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We are the last generation that can relate to those who came to America to make a better life for themselves and their families.





We are the last generation that can relate to those immigrants that came across the sea to make a better life for themselves and their families.

My father Francesco was born in 1897 in Burgio, Sicily, a small town in the province of Agrigento. When he was three-years old his father, Rosario, at age 32, left the family and migrated to America. He knew if he didn't he would be trapped in the clutches of poverty with no hope of a better future for his family. It must have been heartbreaking for him to leave his wife and three children not knowing when he would see them again. But he did!

After a two week voyage below the deck in steerage he arrived in New York City in 1900 and made his way to Buffalo where he settled on Canal Street in a neighborhood called the Hooks. The "Hooks" was teeming with Italian immigrants, living in tenements in what we would now describe as horrible living conditions. For six years he worked and saved enough money to send for his family in Sicily.

In January 1906, Francesco, his mother Paola and sisters, Caterina and Nicolina, departed Sicily to join Rosario in America. Francesco was nine-years old and had not seen his father for six years.

The above scenario is a common story for most of us over the age of 65 who are the direct descendents of the massive wave of Italian immigrants that came to America. Often, when with friends, many of our discussions revolve around the past. Our memories are similar. When I tell my children and my grandchildren what it was like growing up in an old Italian-American neighborhood, I wonder if they really understand not having experienced it themselves.

The Sicilian language permeated the neighborhood. It was part of the communal atmosphere. Those of us who were part of the first generation were able to converse in the dialect spoken by their parents. The second generation Italians lacked the ability to speak fluently, but



Rosario and Paola Di Leo
In front of their home at 285 Busti Ave

could understand the dialect when spoken to, especially when condemned sharply by their elders. I attempt to speak to my grandchildren in Italian, but it is a lost art. They shake their heads and do not understand - nor do they want to.

Our parents and grandparents seldom owned or drove an automobile. Vacations were for others, not for us. Summers were for work or the playground. Central to the community was the neighborhood. Everything you needed was in walking distance and most of the stores and shops were owned and operated by other Italians. Through open windows in homes you heard the voice of huckster coming down the street

shouting in Italian the names of the fresh produce on his truck that day. The women, as they did in Italy, bargained for price and questioned the quality of the produce for sale. The milkman, the iceman, the insurance man, and many of the various street vendors worked their trade up and down the streets. You never had to leave the neighborhood to shop. Your basic needs came to your doorsteps.

In essence you could say that the neighborhood reflected the towns in Italy that were vacated by the immigrants. Relatives, if not in the same house, were close by. In the building where I lived my family rented on the fourth floor, my grandparents rented on the third and my aunt, uncle and cousins on the second. Other relatives were usually a short walk or bus ride away. The close proximity to family and friends allowed us to visit each other often. I am disheartened that my grandchildren do not know the grandchildren of my siblings. This is not by choice, but by distance. We do not live near each other and in some cases not even in the same city or town.

I laugh to myself when I hear my children arranging play dates for their children. It could range anywhere from a few hours in the home or an expensive trip to a movie theatre or Chuckie Cheese. Oh, what a difference a generation makes. In our neighborhood, a typical day

consisted of kids waking up, having a quick breakfast, and running out the door to the nearest playground, not to return home until it was time for lunch and then back outside until dinner time.

At the playground, we played countless games of baseball. Teams were chosen by two captains, usually the best players, tossing a bat to each other and then beginning from the bottom of the bat they exchanged grips hand over hand until the hands reached the top of the bat. The kid who reached the top picked first. As expected the players were selected according to talent. Those not so talented were the last to be chosen. We did not concern ourselves with bruised feelings.

We usually had one bat, and if broken we nailed the pieces back together and covered with black tape. Black tape was our savior. We had one ball to play with and after much use the stitching would come loose and the cover would begin to come apart. Black tape to the rescue. There were only a few that had hand me down baseball gloves. They were the ancient five-open finger gloves of the '40s. The gloves were usually assigned to the first baseman and one or two of the infielders. The remaining players caught bare handed. No comparison to today's structured Little League.

Not all kids played ball. Some of us worked and attempted to earn a few dollars. Many came from big families so money was scarce. The dollar was sacred and not to be spent on foolish items. So if you wanted to have a few coins in your pocket you worked for them. You delivered papers, shined shoes, worked for the neighborhood grocer or for any one who would hire you. Returning pop bottles to the grocer for two cents apiece could get you a nickel candy bar or a popsicle.

Others went to the farms to pick beans all day. I remember the early summer mornings when men, women and young children would leave their homes and walk to the Porter playground on the Lower Terrace to await the arrival of trucks that would take them to North Collins and surrounding farms to pick beans and other produce. At the end of the day, as the sun began to set, they were dropped off back to Porter playground, then making their slow walk back to their homes. I can still envision that walk home—older men and women stooped over, sweaters that offset the morning chill, now slung over their tired shoul-

ders, and a paper bag in hand containing a sample of the day's pickings, conversing in Italian, saying their "Sa Benedicas" as they reached their destinations, only to begin again the next day. Food stamps, Welfare, Medicaid or other entitlements were not available. They did what they had to do to make a living.

