailed introduction that describes the fortuitous circumstances

in his introduction, and as support and necessary background to *Notizie*, Professor Severino gives a chronological summary of Grassi's diary, separate and distinct from Grassi's *Notizie*, distilling day-by-day the most salient events recorded: Grassi's socializing with prominent citizens of Washington, the British invasion and burning of the White House and the Capitol in 1814, the successful petition to Congress to give Georgetown College authority and power to grant degrees, and his becoming an American citizen in 1815.

The book ends with a complete copy of an 1823 review by Edward Brooks (1784-1859) of the second 1819 edition of Grassi's *Notizie* that appeared in the prestigious North American Review. Intrigued by Grassi's book, Brooks took it upon himself to have portions of Grassi's work

translated into English. As an American and a Protestant, Brooks, somewhat benevolently, comments on specific paragraphs of a more controversial nature.

Professor Severino's translation from the Italian is the first complete English translation of Grassi's *Notizie* to appear after 200 years. An important work, *Notizie* predates De Tocqueville's work on American democracy and informed Europeans on America's society and new forms of self government. We are very grateful to Professor Severino and the Georgetown University Press to make it at last available to the American public.

"Georgetown's Second Founder: Fr. Giovanni Grassi's *News on the Present Condition of the Republic of the United States of North America*" — Third and last edition — Translated from the Italian and introduced by Roberto Severino, Professor Emeritus, Georgetown University, Georgetown University Press, 2021. ■



# SIAMO UNA FAMIGLIA

## *Ciao Cugini!*

### A Funke Family Connection Makes Pasta More Magical

By Kirsten Keppel

While I knew the discussion of “Funke” with director Gab Taraboulsy would be fun and fulfilling, I never anticipated how the evening would echo the words of another famous Italian film director, Federico Fellini: “Life is a combination of magic and pasta.”

It felt like magic to see Zoom squares and realize the people I love were all in the same Zoom room for one night. One name caused my heart to pound faster. My cousin Cristina and her 16-year-old son and budding *pastaio*, Stefano Cella de Dan, called from L’Aquila — at 2:00 a.m. local time.

*“Food was second only to religion,’ my mother reminds me, especially when we share airspace with an artichoke, pasta, veal dish, or zeppole.”*

Stefano plays tennis and lobs balls high like waves for his team, Tennis Club Area Sport. He also carries on the tradition of making pasta by hand, as he is growing up seeing four generations of his family do so every Christmas. When I was in L’Aquila in 2012, Stefano’s great-grandmother unknotted the mystery of *gnocchi*-making by placing my thumb in the middle of the cushion before folding the little dumplings. Turns out it’s not just how you knead, but also how you knot the dough for this nubby, chubby cousin of every other pasta. At age 43 and 4,505 miles on the other side of the Atlantic, I learned in Abruzzo a sleight-of-hand trick I had missed kneading dough with my great-aunts on flour-strewn formica tables in the Italian-American kitchens of Watervliet, New York. “Food was



Kirsten Keppel’s relatives in Abruzzo: “Nonna Elena,” Eugenia, Francesca Antenucci, and Roberto Capezzali taking a break from pasta-making.

second only to religion,” my mother reminds me, especially when we share airspace with an artichoke, pasta, veal dish, or *zeppole*.

Seeing Stefano and Cristina with AMHS members and guests gave new depth to our motto, “*Siamo una famiglia*.” My smile increased in wattage once I knew family members on both sides of the sea were sharing this event in real time. A few generations ago, we would all have lived in the same village. Now the village is global, but thanks to technology like WhatsApp and Zoom, we come full circle via the virtual village to share experiences and create new bonds.

Generations after our ancestors emigrated from Italy to the United States, food and stories still connect us over the ocean. Cristina is the granddaughter of my grandfather’s first cousin, “Non-

na Elena,” who celebrated her 98th birthday this May. Elena’s mother and my great-grandfather were sister and brother. Both immigrated to the United States in the late 19th century with five siblings. Several settled in Philadelphia. Others moved to upstate New York. Elena’s mother married and returned to Italy, where four generations of her descendants now live.

