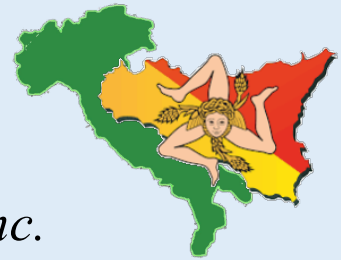




# Il Notiziario

[The Newsletter]  
of the

*Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc.*



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Volume 3, Issue 2

Editor: A.A. Grillo

Spring: Apr 1, 2022

## News from our Executive Board

by Frank "Ciccu" Bruno

Buongiorno Members of FOI,

We hope everyone is healthy and safe.

Well, the first quarter of 2022 is in the books and FOI is moving forward. The first quarter has produced a few major events for FOI. In February, we had a Valentine's Day Zoom Party. And we had 20 members enjoy the first FOI "Day at the Races" at Golden Gate Fields at the end of March. And on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March, 200 people attended the long-awaited dinner show, "That's Italian". The show was a total success that produced 4 standing ovations. The organization raised a large sum of money for our projects and scholarships. The evening was a great achievement. Thank you to all who helped put it on especially Mary Coniglio and entertainers. Beyond any doubt, we showed everyone "What's Italian". See pictures of all the fun on page 3.

Coming up this year we are planning several events such as a HIGH TEA "Italian Style" Extravaganza to be held on May 1<sup>st</sup> at the Pittsburg Elks Club Hall. Mary Coniglio and committee have planned a fantastic event with many surprises. Go to our website for details and to purchase your tickets.

We will again have our annual FOI scholarship awards. The deadline for applying has been extended until 11<sup>th</sup> of April. These scholarships are for Members' Families' children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. If interested please see our website for details about how to apply. Thanks to FOI member Ken Molinaro, owner of Costa Sur Resort & Spa in Puerto Vallarta, who has again given a big boost to our scholarship fund raising by donating an all-exclusive vacation for two, including airfare to his resort for a week. Purchase raffle tickets now. Last year's winner was Gabe Palomino.

We will have 3 events at the three sister cities of Isola delle Femmine: a major event in Monterey on August 20, the FOI Scholarship Awards BBQ in Martinez (June 12), and another event in Pittsburg in October. Watch for details on our website [www.friendsofisola.org](http://www.friendsofisola.org).

We are working with the producers of the documentary "Potentially Dangerous" *When it was a crime to be Italian* to have three private showings in Pittsburg, Martinez, and Monterey.

So, you can see your FOI board is hard at work to make this organization, for preserving our cultural heritage now and in the future, a big success. Please go to our website [www.friendsofisola.org](http://www.friendsofisola.org) to read all we have done and how to participate in our upcoming events.

Please spread the word about The Friends of Isola delle Femmine, Inc. and ask your friends and relatives to join our organization. Our strength is in our members.

Ciao e mille grazie!

Your Executive Board

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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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**News from Isola**

by Sal Coniglio and A.A. Grillo

As here in the U.S., the war in Ukraine is on many minds in Isola and Palermo. From the newspaper Giornale di Sicilia, people in Palermo took to the streets in support of Ukraine, first with a demonstration in Piazza Pretoria, then a vigil in the churchyard of the Cathedral. In the piazza sindacati [trade unions square], politicians, associations and many citizens stood in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. Mayor Orlando said, "Russia's military aggression is senseless. We are ready to welcome refugees."

In a story even closer to our Isolani cugini ed amici, Valerio Vermiglio, a teacher from Isola delle Femmine who moved to the Ukraine in 2015 to continue work as a teacher, was caught by the rapid invasion of Russia. In a video interview carried on the Rete4 TV program *Dritto e Rovescio* [*Straight Ahead and Reverse*], he described that a Russian convoy was just a few kilometers from where he sat in his home in the north of Kiev with bombs falling all around. He continued to make videos as he, his wife Iryna and their children left their home in their car. He sent the videos to Giuseppe d'Angelo in Isola who made them available on YouTube. One video was made as they were stopped in a long line waiting to be processed through the border into Romania. It was quite amazing to see and listen to the couple



In their car on the way to Romania:  
Iryna, Valerio and Daughter at Rear



Cars in Line to Enter Romania

as they made their way through this war zone seeking safety. They hid well the fear and anxiety that they must have been feeling. They even managed a smile on occasion when one of their comments struck them as ironic. It is a different type of travel log, these videos. In the one made from Padova, Italy, they stopped to visit a friend from Isola, Franco Ferrante. They were overjoyed to be safe. From Padova, they drove to Genova, boarded a ferry to Sicily reaching Palermo on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March. Bentornati in patria, Valerio e famiglia! [Welcome back to your homeland, Valerio and family!]