Traditionally we were named after our grandparents and we gave our children the names of our parents. Our grandparents were revered and when they aged and became sick their children cared for them until the end. For better or worse, today's generation has abandoned the old custom.

This was the time when ethnics married within their ethnicity. An Italian boy married an Italian girl in an Italian Catholic Church. The church was the cultural and religious center of the neighborhood. Each church conducted an annual lawn fête or festival. Rides for the kids and Italian delicacies were enjoyed by the parishioners. The churches were always open and we filled them on Sundays. The evening benedictions at St Anthony's on Court Street were conducted in Italian. Most were attended by elderly women, dressed in black, who sang the hymns in Italian. Now churches are closed, the masses are in English, and few people attend.

These are just a few stories from my generation. We each have our own memories that take us back to those glorious days of our youth. But the sights and sounds of seventy-plus years are past and not to be seen or heard again.

Essentially, we have fulfilled the legacy of our immigrant forefathers. We have multiple automobiles, expensive homes, bank accounts and investments. We raised our children in multi-diverse neighborhoods. They attend college and are established in their careers. They have assimilated and married into other ethnicities. We thought of ourselves as Italians, our grandchildren think of themselves as Americans, and they should -- because they are. This was the dream that spurred our people. But let us not forget the struggles that they endured and the prejudices they encountered. For without their dreams, hopes and hard work we would not be what we are today.

The year is 1944, just a few months shy of my fourth birthday. I am in the living room of my great-grandmother, Concetta Carogana. She is singing an Italian aria in her lovely soprano voice. She accompanies herself on the piano with one finger.

She becomes aware of my presence and beckons me to come to her. I give her a hug, and before I realize it, she has lifted me onto her knee. Taking my right index finger between her right thumb and index finger, she proceeds to plunk out 'Santa Lucia' on the piano. After repeating this several times, she encourages me to play it alone. After several attempts, I finally am able to do so quite well.

Thus ended my first formal piano lesson. This event is as vivid in my memory today, as if it happened yesterday.

By the time I was six, my parents had arranged for me to study full time with Miss Voltz, a fine piano instructor. On Tuesdays, dad would drive my older sister, Petrina, and me to the studio on Franklin Street, near Allen, for our weekly lesson. Eventually, our younger siblings, Salvatore and Josephine would join our weekly foray. My youngest sister, Marian would later study piano during her High School years. Petrina was quite earnest in her studies, as was I. Eventually, she would attend Rosary Hill College (now Daemen College) to earn a degree in music, as did Josephine.

Through the years, I had developed an exceptional sense of sight reading. While in college, Petrina was required to give recitals as part of her curriculum. When she brought home a new piece of music, I would sight read it with little difficulty. This upset her immensely. She would complain that she had to study diligently to master a composition; 'Al plays it with

such ease'. Of course, once I realized her anxiety, I would not play her music unless I knew she was not around.

During this time, Uncle Frank DiNatale was pursuing a Masters Degree in music at Ithaca College. He later became a well-known entertainer in Miami, Florida. He was very interested in our musical progress and expected a performance from us while home for the holidays. Liberace was very popular during this time. I had prepared one of his arrangements of 'Tenderly' in the key of E-flat.

I played it note for note and was very proud of myself. Uncle Frank asked to see the music and after looking it over, he stated how pleased he was and asked me to play it again. I asked him to give me the music. He said he wanted to hear my version. I could not play it without the notes! His lesson, of course, was to 'get out of the music'; either memorize it or play it somewhat as written. He also encouraged me not to emulate any one musician's style, but to use something I liked from several favorites and develop my own style. I took all this to heart, and today I can truly say that my style of playing is my own. However, it took quite a while to feel comfortable playing 'Tenderly' or any song in E-flat. Eventually I overcame this mental block and today it is one of my favorite keys.

After I was married, I asked my father-in-law, Doc Penkson, who owned a music studio in Black Rock, and who gave accordion lessons, to explain what the left hand is all about on an accordion. He gave me some lessons and before long I became proficient playing the accordion as well as piano. Eventually I would add Theatre Organ; I had already done some church organ work during my school years.

Early one Saturday Doc called me and asked if I was

busy that afternoon. I said 'no', I figured he needed my help with some project around the home. I was very surprised when he told me I was about to play my first gig. It was a wedding reception. I enjoyed the experience very much and have not looked back since.

Shortly after this I relocated to Rochester, NY. Within a few months I formed a dance combo named 'Pennies Four'. For many years we performed at countless wedding receptions, retirement Parties, Christmas parties, etc. In addition to which I performed solo at several restaurants in the Rochester area.

Eventually I purchased a keyboard on which I could play 'Bass' with my left hand. The sound was very authentic. Ultimately we became a three piece group. When introducing the band members, I always introduced our Bass player as Manny Manko; an American form of the Italian 'mane manco', which means left hand. This was always our private inside joke.