Food is love in Italian families, and connection to food creates a common bond among people of many cultures. Handmade food holds the energy and emotion of those who make it. According to [Merriam-Webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com), the word “emotion” comes from the Middle French *émouvoir*, “to stir up,” and from the Latin *emovere*, “to remove, displace,” from *e* + *movere* “to move.”<sup>1</sup> Emotion means “energy in motion.”

<sup>1</sup> [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emotion](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emotion)

From Old World to New and back, the “energy in motion” moves us forward together.

*“Life is a combination of magic and pasta.”*

– Federico Fellini, Italian film director

And what energy! I love seeing our next-gen *pastaio* use his hands to send the ball back over the net and measure double zero flour in the kitchen. “He could be the one who carries on our stories,” I tell his mother; “You never know.” My relatives in L’Aquila say that when they hear me speaking, they hear our family. When I look at them, I see our family. I love knowing that whether as AMHS videographer or cousin, I am passing on stories to the next generation. Who knows what technology will allow a hundred years from now? *Cent’anni!* 🍝



Stefano Cella de Dan, a budding *pastaio*.

## AMHS Membership

By Lynn Sorbara, 2nd Vice President, Membership

### NEW MEMBERS

*A warm welcome* is extended to: Michele Bishop, Charles Philip D’Adamo, John Joseph D’Amico, Rose Marie DeMarco-Evans, Jo-Ann Pilardi, and Elissa Irene Padula Sobolewski.

### BIRTHDAYS

#### Compleanni a Luglio

Vincenzo Marinucci, July 3; Dianne Francesconi Lyon, July 6; John Verna and Susan Baldassari, July 7; Michael De March, July 9; Anthony Vincent Scillia, July 10; Raymond Bernero, July 12; David Ciummo and Gianpiero Forcina, July 13; Anthony D’Onofrio and Helina Zewdu, July 15; Julia Boivin, July 16; Ilaria Pirocchi, July 17; Crystal Hovermale, Matthew DiFiore, and Roberto Severino, July 19; Mario Ciccone, July 21; Mary Smargiassi Muth, July 22; Lina Pronio, July 23; and Lynn Sorbara and Robert O’Malley, July 27.

#### Compleanni a Agosto

Mario Marinucci, August 2; Ray LaVerghetta, August 5; Pietro Masci, August 8; Loretta Pittarelli, August 9; Ray Abruzzo, August 12; Nancy DeSanti and Susan Di Blasio, August 15; Joseph Ruzzi, Sr. and Karen Grasso, August 16; Rose Ruzzi, August 18; Angela Campanella, August 21; Robert Lucian and Joseph Novello, August 23; and Donna Caruso, August 30.

### ANNIVERSARIES

#### Anniversari a Luglio

Joseph & Joann Novello, July 4; Bernardino Palazzo & Ilaria Pirocchi, July 10; Joseph & Susan Di Blasio, July 13; Peter & Charlie Iovino, July 14; Robert & Barbara Verdile, July 17; Renato & Rita Orcino, July 19; Greg & Diane Bernabei, July 21; Stephan & Rita Carrier and David Ciummo & Sabrina De Sousa, July 31.

#### Anniversari a Agosto

Joseph & Pam Lupo, August 5; Corrado Dal Forno & Julie Finigan-Dal Forno, August 7; Domenico & Julia Conti, August 19; and Guy & Donna Caruso, August 26.

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Category	# of Persons
Associate (Couple)	5 x 2 = 10
Associate (Individual)	40
General (Couple)	48 x 2 = 96
General (Individual)	88
Honorary	11
Scholarship	2
Student	8
<b>Total Membership:</b>	<b>255</b>

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# ORTUCCHIO

PROVINCE OF L'AQUILA, REGION OF ABRUZZO



*A panoramic view of the Fucino Space Center*

Credit: Wikipedia

By Nancy DeSanti

The small town of Ortucchio, in the province of L'Aquila, is situated close to Lago Fucino. It has approximately 1,875 inhabitants, known as Ortucchiesi. The town is famous for its proximity to the largest satellite control center in the world, located in the comune in the middle of a drained lake.

