



# Il Notiziario

[The Newsletter]  
of the

*Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.*



<https://friendsofisoladellefemmine.org> email: [Friendsofisola@gmail.com](mailto:Friendsofisola@gmail.com) Follow us on Facebook

Volume 2, Issue 1

Editor: A.A. Grillo

Winter: January 1, 2021

## News from our Executive Board

Dear Members of The Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc. organization,

First of all, we want to thank you for your membership dues in 2020, it is much appreciated. You are a Charter Member of Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc, your yearly dues contribution will not increase for the foreseeable future. Your contributions have helped us keep our doors open and our new organization moving forward. Your dues, contributions, and sponsorships are tax deductible.

It's been a tough year for a non-profit organization to start up, but we did it! We are still here and we have accomplished a lot in 2020. We launched our NEW website, [www.friendsofisola.org](http://www.friendsofisola.org), continued and expanded our Face Book page. Mary Pappas Coniglio created and launched "Cooking with Mary's Village Style" videos on Facebook, Instagram and on the YouTube Channel in an effort to preserve our culture and heritage through highlighting our families' Old World recipes from our childhood and to keep us all communicating with one another. We published our first Newsletter (IL Notiziario) and Special Editions, with the expertise of our Editor in Chief Alex Grillo. FOI has increased our membership and established an Isola Relief Fund to help those unfortunate Isolani during Covid-19. We are proud to say we have developed and established our FIRST FOI Scholarship Program to award those first-time college bound students as well as those returning to college. We will be accepting applications now with a March 2021 deadline. A Family member MUST BE A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING, TO APPLY.

All these accomplishments are not without costs. To keep our momentum moving forward, we need your membership dues to help defray the costs of insurance, website maintenance, tax advice & tax filings, bank fees, administrative costs, i.e. postage, envelope's, office supplies. No one on the Executive Board of FOI is paid for any of their work or time. Supplies and all food items and supplies needed for videos are donated.

We appreciate your faith in us as a non-profit organization and our cause to preserve our Italian Sicilian Culture & Heritage. We are asking you to renew your Charter Membership at the same low price of \$60 per person for 2021.

We have sent you an Invoice (memberships after June 2020 have been pro-rated) along with a membership application. We would like you to please fill out the application and return it with your check, made out to Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc and mail it to FOI 6114 La Salle Ave. #315, Oakland, Ca. 94611-2802.

If you pay on our website by credit or debit card please still fill out the attached application at the end of this newsletter and send it to our Oakland Address (above) but please include \$2 extra per person to cover the cost of paying the Pay Pal fees. Every dollar counts!

Your Charter Membership provides you:

- Sustaining dues
- Personalized Membership Card
- Acknowledgement on website and in our Newsletters
- Discounts on some event tickets and merchandise
- Exclusive College Scholarship funds available for your immediate family members
- VIP treatment at all FOI events along with our sponsors
- VIP seating at Event dinners and shows

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*To preserve, protect, and promote the Italian-Sicilian cultural heritage among the descendants, immigrants, citizens and friends of Isola delle Femmine, Sicily and around the world.*

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Co-founder & Chairman of the Board: V.S. DiMaggio, Co-founder & President: F.B. Bruno,  
Vice-President & Secretary: M. Pappas-Coniglio, Treasurer: V.M. Mafitano D.M.D.,  
Liaison to Isola delle Femmine: S.N. Coniglio, Advisor & Business Consultant: A.D. Seeno, Jr.,  
Historian: V.S. Ferrante, Historian & Researcher: A.A. Grillo, Membership Advisor: C. Bonanno

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Your prompt contribution remittance will keep you current as a member in good standing and you will be paid in full through January 1, 2022.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts, and thank you for helping us keep our Italian Sicilian Culture & Heritage alive.

Sincerely,  
Your Executive Board

**News from Isola**  
by A.A. Grillo

**A New Mayor for Isola**

In the mayoral election held at the beginning of October, the incumbent Stefano Bologna was defeated by Orazio Nevoloso. The election was very close with only 25 votes separating the two candidates after the final count, or 0.6% of those who voted.

Our Friends of Isola organization sent a letter to the outgoing mayor thanking him for his many years of service to the people of Isola and for his instrumental help in establishing our Sister City project followed by many years of ongoing friendship and support for our work promoting our Italian-Sicilian heritage.