In 2000, when I retired from my job in Electronics I began entertaining solo at Senior Centers, Assisted Living Facilities, and Nursing Homes. To this day I am active in music and still enjoy every minute of it.

I often thank the Good Lord for the talent of music which He has bestowed upon me, and for the many opportunities I've had to use it. I thank my mother for insisting that I study my piano lessons daily. I thank great-grandma Concetta for my first piano lesson.

I often tell my friends that my earnest desire is to die while playing the piano; resolving a B-flat seventh chord to an E-flat major chord.



Al Saia

About the Author....

Born in Buffalo, NY, in 1940, Al was raised on Seventh Street between Georgia and Carolina in the West Side; 'in the shadow of City hall'. In 1965 his job took him to Rochester, NY. where he has spent most of his musical years. Music has always been an important part of Al's life. It helped put his three children through school. All have followed the Saia musical tradition in some way. Today, his grand-children are continuing that tradition.

He is proud to count among his family members many musicians:

- Charles Saia (father)- choir member
- Frances Saia (mother)- choir member
- John Carogana (great uncle)- pianist, choir member
- Jimmy Foster (uncle)- big band vocalist
- Frank Natale (uncle)- pianist
- Epi 'Happy' Campanella (cousin)- valve trombone, string bass
- (Epi's dad, Mario, played Sousaphone with the John Phillip Sousa Orchestra)
- Petrina (Saia) Paoletti (sister)- pianist, church organist
- Josephine Saia (sister)- pianist, church organist
- Joseph 'Doc' Penkson (father-in-law)- accordion
- Joe (Pinky) Penksa (brother-in-law)- accordion.

In the year 827 AD, the Saracens began their conquest of Sicily. By 925 AD, they controlled the island completely. These Moors were eventually conquered by the Normans of the Great Count Ruggieru, but to this day much of Sicilian culture remains tinged by the Moors' presence on the island. Though some of the customs have relaxed in today's Sicily, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, our immigrant ancestors brought many of them to America: the wearing of dark shawls and shape-concealing clothing by women; the strict separation of the sexes in daily life; the concept of 'family honor above all'. In addition to social customs, the Muslims brought culinary delights: sugar cane and cannoli, for example. They also brought oranges, lemons, spinach and artichokes. Their words for these foods became part of the Sicilian language: naranj (aranci), laimun (limuni), esbinakh (spinaci) and kharchouf (carcioffi). The Moors also introduced the 'thistle artichoke', a cousin of the real thing. In Sicily, this variation was called carduni.



Sicilian Carduni Flower

These plants were not the "cardoon" or "gardoona" of America, but more artichoke-like, with flowers or "chokes" that could be eaten. In fact most of the plant was edible, including the roots and the celery-like stem, all with that buttery-bitter flavor that pleases the taste

buds of Sicilians. When they came to America, a couple of things worked against our ancestors' enjoyment of the carcioffi or carduni they had loved in Sicily. First, they were mostly poor, and true artichokes were delicacies they couldn't often afford. Secondly, the carduni or 'thistle artichokes' of Sicily were not widely available here.



Sicilian Cardunni Plant

But our enterprising mothers and grandmothers, who could make a meal from what others might consider weeds, like dandelions (chicoria) or mustard plants (mazzareddi), found a plant that offered the buttery-bitter richness they missed. It was the simple burdock, a weed that grew from cracks in the concrete, along the edges of buildings under the roof gutters, and most famously, along railroad tracks. It wasn't long before the women began sending their men out in a rite of spring, crowbars and knives in hand, to gather these 'carduni Americani.'

Burdocks, like the Sicilian carduni, are also of the artichoke family. They have broad leaves and thick, ridged stalks like celery or rhubarb. They blossom with small purple flowers which ripen into little round seed-bearing 'burrs'. These propagate their kind by sticking to the fur of animals (or the clothes of humans) so that they can be carried to fertile ground and grow anew. As a kid on Musacchio's farm in North Collins, I remember col-

lecting burrs and sticking them together to make different shapes – cars, fish, animals, etc.; sort of a poor-kid's natural 'Lego' set. About that same time (1941), a Swiss engineer, Georges de Mestral, had as much imagination as I, but a more practical application, and he invented Velcro to mimic the sticky burrs of the cardoon.



American Burdock Burrs

In addition to the above characteristics, like other weeds, cardoons have tough, deep roots, so picking them was a man's job. The further into the growing season, the tougher the cardoon stalks (to pick or to eat), and experienced pickers knew when to go out just when the plants were tender enough, but not so tender that they had not attained the desired flavor. These men were jealous of their 'cardoon spots' and would not eagerly share them. Often they kept the weeds' locations as family secrets, passing them on only to their children and grandchildren. Some Per Niente members, to this day, go out to pick cardoons. Where, I don't know!