Fucino Lake (Lago Fucino) was once the third-largest lake in Italy, but since ancient times, there were many attempts to drain the basin. The large lake was surrounded by settlements, but while the basin provided fertile soil and plenty of fish, it had no outflow and was a source of malaria and frequent floods. During the 1st century A.D., Roman Emperor Claudius attempted to drain the lake using a drainage tunnel. The water level was lowered but the lake was not completely emptied. Due to the lack of maintenance after the fall of the Roman Empire, the lake returned to its original size.

In the 19th-century, another attempt was made to drain the lake. Work began around the 1850s and the basin completely dried up in 1878. The whole area around Lake Fucino was dedicated to agriculture and it is now one of the most fertile regions in Italy.

The Fucino plain, being large, flat and mostly uninhabited, was deemed the ideal place to build a large facility now known as the Fucino Space Centre.

Since its opening in 1963, this civilian “teleport,” the largest in the world, has been a pioneer in the use of telecommunication technologies. From here, the first moon landing in 1969 was broadcast to the world. The first internet connection in Italy also happened inside the Fucino Space Centre in 1986. Now the 370,000-square-meter facility contains over 170 antennas and is involved in countless satellite-related projects. Its Galileo Control Centre manages the orbit of the satellites along with a network of about 40 ground stations.

From the Fucino Space Centre, Telespazio (a Leonardo company) performs the satellite in-orbit control activities, carried out by a team of over 100 engineers and specialist technicians — in general, telecommunications, television and multimedia, and all activities related to space missions for the major satellite operators.

Interestingly, the Fucino Space Centre houses the stern of the ship Elettra, on which Guglielmo Marconi carried out his shortwave radio propagation experiments in the period between the two World Wars. Built in the early 20th century, Marconi bought the Elettra in 1921, and during the following years, he used it as a laboratory ship sailing around the world. In 1937, after the scientist's death, the ship was purchased by the Ministero delle Poste e Telecomunicazioni which, in 1978, donated the stern section to Telespazio.

The Fucino Space Centre Museum was built in

1968, and it houses equipment used in the pioneering phase of satellite telecommunications. Among these are the mobile stations with which the first transmissions between the U.S. and Italy were carried out in 1962 using the Relay satellite, and the 9-metre diameter antenna used from 1963 for transmission experiments with the Telstar satellite. In 1968, this antenna was transported to Uganda for Pope Paul VI's visit, and it provided the first worldwide television link from Africa.

The town of Ortucchio is also known for its hiking and biking trails, some of which are near national parks and the Laghetto di Ortucchio. ■

## What to See

- The remains of the church of Sant'Orante

## Important Dates

- **March 5** — Feast and market fair of Sant'Orante
- **June 13** — Feast of S. Antonio
- **First half of August** — Sagra della ranocchia.
- **September 28** — Feast of Sant'Orante, the patron saint

# ORTUCCHIO

PROVINCIA DI L'AQUILA, REGIONE ABRUZZO

Translated by Ennio DiTullio

Il piccolo comune di Ortucchio, in provincia dell'Aquila, è situato vicino al Lago Fucino. Il comune conta circa 1.875 abitanti, detti Ortucchiesi. La cittadina è famosa per la vicinanza al più grande centro di controllo satellitare del mondo, situato nel comune al centro di un lago bonificato.

Il Lago Fucino era un tempo il terzo lago più grande d'Italia, ma fin dall'antichità ci furono molti tentativi di drenare il bacino. Il grande lago era circondato da insediamenti, ma mentre il bacino forniva terreno fertile e abbondanza di pesce, non aveva deflussi ed era fonte di malaria e spesso si allagava. Durante il I secolo d.C., l'imperatore romano Claudio tentò di drenare il lago utilizzando un tunnel di drenaggio. Il livello dell'acqua si abbassò ma il lago non fu mai completamente svuotato. A causa della mancanza di manutenzione dopo la caduta dell'Impero Romano, il lago tornò alle sue dimensioni originali.