A letter of congratulations was also sent to the new mayor in which we offered our continuing support for the people of Isola and for his administration. We also extended an invitation to join us at our upcoming event at the Colombo Club. As yet we have not received any reply.

Here is some information about Mayor Nevoloso that we have been able to ascertain thus far. He is 40 years old. His wife's name is Elena Rubino and they have one baby girl just 6 months old. Mayor Nevoloso has a degree in Information Engineering and works for an agency of the Regional Government in Palermo. One of his campaign issues was to push the upgrade of the city's harbor. We have also been told that he has an uncle living in Monterey named Giovanni Nevoloso.

We hope to be able to establish connections with the new mayor in the near future.

Meanwhile, as here in California, the pandemic has surged in all of Italy and Isola is under strict lockdown for the time being. There will be no extended family gatherings there for the holidays. Everyone there as here is hoping the vaccines will soon rid us of this dangerous virus.

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We're thrilled that  
**Michael DiMaggio**  
has joined Guaranteed Rate Affinity!

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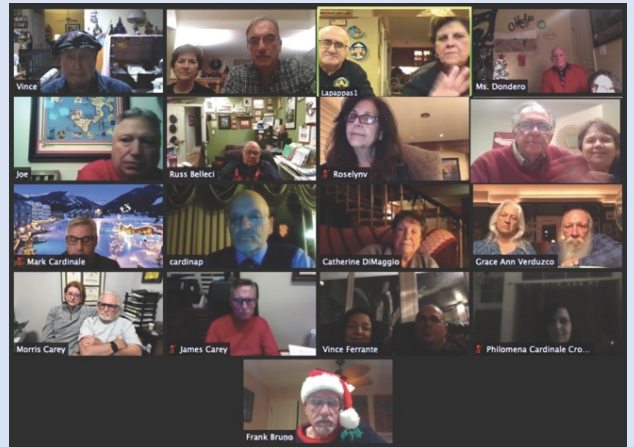
## What's Happening

by Frank Bruno

### FOI Zooming Cocktail Party

Our first, and not the last, Virtual FOI Cocktail Party was completed on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you missed it there will be others. I believe it was a success. We had 24 in attendance; myself, Vincent Ferrante, Sr., Mary Pappas Coniglio, Sal Coniglio, Alex & Jean Grillo, Joe & Catherina Ferrante, Nicky DePaola, Lisa Dondero, Roselyn & Vince Malfitano, Russell Belleci, Vincent & Midge Di Maggio, Pete Cardinale, Vince S. & Nicole Ferrante, Grace Ann & Frank Verduzco, Patrice & Jimmy Shipe, Mark Cardinale, Philomena Crone, Catherine Bruno-Di Maggio.

Some of the comments were; "Ciao Frank, it was a fun evening last night and great job at hosting. Do it again soon. Love to everyone. Ciao Grace Ann Verduzco"



A Few of the Attendees at the Party



Lemon Drop Drink Ingredients

"I enjoyed the virtual call the other night and look forward to many more and in person meetings as well." Mark Cardinale

"We should have done this a long time ago. I'm in favor of another virtual cocktail party." Vince Malfitano

The party started with an introduction by our own Chairman & Co-Founder Vincent S. Di Maggio. We had an avocado dip recipe demonstration by Mary Pappas Coniglio, as well as her Lemon Drop cocktail recipe. I demonstrated a Smokey Manhattan cocktail, delicious!

Nicky D entertained us with three songs, "The Christmas Song, a Frank Sinatra tune, "I've Got the World on a String", and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." Great entertainer. Thank you, Nicky D.

I gave our attendees a few updates from FOI; the *Il Notiziario* (The Newsletter) was coming out in January; the first FOI Scholarship program-for members only-is on our website, [www.friendsofisola.org](http://www.friendsofisola.org), along with the application and requirements; the membership renewal forms will be forth coming; Mary was taking orders for traditional & chocolate Panettone from the Palermo Bakery in Monterey-after the party Mary hit the 119 sold mark, congratulations Mary for a great job.

"That's Italian" dinner show is still on track for May 8, 2021, God willing. We had a great donation for our scholarship program from Ken Molinaro. He also donated 2 airline tickets and a week stay at a Puerto Vallarta resort. More information coming, stay tuned. Also, FOI formed an Isola Relief Fund to assist those unfortunate Isolani during this terrible pandemic.

We then just chatted, drank, and enjoyed each other's company.