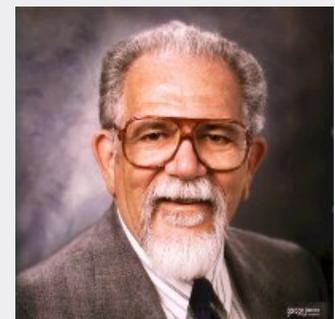
Cardoon stalks resemble very long celery, but the ridges along the back are actually hard spines that you must peel off before you can cook and eat the vegetable. The more mature the plant, the tougher the stalk, and the harder it is to clean: all the more reason to pick

tender young plants. The root, or trunzu, resembles a carrot, and in a contrary way, the more mature the plant, the larger and tastier the trunzu. Old-timers hunted cardoon with a sturdy crowbar, inserted at the base of the plant and worked carefully to extract the root, intact. Many modern pickers use a sharp knife and cut the stalks off at the base, leaving the root behind. Either way, picking and cleaning cardoons usually meant skinned knuckles and sore fingertips, but the end result was worth it.



American Burdock Plant

Once peeled and cleaned, the cardoon stalks can be parboiled and frozen for future use, sautéed with salt and olive oil, or cooked with eggs in a froscia. Perhaps our food editor Sam Arena will devote a future column to cardoon recipes. Regardless, thanks to the Moors, Sicilian-Americans have made the cardoon their own.



Angelo Coniglio

In these times, when it isn't unusual for people not to know their neighbors, I want to tell my fellow Per Niente members a wonderful story of friendship that began on Buffalo's West Side almost 100 years ago and continues strongly today.

The Insana/ Lepeirs and the Lauricella/ Zarccone families trace their friendship over a span of six generations, including the coincidence of being next-door neighbors three times.

In 1914, my parents, Sam and Rose Insana (from Palermo), moved to 423 Seventh Street. I lived there with them, my two brothers and our grandmother, Vittoria Santa Maria. Next door, at 419 Seventh Street, were Ralph (from Racalmuto) and wife Mary (from Montedoro) Lauricella, and their six children.

Mary's mother, Angela Licata, visited daily from her home on Trenton Avenue. Angela and Vittoria enjoyed chatting back and forth from the front porches about their childhood days in Sicily, the family and friends left behind, and the new experiences of life in America. From over the back yard fence, Ralph would call out to the Insanas to come and enjoy the variety of vegetables and fruit from his cherished garden – which included a fig tree -- and some of his homemade wine.

In 1936, Joseph and Josephine Zarccone (from Valledlunga) and their seven children moved into the lower flat of the Lauricella home. The Insanas were delighted to welcome that lovely family to the neighborhood and they, too, became our friends.

In 1940, Russell Lauricella married Ann Zarccone and a few years later moved to 435 Seventh Street. Richard Lepeirs and I also had married (both couples at Holy Cross Church) and we moved into an apartment at 427 Seventh. Once again, we lived right next door. This happy coincidence ensured that our children – Elaine Marie, Linda and Richie Lepeirs and Mary Ann, Lorraine, Arlene and Ralph Lauricella --spent their early childhood together.

We still laugh recalling that when Elaine Marie and Mary Ann attended kindergarten at Holy Cross School they were such close friends and had such similar features that the nuns would sometimes be confused as to who was who.

In 1951, the Lepeirs family moved to 210 Winston Road, a house built by Richard and his father, directly across the street from St. Rose of Lima Church. Several years later, my widowed mother came to live with us. Soon after, the Lauricellas also moved to North Buffalo.

In the 1960s, when Mary Ann was in her teens and I was in my 40s, we happened to board the same bus, and instantly renewed our family friendship. Mary Ann was then a Buffalo Courier-Express reporter and I did special events and promotion work for D'Youville College. Our careers intertwined for about 12 years with Mary Ann often writing feature stories about projects I worked on for the college, and for Shea's Buffalo and the Courtyard Theater.

In 1972, Lorraine Lauricella's fiancé, Tom

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Lococo, who did not know our family, purchased the house next door to us on Winston Road. Soon, we resumed our tradition of sharing with dear neighbors, as my mother often presented Tom with her freshly baked bread and cookies. This was the third time our families were next-door neighbors by coincidence.

When Lorraine and Tom Lococo's son, Mark, relocated from Buffalo to San Diego, my daughter Linda and husband Doug, who live there, helped him get settled into his first apartment, by coincidence in the same neighborhood, and still invite him to celebrate his birthday with them every year.

Mark Lococo and Elaine's daughters, Rose

Marie and Ann Marie Dembicer, represent the fifth generation of our friendship. When Mary Ann attended a PBS Conference in San Francisco she spent time with Rose Marie's daughter Estrella – who is our families' sixth generation connection.

As much as we are excited to look to the future for even more shared family friendships, it's also very nice to still be able to look back. From my home in Granada Hills, CA, I recently had a most enjoyable telephone conversation with Josephine Zarcone Sardella, who resides in Tonawanda, NY. We are both in our 90s and we had fun talking about our high school days and other great memories of Buffalo's old West Side.