Nel XIX secolo fu fatto un altro tentativo di drenare il lago. I lavori iniziarono intorno al 1850 e il bacino si prosciugò completamente nel 1878. L'intera area intorno al lago Fucino fu dedicata all'agricoltura ed è oggi una delle regioni più fertili d'Italia.

Così la piana del Fucino, essendo ampia, pianeggiante e per lo più disabitata, è stata ritenuta il luogo ideale per realizzare una grande struttura oggi nota come Centro Spaziale del Fucino.

Sin dalla sua apertura nel 1963, questo centro di telecomunicazione civile, il più grande del mondo, è stato un pioniere nell'uso delle tecnologie di telecomunicazione. Da qui, il primo sbarco sulla luna nel 1969 è stato trasmesso al mondo. Anche la prima connessione internet in Italia avviene all'interno del Centro Spaziale del Fucino nel 1986. Ora la struttura di 370.000 metri quadrati contiene oltre 170 antenne ed è coinvolta in



Telescopic parabolic antennas at the Fucino Space Centre

Credit: Wikipedia

innumerevoli progetti legati al satellite.

Il suo Galileo Control Center gestisce l'orbita dei satelliti insieme a una rete di circa 40 stazioni di terra.

Dal Centro Spaziale del Fucino, Telespazio (società del Consorzio Leonardo) svolge le attività di controllo in orbita dei satelliti, svolte da un team di oltre 100 ingegneri e tecnici specializzati in telecomunicazioni, televisione e multimedia, e tutte le attività legate a missioni spaziali per i maggiori operatori satellitari.

È interessante notare che il Centro Spaziale del Fucino ospita la poppa della nave Elettra, sulla quale Guglielmo Marconi effettuò i suoi esperimenti di propagazione radio ad onde corte nel periodo tra le due guerre mondiali. Costruita all'inizio del '900, Marconi acquistò l'Elettra nel 1921 e negli anni successivi la utilizzò come nave laboratorio in giro per il mondo. Nel 1937, dopo la morte dello scienziato, la nave fu acquistata dal Ministero delle Poste e Telecomunicazioni che, nel 1978, donò la sezione di poppa a Telespazio.

Il Museo del Centro Spaziale del Fucino è stato realizzato nel 1968 e ospita apparecchiature utilizzate nella fase pionieristica delle telecomunicazioni satellitari. Tra queste le stazioni mobili con cui nel 1962 furono effettuate le prime trasmissioni tra Stati Uniti e Italia utilizzando il sistema satellitare Relay e l'antenna di 9 metri di diametro utilizzata dal 1963 per esperimenti di trasmissione con il satellite Telstar. Nel 1968 questa antenna fu trasportata in Uganda per la visita di Papa Paolo VI e fornì il primo collegamento televisivo mondiale dall'Africa.

Il comune di Ortucchio è noto anche per i suoi sentieri escursionistici e ciclabili, alcuni dei quali vicini ai parchi nazionali e al Laghetto di Ortucchio. ■

## Attrazioni del luogo:

- I resti della chiesa di Sant'Orante

## Date da ricordare:

- **5 marzo** — Festa e mostra mercato di Sant'Orante
- **13 giugno** — Festa di S. Antonio
- **Prima metà di agosto** — Sagra della ranocchia.
- **28 settembre** — Festa di Sant'Orante, patrono

## Sources:

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# CITY VINCHIATURO

PROVINCE OF CAMPOBASSO, REGION OF MOLISE



By Nancy DeSanti

The beautiful town of Vinchiaturro is located about 10 kilometers southwest of Campobasso. It has approximately 3,185 inhabitants known as Vinchiaturesi.