All in all, it was a successful Virtual Cocktail Party. We will have others.



## I Ricordi d'Isola [Memories of Isola]

by Sal Coniglio

### The Evolution to Become the Piazza di Pittsburg

The Piazza di Pittsburg has not always been part of the Isola delle Femmine landscape. Located directly in front of the City Hall of “Commune di Isola delle Femmine” on the street named Via Lungomare Eufemio, in 1950s and 1960s, the area was used as a parking lot that could fit about 5 automobiles. It also had a small cement slab enclosed by an iron railing and partly covered with a canopy. The canopy area was filled with tables and chairs and there were a few tables with umbrellas beyond the canopy. This area was used in the summer for outdoor dining and small gatherings such as birthday parties and Holy Communion celebrations. The area would be dismantled in the winter.



Parking Area with Refreshment Area Under the Canopy & Umbrellas



Closeup of the Refreshment Area

Under the canopy there was an intercom connected to the café shop across the street, named the Lo Bianco Bar. With the intercom, patrons could order food or drink, which would be delivered to the table area by the waiter. One had to be at least 18 years old to order unless accompanied by an adult or older family members. Available from the Lo Bianco Bar were cakes and pastries such as *cuccidati*, *arancini*, *cannoli*, *sfingi San Giuseppe* along

with beverages including espresso, and other seasonal refreshments.



A Group Under the Canopy



Piazza di Pittsburg Today

Eventually, as traffic in the street separating the bar from the seating area increased, this gathering area with service was abandoned due to safety concerns for the waiters. In the 1970s, the city started improving the area expanding it towards the marina, turning it into a more proper piazza.

The Fisherman statue was donated to Isola as a result of a project led by Frank B. Bruno and Vincent S. DiMaggio with the generosity of artist Frank Vitale, who donated the original mold used for the statue in Pittsburg. It was shipped to Isola by the "Isola delle Femmine Sister

City Committee 1992” holding fundraisers for the project to commemorate the twinship between both cities and to honor the brave Isolani citizens who came to Pittsburg with their families to start a new life in America. With the arrival of the Fisherman Statue, the piazza was selected as a proper public location to display it, and in 1994, the city changed the name of the area to Piazza di Pittsburg as we know it now.

[Pictures courtesy of Orazio Sansonini]

## **A Bit of History that Is Ours**

by Vince S. Ferrante

### **Isolani Beginnings in Martinez**

Attempting to nail down the first of anything while going back in time can be a daunting task. The access of written records is critical. Without that, you piece together the puzzle as best you can. That applies here as we uncover the Isolani beginnings in Martinez, the county seat of Contra Costa County. Often times ethnic groups were left off census records in the early days, perhaps due to a lack of interpreters or for other reasons unexplained. Also, the 1890 federal census records are scant, due to most being destroyed by fire. Our available sources are listed below.

Not unlike Pittsburg, Martinez sits on the shores of the Sacramento Delta, which at one time flourished with fish. Salmon and shad were among the primary harvest. In the late 1800's, Martinez also developed an Italian fishing village along the shoreline area in close proximity to Alhambra Creek and adjacent to Granger's Wharf. A large influx of immigrants arrived from Isola delle Femmine as well as from the neighboring villages of Saint Elia, San Vito Lo Capo, Cattolica and Sferacavallo. The men, of course, would arrive first from the Old Country. Many stayed in the "arcs" or small houseboats as we call them today. Many others stayed in the boarding houses which later became central to leisure activities. They would secure work, acquire a residence or property of their own and save up to



Alhambra Creek, Home to Many of the Martinez Fishing Fleet.  
Courtesy of Martinez Historical Society



Net Drying Racks on Grangers Wharf ca.1910  
Adult in forefront might be Giovanni Flores, an early fish buyer. Courtesy of Martinez Historical Society

send for their family. This process could take years. An industrious group, they not just manned the fishing boats and the nets, they eventually filled all the occupations that made up a fishery maintaining nets to processing the fish in canneries.