One last news item about Isola from the Giornale di Capaci, Luigi Sbarra, the national secretary of the CISL [Confederazione Italiana dei Sindacati Lavoratori], Italy's second largest trade union federation, spoke on the occasion of the third provincial congress of the union being held in Isola delle Femmine. He spoke of important but insufficient national funds stating: "We are facing a long and difficult crisis for families, workers and the elderly."

We're thrilled that  
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**What's Happening**

**A Night of "That's Italian"**



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

by Orazio Sansonini, translated by A.A. Grillo

### **Devotion, worship and festivities of the Madonna delle Grazie At Isola delle Femmine**

The veneration and devotion to the Madonna delle Grazie is undoubtedly the best gift received by the ancestors of Isola delle Femmine, fishermen coming from Capaci. The Madonna delle Grazie has always been the honor of the Isolani, who unite and identify with her.

Her feast was born in Capaci, motherland of Isola delle Femmine, where already in 1597, she is mentioned in the brief report of Monsignor Bernardo Gash, bishop of Mazara del Vallo in whose diocese the territory of the then fief of Capaci existed. An altar is mentioned with a picture of the Madonna, our Lady, the mother of grace, who was invoked and venerated by the faithful as Madonna delle Grazie and celebrated on 8-September, the feast of her birth. The Monsignor's report continued that this painting was kept in the Capaci Chiesa dell'Assunta [Church of the Assumption], known as Trinità [Trinity], demolished in the 80s of the previous century, which was located near the mother church.

In Isola, at that time a village of Capaci (also known as Tonnara or Capaci di Jusu [Lower Capaci]) the painting was brought by Capaci fishermen and for a very long time the Madonna was venerated with the title of Maria SS. [Santissima] della Tonnara, as the abbot Domenico Stanislavo Alberti recalls in his 1718 memorial "Meraviglie di Dio" ["Wonders of God"], a copy of which is kept in the historical archive of the mother church of Capaci. Also, from this writing we learn that the feast of the Madonna della Tonnara was celebrated on August 5th.

Starting from the second half of the 1700s, precisely in 1760, there was a change of name from Madonna della Tonnara to Madonna delle Grazie and the feast was moved to August 15 so as not to coincide with the September feast of Capaci people.

Even when Isola became independent from Capaci in 1855, for decades through the 1900s until 1958, the festival continued to be celebrated on August 15. And finally, the devotion towards the image of the Madonna of the fishermen, transplanted to the new municipality of Isola, was a reason for the eventual creation of a new sculpted image that arrived in 1859.

Then in 1959, in celebration of the "centenary" of the arrival of the statue of the Madonna delle Grazie to Isola, it was decided to move the celebration to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July. The 1<sup>st</sup> was set as the day for the coronation ceremony and the 2<sup>nd</sup>, then the feast of the visitation of the Virgin to Saint Elizabeth, as a celebration of the festivity of the Madonna delle Grazie in order to make it coincide with the heartfelt celebration of Isola's patron Saint Peter on 29-June. Even today, 2-July is solemnly the day of the celebrations in Isola delle Femmine of Maria SS. delle Grazie.

In the meantime, the celebration of 8-September in Capaci had failed due to the closure of the church of the Trinity, in which the original image of the Madonna was venerated and due to the dissolution of the brotherhood of the SS. Trinità who took care of the feast. Consequently, the Isolani veneration grew.

So with time and the increase in popularity of the Isola festival, even Capaci people began to celebrate the Madonna delle Grazie on 2-July until 1983 when the last great feast was celebrated in Capaci at the Madonna delle Grazie, leaving only Saint Erasmo as patron of that city.

To be honest, the statue of the Madonna delle Grazie was not intended to center all the interest of the Isolani on itself. But the love and devotion to the evocative statue and the news of great wonders attributed to it have meant that the devotion spread even to the neighboring villages so as to heavily, but unjustifiably, obscure the devotion of the Isolani to St. Peter, who was and remains the patron saint of the Isolani community.

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

by Vincent S. Ferrante

### **EARLY COMMERCIAL FISHING BOATBUILDING**

This article will focus on early commercial boat building as related to our local historic fishing grounds.