The small center rises between two hills, the seats of a monastery and a castle, in a landscape of thick forests. It is surrounded by the Matese mountains on one side and the Sannio mountains on the other, amid hills sloping down towards the plains.

According to some historians, the origin of the town is found in the ancient Samnite town of Ruffiro, built on a steep, almost inaccessible calcareous rock, near the current Monteverde hill. After being defeated by the Romans, Ruffiro changed its name to Vincula Catenis (Prison with Chains), since there was a type of concentration camp where the Romans imprisoned the rebel Samnites. In memory of this episode, the coat of arms of Vinchiaturro features a tower with two huge chains hanging from the walls.

The effects of such brutal subjugation by the Romans lasted a staggering 1,500 years as Vinchiaturro remained without any type of autonomous administration. And to make matters worse, a huge earthquake leveled the area in 1456 before a series of French or Norman lords used Vinchiaturro and the surrounding area as a temporary stepping stone for their own feudal careers. Later, when the ruins of the 1805 earthquake were surveyed, it became apparent that the origins of the town were much older than thought. Ancient inscriptions and coins were found demonstrating that the zone was inhabited prior to the destroyed villages.

Actually, about 650 A.D., a Benedictine monastery was founded, the abbey of Monteverde, an important center of culture and craftwork, especially stone-carving, around which a village was built.

In succeeding centuries, the monastery was hit by earthquakes — in 1349, then the 1456 ruinous earthquake which destroyed the monastery, while sparing the church. Another earthquake in

*The campanile in the center of Vinchiaturro.*

Credit: Comune di Vinchiaturro

1688 obliged the monks to move away. Finally, the 1805 earthquake completely destroyed what was still left, devastating the area. Following this destruction, the peasants and shepherds who for centuries had lived around the Benedictine center resettled in the valley.

The last feudal owner was the Marchese Federico Longo during whose reign the palazzo was built and the Convento di Santa Lucia, and the Longo family kept the noble title of Marchesi di Vinchiaturro well into the second half of the 19th century.

One of the interesting nearby sights is Monte la Rocca, which has an altitude of almost 4,000 feet. Ceramic pieces of the Samnite period and stones of Roman times have been found as part of a walled fortress. It is believed that this was probably a fortress controlling both the road

# CITY VINCHIATURO

PROVINCIA DI CAMPOBASSO, REGIONE MOLISE



A panoramic view of the town.

Credit: quotidianomolise.com

from Campobasso to Sepino and the two shepherds' tracks of Pescasseroli-Candela and Lucera-Castel di Sangro.

One of the town's traditional events is La Pezza de Casce, at Carnival, in the piazza municipio. It's a traditional team competition where instead of a football the players have to move, by force of their biceps, a 30-kilogram piece of Parmesan, along a centuries-old itinerary.

The economy still relies on agriculture, dairy products, firewood, and on small industries of ceramic, glass and iron. More recently, tourism has been growing especially in the summer, when Vinchiaturu is a favorite starting point for excursions into the mountains. ■

## What to See

- Ruins of the Church of Santa Maria Guglieto
- Monastery of Santa Lucia from the 17th century with beautiful frescoes

## Important Dates

- **May 20** — Feast of St. Bernardino da Siena, the patron saint

## Sources:

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[www.italyheritage.com/regions/molise/province-campobasso/vinchiaturu.htm](http://www.italyheritage.com/regions/molise/province-campobasso/vinchiaturu.htm)

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## Translated by Ennio DiTullio

La bella cittadina di Vinchiaturu si trova a circa 10 chilometri a sud ovest di Campobasso. Conta circa 3.185 abitanti conosciuti come Vinchiaturesi.

Il piccolo centro sorge tra due colline, sede di un monastero e di un castello, in un paesaggio di fitti boschi. È circondato dai monti del Matese da un lato e dai monti del Sannio dall'altro, tra colline digradanti verso la pianura.