Sara continues her treasured friendship with the Lauricella family, as does her daughter Linda. Sara is 95 and lives in Granada Hills, CA.

Elaine's Lepeirs 5th Birthday Party

Elaine, Joan Ervolina, Mary Ann Lauricella, Sister Linda (standing)



At almost six-feet he was tall compared to his Italian-American contemporaries. Before the years and severe arthritis made him stooped and stiff, he must have been even taller.

His name was Alexander, or, to be more accurate, Alessandro Pignone. To most he was Alex or Duke, but to me he was Alexander the Great or Zio Alessandro. The name Duke was a rather sneering reference to the fact that for much of his life he did not work at a regular job. Most people did not know that, as child of three or four in Italy, he fell down a steep hill into a ravine and almost lost his life. He was hospitalized for nearly two months and when he returned to his family it was clear that he had suffered some brain damage that left him with significant but invisible disabilities. It was a subject that was never discussed. He had all his limbs. He could walk, he could see, he could talk. People would ask, "What the heck is wrong with him?" Some declared that he was just lazy, but nothing could be further from the truth.

What they didn't know is that he did tons of work around the house. He cleaned the snow, not only in the front yard, but in the backyard too. He trimmed the grapevines and watered the tomato and pepper plants that grew in the family garden that his brother Carmine planted. He was such a good guy he also cleaned the snow off the cars parked on the streets after a snowfall,

even if he didn't know the owners. He shoveled snow for the neighbors and would never take a penny for doing it. Alex always opened doors for worshipers on Sunday morning at St. Anthony's and later at Holy Cross. No, Alex was not lazy but he was uniquely content with his life, with who he was and where he was.

At the time of his accident he had been left in the care of his fifteen-year-old brother Carmine, who always felt a special responsibility for Alex for not watching him more closely. He became Alex's guardian and protector until the day he died. That brother was my grandfather and thus Zio Alessandro came into my life.

Alexander sightings were common, not only in all parts of Buffalo, but throughout Erie County and even beyond. He was well known by the local police who walked the beats of Buffalo and its environs. We kids thought he must have worn out more shoes than any other single person in the history of the world. He walked everywhere: from Buffalo to North Collins, the East Side, the West Side, north and south. He walked everywhere yet nowhere in particular much of the time. Alessandro's family had a mixed breed dog named Princey who was his best friend and together they often walked the town for hours. We often wondered how sometimes Alex found his way home, but he always did. He walked not only in spring and summer, but also in the fall and winter, in the rain, wind, sun and snow. As he got older he often wore threadbare clothing on his walks. Although his family bought him new clothes, he refused to wear the new until he had absolutely no other choice because his old clothes were simply falling apart. To many, he looked like a tramp, a bum.

The Duke was kind and considerate to all and he seemed to be gloriously unaware of the disdain of some of the people he met. His illness had made him into someone special, a rare breed, childlike and innocent, like no other any of us have ever met before or since. He lived in the moment. He seemed to have no cares or

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worries, simply taking life as it came, the good and the bad. You couldn't get him to go see a doctor or visit a hospital for love or money. He would never let you take his photograph. To him, life was what it was, and whenever the Lord would choose to call him home, he would be ready. Children and animals knew that he was rare and special, even if adults weren't perceptive enough. Alex was like a piper. Often when he walked he would do so with an honor guard of children, dogs and even a stray cat or two following behind. It was a sight to behold.

A little boy, Salvatore, who suffered from asthma wanted desperately to join his Uncle Alex, Zio Alessandro, on one of those walks, but was not allowed to do so for fear that he would have an asthma attack brought on by the exertion of the walk. The boy kept pestering his uncle until he could no longer refuse. Alexander told Salvatore that it would have to be a short and sweet journey and then only if the weather cooperated. The two got going about 6:30 one morning, when the youngster was left in Alex's care. It started out as an uneventful but exciting interlude. The two proceeded on a route up Seventh Street to Connecticut Street, past the 174th Armory, and then over Richmond Avenue to Barker to Delaware and then up Delaware to Forest Lawn Cemetery where they stopped at the Red Jacket statue for lunch. Alexander pulled out a brown paper bag containing a pepper and egg sandwich and an orange for the two to share, but suddenly the little boy began to wheeze and he soon was having a full-blown bronchial asthma attack. Alexander was frightened, but took the six year old boy into his arms and walked home, carrying him the entire way.

After a while, the boy began breathing better, he thanked his benefactor for one of the best days of his life and asked to be put down as they approached School #3 on Porter and Niagara Streets. They walked the rest of the way hand-in-hand and no one was ever the wiser. Neither of them ever mentioned this event, though Salvatore would remember it in the years to come as a near disaster that turned out to be a great success. It was his first great adventure. And, for both,

it only enhanced the love they felt for one another. Did I mention that Princey was also with them and he too kept their secret.