The following are among the first documented Isolani to settle in Martinez, chiefly as fishermen. Giuseppe Fontana emigrated to Martinez in 1895. Giovanni Flores emigrated to America in 1890 and was an early fish buyer in California receiving his license in 1893. Salvatore Costanza emigrated in 1895 and was also an owner of a market. Salvatore along with his brothers opened a macaroni factory on Howard St. Giovanni Billeci and his adopted son Francisco Giardino-Billeci,



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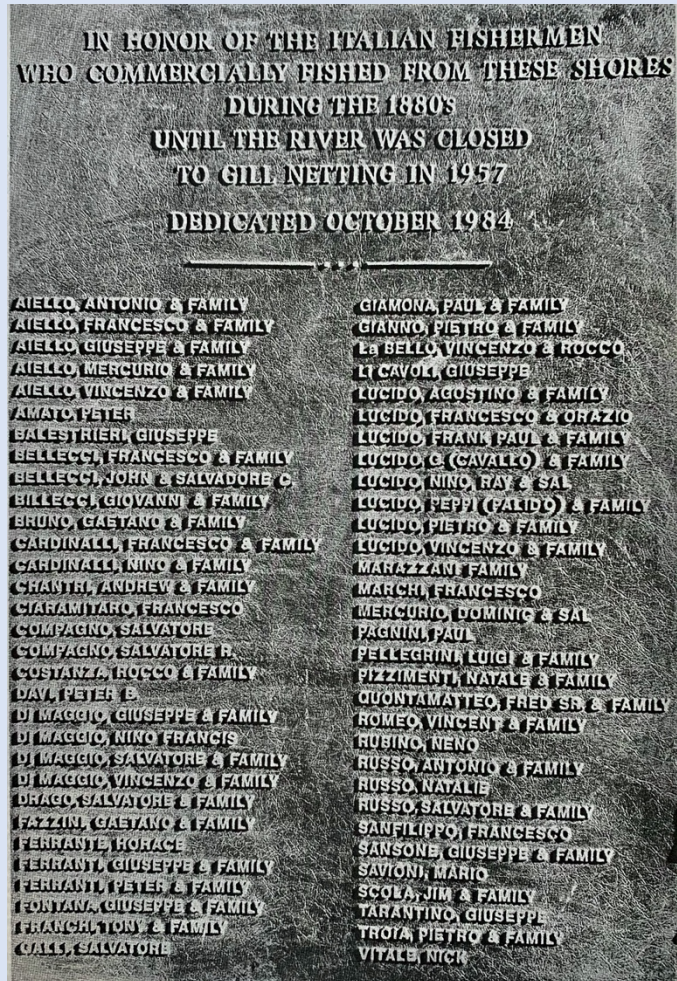
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both arrived in 1898. Giovanni, my 2nd great grandfather initially made a go of it as early as 1882 in St. Louis before hitting hard times. He then went back to Isola to recuperate and finally made his way to Martinez. He would become a boss with the Alaska Packers Association.

We know that many Isolani' "fisher" families resettled from the Sicilian fishing village of New York Landing in Black Diamond (present day Pittsburg). Paolo Giamona arrived in Pittsburg in 1898 and relocated to Martinez in 1900. He was followed by his father in law Giuseppe Ferranti who arrived in Pittsburg in 1891 and then moved to Martinez in 1902. Giuseppe DiMaggio, the father of famed baseball brothers Joe, Vince and Dom arrived in Pittsburg in 1898 and moved to Martinez in 1903. Of note is that following the 1906 Great San Francisco Earthquake many families escaped the catastrophe and relocated to the towns of Martinez and Pittsburg to join relatives. Other notable surnames include Cardinalli, Costanza, Lucido and Russo. Many of these surnames are still recognized in Martinez and can also be found in Pittsburg and Monterey to this very day, as many "followed the fish" to Monterey while others stayed in the delta area finding success in other occupations when the delta was closed to commercial fishing.

Martinez still maintains much of its early fishing legacy in the form of many buildings including the "Little Italy" Shoreline residential neighborhood and the family commercial markets which are noted with historical markers. The Alhambra Creek area, where many of the fishing boats once moored, the net tanning vats can still be seen. St. Catherine's of Siena Catholic Church and cemetery dates from the early 1870's where many of our fisher family ancestors were laid to rest and the Fishermen's Monument stands at the Martinez Marina. Our Isolani history in Martinez really makes for a beautiful walk "in the footsteps of our ancestors". Just ask your Nanno.