Secondo alcuni storici l'origine del paese si trova nell'antico borgo sannitico di Ruffiro, costruito su una roccia calcarea scoscesa, quasi inaccessibile, nei pressi dell'attuale colle di Monteverde. Dopo essere stato sconfitto dai romani, Ruffiro cambiò il suo nome in Vincula Catenis (Prigione con le catene), poiché esisteva una sorta di campo di concentramento dove i romani imprigionavano i ribelli Sanniti. A ricordo di questo episodio, lo stemma del Vinchiaturu presenta una torre con due enormi catene appese alle pareti.

Gli effetti di tale brutale sottomissione da parte dei romani durarono ben 1.500 anni poiché Vinchiaturu rimase senza alcun tipo di amministrazione autonoma. E come se non bastasse, un enorme terremoto rase al suolo l'area nel 1456 prima che una serie di signori francesi o normanni usassero Vinchiaturu e l'area circostante come trampolino di lancio temporaneo per le loro carriere feudali. Successivamente, quando furono censite le rovine del terremoto del 1805, divenne evidente che le origini della città erano molto più antiche di quanto si pensasse. Sono state trovate antiche iscrizioni e monete che dimostrano che la zona era abitata prima dei villaggi distrutti.

Infatti, intorno al 650 d.C., fu fondato un monastero benedettino, l'abbazia di Monteverde, importante centro di cultura e artigianato, soprattutto di intaglio della pietra, attorno al quale sorse un borgo.

Nei secoli successivi, il monastero fu colpito da terremoti - nel 1349, poi il rovinoso terremoto del 1456 che distrusse il monastero, risparmiando la chiesa. Un altro terremoto nel 1688 obbligò i monaci ad allontanarsi. Infine, il ter-

remoto del 1805 distrusse completamente ciò che era rimasto, devastando la zona. In seguito a questa distruzione, i contadini e pastori che per secoli avevano vissuto intorno al centro benedettino si sono insediati nella valle.

L'ultimo feudatario fu il Marchese Federico Longo durante il cui regno fu edificato il palazzo e il Convento di Santa Lucia, e la famiglia Longo mantenne il titolo nobiliare di Marchesi di Vinchiaturu anche nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento.

Uno dei luoghi interessanti nelle vicinanze è il Monte la Rocca, alto quasi 4.000 piedi. Pezzi di ceramica del periodo sannitico e pietre di epoca romana sono stati trovati come parte di una fortezza murata. Si ritiene che questa fosse probabilmente una fortezza che controllava sia la strada da Campobasso a Sepino che i due sentieri pastorali di Pescasseroli-Candela e Lucera-Castel di Sangro.

Uno degli eventi tradizionali del paese è La Pezza di Casce, a Carnevale, in piazza municipio. E 'una tradizionale competizione a squadre dove invece di un pallone da calcio i giocatori devono muovere, con la forza dei loro bicipiti, un pezzo di parmigiano da 30 chilogrammi, lungo un percorso secolare.

L'economia fa ancora affidamento sull'agricoltura, sui latticini, sulla legna da ardere e sulle piccole industrie della ceramica, del vetro e del ferro. Più recentemente, il turismo è cresciuto soprattutto in estate, quando Vinchiaturu è un punto di partenza prediletto per le escursioni in montagna. ■

## Le attrazioni del luogo:

- Rovine della Chiesa di Santa Maria Guglieto
- Monastero di Santa Lucia del XVII secolo con bellissimi affreschi

## Date da ricordare:

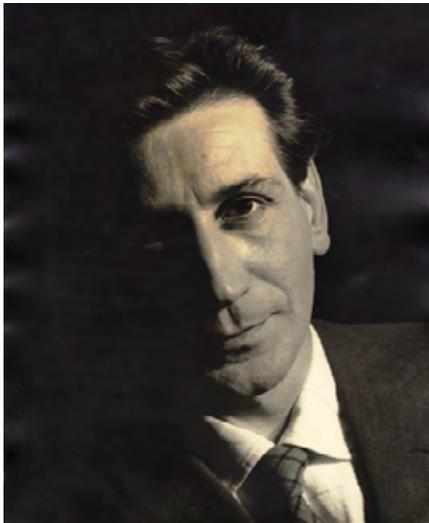
- **20 maggio** — Festa di San Bernardino da Siena, patrono

# Campobasso's Contributions to Music and Film

By Joseph "Sonny" Scafetta, Jr.