#### **THE FELUCCA SAILBOAT**

The first fishing boats that were used by Italian fisherman in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century were called feluccas, lateen rigged vessels, the type of which had been used in the Mediterranean Sea for centuries and which had its origin in Egypt. The lateen sail was triangular in shape extended by a long spar slung to a low mast. The feluccas were a common sight in San Francisco Bay and in the fishing grounds south of the Golden Gate between Pigeon Point and Monterey until after the turn of the century when they were replaced by gasoline powered craft. While the felucca was an ideal fishing boat for bay and ocean fishing, its design made it unsatisfactory for work in the waters of the Sacramento Delta.



**A Felucca Sailboat Comes into North Beach Under Sail & Oars While a Delta Sailboat Is Rowed Out. A schooner Sits in the far background**

#### **THE DELTA SAILBOAT**

In 1868 a new style of boat appeared in the Sacramento Delta, equipped with a sprit rigged sail. It measured about 26 feet in length with an eight-foot beam or width. It had a retractable keel which allowed it to enter very shallow water, and a removable rudder which permitted the net to be hauled over the stem.



**Delta Sailboats with Their Sprit Rigged Sails**

The boat, which literally became home for its two-man crew during the fishing season's peak, proved to be the very acme of efficiency, a powerful seaworthy rowing and sailboat, fast, highly maneuverable, inexpensive, durable, versatile and dependable. As late as 1929, the Delta sprit rigged sailboat saw use in all parts of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and in Suisun Bay, San Pablo Bay and even San Francisco Bay. The popularity of this boat was widespread, and soon hundreds of such craft were employed in gill-net operations on the Columbia River, a fact which caused many people to believe that the boat had been

developed there. The misnomer "Columbia River fish boat" or "Columbia River salmon boat" was applied to it.

Credit is given to Sicilian Black Diamond (present day Pittsburg) fishermen for the Delta sailboat's popular use in Alaska. They disliked the primitive boats used in Oregon and Alaska, saying that cemeteries up there were full of the men that used them. The Black Diamond men led the way in taking their own boats north.

These boats were a modified version of the Delta sailboat, 32 feet long, 12 feet wide with a deeper draft such that it was able to handle tides of 22 feet. Also, it could carry heavier loads of fish, about 330 salmon, and was used in Alaskan waters until 1952 as regulations were relaxed for power boat use.

Next issue, power boats and their builders.

SOURCE: A History of Commercial Fishing Industry of Pittsburg, California by John R. Light 1971

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

by Mary Pappas-Coniglio “Cooking with Mary’s Village Style”

Visit us “Cooking with Mary’s Village Style” and “Friends of Isola delle Femmine” on Facebook, Instagram & YouTube or on our Website: [https://friendsofisoladellefemmine.org/food\\_travel/](https://friendsofisoladellefemmine.org/food_travel/)

### *Cooking with Mary's Village Style*

One of my Mother in laws famous dishes perfect for Lent (without adding the meat).

*Thank you Maria Lucida Coniglio*



## **Pasta with Broccoli**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 3-4 Lb. Broccoli cut medium pieces                 | 2-3 Tbs Butter                            |
| 1 large onion chopped small                        | 1 Small Can Chicken Broth (not all of it) |
| 4-5 ounces chopped Pancetta, Prosciutto or Sausage | Some Pasta Water if needed                |
| 2-3 Cloves Garlic minced                           | 1/2 cup black Raisins Optional            |
| Olive Oil  | 1/2 Cup Sliced Almonds Optional           |

**In a small amount of Olive Oil sauté the pancetta, prosciutto or sausage until crisp then add the onion cook until it is translucent.**

**Add garlic and cook for a minute until the garlic is fragrant, not browned.**

**Add the butter and raisins (optional) then add broccoli and sauté for a minute or two.**

**Then add some of the chicken broth, just enough to create a little sauce. As the broccoli cooks you may need to add more of the chicken broth or some of the Pasta water to loosen it up. Do not over cook the broccoli. You do not want it to be mashed up.**

**lastly add almonds (optional). Finish with grated cheese.**

**Any Pasta works with this recipe but my favorite is Campanelle (little bugles)**

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

We continue to add new members. Two here added to our already 140 active members.

Phyllis Aiello-Bruno      Patricia Basket      Paul Flores

*more to be published in future issues*

**A big thank you to Ken Molinaro**

for supporting our scholarship program with a raffle prize trip to Mexico.



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