Martinez Pioneer Fishermen's Plaque  
Near Ferry Point  
Courtesy of Martinez Historical Society

Source Information:

1. *History of Contra Costa County*, Slocum & Co., San Francisco (1882).
2. *Martinez: A California Town*, Martinez Historical Society (1982).
3. Davi-Collins, Katherine "Tina", *Pioneer Italian Fishermen of Martinez "Nostrì Pescatori"*, self-published (1997).
4. *Images of America, Martinez*, Martinez Historical Society (2004).
5. Oral Martinez Fishing Recollections of Vincent J. Ferrante.
6. Bellecci, John, *3 Generations of Success - Sicilian To American: Values for Immigrants and All Who Want to Succeed*, IUniverse (2008).
7. Gumina, Deanna Paoli, *The Italians of San Francisco 1850-1930*, J.S. Ozer (1978).

## **Mangia Bene Tutti [Eat Well Everyone]**

by Mary Pappas-Coniglio “Mary’s Village Style” (follow me on Facebook)

### **Pasta with Lentils**

#### **Ingredients**

- 1 Bag Brown Lentils
- 1/3 Cup Split peas or light-colored lentils
- 1 Large Onion (Chopped or sliced)
- 1 1/2 Cups Celery (Chopped)
- 2-3 Medium Carrots (Chopped)
- 5 Garlic cloves (Minced)
- 3/4 Cup Tomatoes chopped no juice
- 1 Can Chicken Broth
- 12-14 Cups Water approx.
- 2 Medium Potatoes diced (optional)
- 1 Whole Cauliflower cut up (optional)
- 3 Handfuls fresh spinach or 1 box frozen spinach (optional)
- 1/2 pound Small pasta (optional)



1903 Mary Aiello Pappas 1985

Mother (4 sons) Nana, Old World Chef & Entrepreneur 2 Restaurants (Checker Café and Lincoln Grill) and Saloon (Lincoln Lounge), all during WWII while 3 of her sons were serving in the war. Grocery Stores 1930-1977 (Pappas Market), Soda Fountain (Vogue Fountain), Deli (Sal’s Deli School Street), Landlord to many and foster Mom.

#### **Directions**

Before you start .....spread your lentils out onto a cutting board ...a little at a time.....and carefully go through the lentils ....to be sure there are no rocks or other debris mixed in the package of beans.

When you are sure the lentils are clean place the lentils and split peas in a strainer and rinse gently.

Sauté onions in a little oil for a few minutes.

Add celery and carrots and sauté a few minutes until onions become transparent.

Add garlic and cook for a minute until fragrant.

Add your rinsed lentils and split peas...you can substitute lighter color lentils for the split peas. It’s up to you or you can omit the peas and or lighter color lentils and just use regular lentils. Add the potatoes (optional).

Add squeezed tomatoes (about two hands full) no juice only the tomatoes and chicken broth. Add enough water to cover beans.

Boil for about 35 to 45 min. until lentils are tender, adding water constantly as needed – you may or may not use all of the water. Season with salt and pepper sparingly.

After the beans are tender, add cauliflower or/and some spinach. When it comes to a boil, add small pasta or broken spaghetti or cook the pasta separately to be combined just before serving.

**This recipe was one of my Nana Mary Aiello Pappas’ favorite dishes.....she was a great cook and began teaching me to cook when I was eleven years old.....Thank you Nana! I remember and cherish those days we spent together.**

**Mary Pappas Coniglio**



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**New Sustaining Charter Members of Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.**

Ken Molinaro	Chi-Cha Russo-Boyes	Aldo Gigliotti
Mark Cardinale	Karin & Claude Grillo	Linda Haynes
Michael DiMaggio	Mary & Leonard Gianni Sr.	James & Carol Carey
Frank Verga	Josephine Cardinale Olney	Ken & Carol Ostertag
Stephen Lucido	Morris & Carol Carey	Erasmus & Catherine Aiello
Anna Sorci	Ursuline Carpetta	John (Giovanni) Bruno
Juanita Ferrante	Marlene Hill	Carmela Rose Malfitano Motter & James Motter
Laura Young	Bert Bonanno	

*more to be published in future issues*

**Ambassadors**

Nicole Impagliazzo	Lou Esposito II	Vincent & Midge DiMaggio
Lisa Dondero	John Lineweaver	Vincent & Roselyn Malfitano
Ken Molinaro	Mike & Jan Fernandes	Salvatore M. Coniglio
Jim Coniglio	Albert & Sandy Seeno	Bert & Bella Cutino
Michael Orlando	Nicky D (DePaola)	Leandra Ramm Coniglio
Wolfgang Croskey	Frank & Robin Bruno	Virginia Simonian
Josie Esposito		

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