As noted in the last issue, the city of Campobasso (population 49,230 in the 2017 census) in the province of the same name in the region of Molise, has produced several notable individuals who have made contributions in the areas of music and film. These are the second and third of three profiles of such artists.

## Alberto Bonucci



Alberto Bonucci

Credit: blogspot.com

Alberto Bonucci was born in the city of Campobasso, Italy, on May 19, 1918. He was a good student who participated in school plays. After he graduated in 1936, he acted in various local theater companies and played roles on the local radio station until 1941 when he was drafted. He flunked his physical exam for the Italian army, so he stayed home for the duration of World War II. After the war ended, he married his high school sweetheart. They had two children, Nicoletta and Emilio, who both became actors. In 1949, he moved to Paris to perform in the cabaret "Rose Rouge."

In 1950, he accepted an invitation to go to Florence to act in the Pergola Theater. Later that year, he formed with two other actors "Il teatro dei gobbi" (The Theater of the Hunchbacks) which became celebrated for launching a new style of satirical comedy in Italy. Before 1950 was over, he acted as a night club comedian in his first film role in the English-language movie "Variety Lights." Bonucci would go on to appear in 52 more films, both in Italian and in English, between 1951 and 1967. Among his notable English roles were as the Russian director in "Toto in Color" (1952), as the presenter of the

beauty competition in "It Happened in the Park" (1953), as a lyricist in "Neapolitan Carousel" (1954), as Carlo in "Blood and Roses" (1960), as Cyrano de Bergerac in "The Four Musketeers" (1963), as the ham radio operator in "Seven Golden Men" (1965) and the sequel, "Seven Golden Men Strike Again" (1966), and lastly as Nathaniel in "The Taming of the Shrew" (1967).

After this last film was released, he was diagnosed with a brain tumor, so he returned with his family to Campobasso. He succumbed in Rome on April 5, 1969, about seven weeks before his 51st birthday. He is buried in Campobasso.

**Sources, all accessed January 24, 2021:**

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(link expired)

## Fred Bongusto



Fred Bongusto

Credit: last.fm

Alfredo Antonio Carlo Buongusto was born in the city of Campobasso on April 6, 1935. At the age of 20, he moved to Padua to study law and began to sing in a band with other university classmates. Alfredo decided to abandon his studies and to dedicate himself to a musical career.

Initially, he joined a group called the 4 Loris which had a hit single "Stringimi e baciarmi" (Hold me tight and kiss me) in 1959. After another hit "Notte d'amore" (Night of Love) in 1961, he decided to adopt the stage name of Fred Bongusto and to

become a soloist. His first hit single "Bella Bellissima" (Beautiful, Very Beautiful) was released in 1962. He would go on to have 74 more hit singles on the Italian charts. He released his first album "Fred Bongusto" in 1963. He cut 37 more albums over the course of his career. In 1967 he composed the sound track for a film "Il tigre" (The Tiger). It was the first of 28 sound tracks that he would write. He twice won the Silver Ribbon for the best sound track of the year from the Italian movie industry. In 1967, he married the Italian actress, Gabriella Palazzoli. They had no children.

Bongusto's proclivity for exploring Latin American rhythms and American big band swing music made him very popular in South America, especially Brazil. His role models were the Americans, Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, and especially Frank Sinatra.

In 1979, while Bongusto was away from his home in Rome, two members of the Armed Revolutionary Nuclei, a terrorist neo-fascist militant group, broke into his house, beat his wife and housekeeper, and robbed his wife of her money and jewelry. Four years later in a shootout with police in Rome, one robber was killed and the other was wounded, arrested, and jailed.