When Alex died on December 30, 1956, he was sitting on the back stairs with a shovel in his hand. He had been removing snow. He had a look on his face that his grandnephew, Salvatore, who found him and closed his beautiful and innocent blue eyes for the last time, never forgot. At that moment, the then 16-year-old felt the loss of a beloved companion and the pain of death for the very first time. He had never felt that way before. The boy and Princey tried to comfort one another. Salvatore knew, however, that he now had a guardian angel, a sweet saint who would protect and watch over him just as he had on their great adventure. He mouthed the words "Goodbye Alessandro" as he left the old man to tell the other family members what had just happened. Princey stayed by Alessandro's side, faithful to the end.

Zio Alessandro – thank you for being there for me. I love you now and forever.



Six-year old Sal Martoche
Accompanied his Uncle Alessandro
on one of his daily walks.



Russell Alba

9/13/1920 - 12/7/2011

Our Dad, Rosario (Russell) Alba was born in 1920 to Calogero and Giovanna Alba who emigrated from Sicily to Pennsylvania and later settled on Buffalo's West Side. He was one of five children. His parents imparted a strong work ethic and as a child, he spent each summer in Angola picking fruits and vegetables to help his family. "A penny a pound" he'd tell us as that's what they were paid. After working as a cab driver and an airplane assembler at Curtis Wright, he chose his career as a truck driver and for 30 years made friends at all his various stops. In retirement, he continued driving as a volunteer for the Cancer Society and for the Lockport Senior Citizens Center.

He met and married our Mom, Grace Skill and together they left the "city life" to fulfill her dream of owning a house in the country. They worked to restore the farmhouse and barn, plant a garden every year, raise animals and create a peaceful haven for us kids to grow up on. The farm, dotted with his beloved Blue Spruce trees would later become a gathering place for our friends, whether swimming in the pool or hanging out in the barn. Friends and relatives would visit in the summer and be treated to lots of food and Russ's famous red wine which he so prided himself in making and later sharing the tradition with a few select friends and grandson Anthony.

Family was most important to Dad. He was a devoted husband who trusted and respected his wife Grace. He was supportive and proud of his three children even if he didn't always put it into words. We just knew that he would always be

there and somehow everything would be alright. When Mom passed away far too early, he made sure we all stayed connected even though we were separated by miles.

Dad, affectionately known as "Bop" to his grandsons was incredibly devoted to them and made sure that he was there for First Communions, Confirmations, graduations and other events in their lives. "Bop" could be seen at soccer, baseball and hockey games as well as concerts, plays and activities they were involved in. In more recent years, a dinner at Santasiero's with all of us brought him great joy. Bop made no secret of the pride he felt for each of them -- Anthony, Mike, John and Nick as they have grown into fine young men. He was a true role model.

Bop loved making sure you had all the local "goodies" from WNY like Sahlen's hot dogs or Chiavetta's marinade. As soon as he knew what you liked, he'd put together his famous "care packages" filled with an assortment of edible treats sent quickly on their way thanks to UPS!

Dad looked terrific for a man of 91 years and loved keeping his age a secret. Perpetually tanned, he attributed his good health to "clean living" and a bit of red wine for sure!

He could be a bit stubborn at times but it may have been that stubbornness that carried him through childhood polio, being run over by a car, the early loss of his wife and a bout with cancer. He never complained about those things and just encouraged us to press on during the tough times. Even in his final hours, he possessed a strength



A young Russell Alba

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and dignity that we will hold in our hearts forever.

Perhaps one of the greatest gifts he has given us all is a true appreciation for the simple pleasures in life. He got such joy from just sitting around the kitchen table, eating cheese, drinking wine and

talking. A summer afternoon spent lazing in the yard was just a golden day for him and even better if shared with any of us. A day well spent and a life well-lived -contentment- may all of us be as lucky.

Russell with dad Calogero and mom Giovanina on the lower West Side



Russell with his Ford at the Front Park



I grew up and still reside on Buffalo's West Side. I am the third generation in my family to live and own our home at 721 Busti. Our neighborhood was known as "Doctor's Row;" probably because there was a doctor's office on nearly every corner. On Niagara and Vermont was Dr. Lascola. On Niagara and Connecticut was Dr. LaMastra. On Seventh Street (now Columbus Pky.) were Doctors Pisa and Naples. On Porter Avenue were Doctors Mallia, Moscato, Lombardo and Spano to name a few. So you see we were pretty much covered by dentists and medical doctors.

In addition to all the doctors there were also Judges: Montesano, Buscaglia, and LaTona. There were attorneys, the likes of John Nasca, Thomas Runfolo, and John Martina. P S #3 Principal was Miss Louise LaTona.

My grandfather, Louis Marinaccio, bought our home on Busti in the late 1930s. My father Michael and mother Margaret married in 1946 and lived in the upper apartment, where I was raised along with my brother Louis and sister Michelle (DiLeo). My paternal grandmother, Pasqualina, who lived downstairs from us died when I was fourteen-years old. I can still see her sitting on the front porch visiting with countless relatives, the Marinaccios and the DeGeorges who lived in the area. Also there was a daily stream of friends and neighbors who stopped by.