In 1990, as a member of the Italian Socialist Party, Bongusto was elected a councilor in the city of Bari in the region of Puglia. He decided to serve only one two-year term.

On March 18, 2005, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi presented Bongusto with a silver plate to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his musical debut. On National Day, June 2, 2005, President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi awarded Bongusto with the title of Commendatore in the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic. Bongusto made his last public appearance in a concert on April 22, 2013, at the age of 78. He retired to care for his wife who had been diagnosed with cancer. She died three years later. On November 7, 2019, he entered the King Umberto I Clinic in Rome, complaining of chest pains. He died the next morning from a heart attack at the age of 84. ■

**Sources, all accessed January 17, 2021:**

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Ben Brenman Park,  
Alexandria, VA



*The Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society is pleased to host an in-person Ferragosto Picnic once again after taking a year's hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic. And, this year, we are excited to partner with the Casa Italiana Sociocultural Center to co-sponsor this event! We have reserved a shelter (covered pavilion) with 10 large picnic tables.*

## **FOOD & DRINK**

- Bring your own picnic basket of food, along with paper products, utensils, and table covers.
- Wine, keg beer, soft drinks, bottled water, ice, and cups for beverages provided by AMHS.
- One grill is available with our reservation. Please bring your own charcoal and lighter fluid.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

- Bring bocce balls, lawn chairs, card tables.
- Playground and enclosed restrooms within walking distance of the pavilion.
- City of Alexandria and CDC guidance regarding masks will be followed.

## **ADDRESS**

**Ben Brenman Park**  
4800 Brenman Park Drive  
Alexandria, Virginia 22304

## **PARKING**

There are three main parking lots near the pavilion, which is located off a footbridge adjacent to the baseball field. Look for the balloons tied to the footbridge.

**This event is free. Please bring your family and friends  
for an afternoon of good food, fun, and friendship!**

For information & to RSVP, contact Maria D'Andrea-Yothers (703) 473-4033



# ITALIAN-THEMED STAMPS

*Issued by the U.S. Postal Service*

By Joseph "Sonny" Scafetta, Jr.

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has issued a colorful set

of four Italian coffee

drinks, i.e. *caffè latte*, *caffè mocha*, *cappuccino*, and *espresso*, in a booklet of 20 "forever" stamps, each valued at 55 cents, with five of each of the four drinks in each booklet. The first day of issue ceremony took place in Seattle, Washington, on April 9, 2021. The booklets will be on sale for \$11 each at all local post offices until April 8, 2022.

Also, the USPS has issued a sheet of 20 same-image "forever" (55-cent) stamps honoring Lawrence Peter (Yogi) Berra (1925-2015), on June 24, 2021. A smiling Yogi is shown wearing a New York Yankees baseball cap and a catcher's chest protector. A partial view of a catcher's mitt is also seen. The first day of issue ceremony took place in the Yogi Berra Museum & Learning Center on the grounds of Montclair State University in Little Falls, New Jersey, on June 24, 2021. The stamp image of Yogi is based upon a portrait painted by artist, Charles Chaisson, from a photo taken by the Associated Press. The sheets will be available for purchase for \$11 each at all local post offices until June 23, 2022.

Yogi Berra served in World War II as a gunner on a rocket-launching ship during the D-Day invasion of Normandy, France. He made his major league debut in 1946. In his 18 years with the Yankees, Yogi won three Most Valuable Player (MVP) Awards and a record ten World Series rings. He holds numerous World Series batting



records and was an All-Star for the American League 15 consecutive years. When his uniform number 8 was retired by the Yankees, he was also honored with a plaque in Monument Park next to Yankee Stadium. He led both the Yankees and the New York Mets to the World Series as a manager. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, in 1972. ■

*We're Back!*  
**FERRAGOSTO PICNIC**  
In-person Event  
Sunday, August 15  
See details on page 15



## THE ABRUZZO AND MOLISE HERITAGE SOCIETY

of the Washington, DC Area

Celebrating Italian Culture & Community since 2000

4669 Lawton Way, #104  
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