As youngsters we walked to the Niagara Show or downtown on Saturday afternoons. On Sundays we went to Holy Cross Church as a family. We passed family owned businesses: grocers, factory workers, laborers, and countless others whose goal it was to provide, nurture and educate their families to thus create a united neighborhood of friendship and love. Then maybe a stop at Columbia Market or Merlino's Cheese or Muscarella's pastry shop. If you needed bread, dough, sheet pizza, or donuts there was Balistreri's, Christiano's and Luigi's bakeries. At that time my father belonged to the Valledolmo Club on Seventh and Georgia Streets. So on Sunday afternoons we visited my maternal grandmother, Antonia, who lived above Mallia's Meat Market on Geor-

gia Street.

How simple and loving our lives were. So uncomplicated: no computers, no cell phones, and no texting. Actually, we didn't have a home phone until I was 12 years old. How did we ever survive? We bonded with each other over tales of life in the "Old Country" and listened and loved without interruption.

Growing up we knew all our neighbors, what family they had, what jobs they held. Everyone knew of everyone else not just our blocks but also all over the West Side. So, I want to know, why did everybody leave?

Each time I read *Per Niente Magazine* I absorb amazing familiar accounts of life on the West Side and I can't help but wonder why everybody didn't stay or at least move to another neighborhood close by. Why was this cohesive wonderful way of life abandoned for North Buffalo or suburbs?

Oh, how I long for the entire familiar names and faces that was part of my life growing up. Everything you needed was in walking distance or a short bus trip away. If you wanted quality furniture you went on Niagara Street to Home Beautiful owned by Frank Tagliarino. If men wanted quality clothes, Buf-famonti's Men's Shop was on Niagara Street as was Alessi's Toy Store with its bikes and crafty toys for every child. My great uncle, Vito Marinaccio, had a Travel and Insurance Agency on Niagara Street. He arranged for many Italian families to come to America as well as helping to bring their relatives here.

I realize Urban Renewal changed the landscape of the West Side. Many people were uprooted so thruways and those hideous stone apartments on Niagara Street could be built. Georgia and Carolina Streets were abolished. Consequently, with the exodus of Italians, other ethnic factions have taken over the area. Niagara Street from Porter Avenue to Maryland Street is known as Puerto Rican Way. It's definitely not the Niagara Street I knew. The Niagara Porter Library dons a Puerto Rican flag in the window. I don't remember on Italian flag ever displayed there.

I guess I just wish everyone had stayed and

kept our area in the fashion of Italian heritage, family, friends, and business. Two years ago I had the pleasure of attending my 45th Grover Cleveland High School reunion. How wonderful it was to see everyone who used to live here. I can honestly say my husband, Bill Alessi, and I were the only ones who still live on the West Side. At first, I felt a little conflicted because even though we have a beautiful home that we love, I was embarrassed to say I still live on the West Side. I thought that maybe these former classmates, who all lived elsewhere, might think we weren't successful or happy. That notion was quickly dismissed.

I am constantly reminded of my younger life and have a wonderful sense of home. Believe it or not, I still have the same neighbor for the past 65 years on Busti Avenue. He is Sam Benevento and he is 101 years young. My husband Bill and I look in on him daily. We listen to Sam play piano and harmonica after which we hear about his Alaskan fishing expeditions and stories concerning our families and friends from years long past.

So again I ask, "WHY DID EVERYONE LEAVE?"



The Marinaccio Family

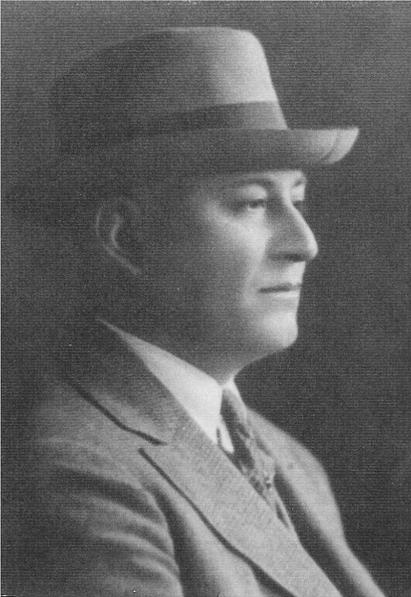
1946 Marriage of Michael Marinaccio to Margaret Iozzia

On Porch 3rd from left: Grandfather, Louis Marinaccio. On porch, 4th from right: Grandmother, Pasqualina. Bottom step 2nd from right: Grandmother Antonia. On steps above bride and groom: Great Uncle Vito De George, next to wife, Letizia. Lady in white near awning: Bridget De George Masiello (mother of Anthony, former Mayor of Buffalo)

John Smaldino, appointed to the Buffalo NY Police Department in 1910 was the cities first Italian-American police officer.

Article written by Manuel Bernstein appeared many years ago n the Buffalo Courier Express.

Courtesy of Grandson, Bob Smaldino, Avon Lake, OH.



Detective John Smaldino

The Mafia, noted for its plain and fancy homicides, never gained a foothold in Buffalo, but the Black Hand, a ruthless gang of extortionists and black mailers who intimidated their victims with threats of violence, operated successfully for more than a decade in the early Twenties. That is the claim of John Smaldino, a retired policeman, who worked in plainclothes during the most of his 40 years in the department and played a major role in curbing the activities of the two groups here.

Smaldino's accomplishments include solving 25 homicides between 1916 and 1930. He headed the famous Italian Squad which operated with great success in the early 1920s. He was decorated for bravery and outstanding police work on several occasions. He received hundreds of letters threatening his life. But he was fearless and described the senders as cowards.

Smaldino who is 71 retired from the department in 1950 but still is active in police work. He is the chief investigator for the National Bureau of Scientific Investigation, a private detective agency and puts in a full days work with the same regularity, enthusiasm, and ability as when he served with the Buffalo police.

Smaldino received part of his education in Italy and at School 3 then located at Perry and Illinois. He crossed the Atlantic on seven different occasions to visit relatives, but family settled in Buffalo when he was 16. He joined the police force in 1910 and within a very few months, he became the first of Italian extraction to work solely in plainclothes. Although he was assigned a partner or headed some special squad, he like to work alone, and in the early Twenties policemen called him the “lone wolf.”

Smaldino emphasized the Mafia and Black Hand were two distinctly different groups. The Mafia, he recalled, came into existence in Palermo, Sicily, about 70 years ago. “A group of men who kept their identities secret, banded together, and at first operated on the pretext that money they requested from wealthy families would be used for the needy,” he related. “They soon discovered this was an easy way to get money. They were very diplomatic in their methods of approach at the outset, but soon became ruthless. When the intended victim refused to ‘donate’ he either vanished or his body was found in an alleyway or gutter.”

The veteran investigator said the Mafia moved into this country in 1910, the year he became a policeman, and in less than a decade, its activities spread to most of the large cities from the Rocky Mountains to the East Coast. “The Mafia never gained a foothold here,” Smaldino asserted emphatically. “Shortly after World War I, this outfit made an attempt to ‘move in’ but its activities were quickly discovered by police through anonymous tips. A squad comprising of young Italian-American members was formed to combat this threat, and within a short time, the Mafia vanished.”

The Blank Hand followed soon after and remained in existence from 1920 to 1933, Smaldino declared. Placing of homemade bombs on verandas and in doorways of business establishments was the method used by

the Black Hand to intimidate persons who refused to pay larges sums of money for "protection." "The gang operated by sending letters to their victims, warning that if specified sums were not paid, they would be killed. The amounts demanded depended on the wealth of the individual. In some cases, it was as high as \$10,000. At the bottom of the letter was the black imprint of a human hand. Thus, the authorities named the gang the Back Hand."

With elimination of the Mafia, the Italian Squad went to work on the Black Hand. Records at headquarters reveal that in 1921 and 1922, approximately 25 dwellings and business establishments had been badly damaged by bombs. Some of the victims were know by police to be connected in illicit traffic of whiskey. Others were businessmen. Nearly all were residents of the West Side.

The Italian Squad was severely handicapped because the victim in most instances refused to co-operate by supplying descriptions, names of their enemies, or other clues that might lead to an arrest. The unit operated about two years and was disbanded with the appointment of a new police administration. However, records show many hoodlums were taken into custody and sent to prison.

Smaldino related one of his experiences during the war on the Black Hand. "Early one morning I received information that a bomb was to be planted in front of a building at Court and Wilkeson Streets," he declared. "I didn't have to summon other members of the squad. I always like to work alone anyways. I hurried to the scene and hid in a hallway across the street." "I was in hiding only a few minutes when I saw a man walk up to the building carrying something wrapped in a newspaper under his arm. Then he lit a match, bent his knee and ran. I hurried across the street and saw the bomb to which a long fuse was attached. I pulled out my pocket knife and severed the fuse. Then I ran after the suspect, capturing him after a five-block chase. I had emptied my revolver at him during the pursuit. Had the prisoner remained a day or two longer in his cell at the old jail in Trenton Avenue he might have been able to make good his threat."

"En route to Auburn Prison the bombing suspect told deputies to look under an old coat in the cell he occupied during the trial. Authorities found a big hole in the cell wall. "The prisoner, using a fork or a knife smuggled into the jail, had cut away a rotten section of the wall. He had only an inch more to dig and he would have been able to wriggle out of his cell to the street."

Smaldino declared he received most of the threatening letters during the years from 1920 to 1927. "The letters threatened that my body would be dismembered, my head would be bashed in or my throat cut, but they never bothered me," he recalled. "Nearly all the letters were signed with that famous imprint, the sign of the Black Hand".



OFTEN THREATENED, NEVER DAUNTED—With his prisoner in tow, John Smaldino, left, holds the home-made bomb intended for use in a Black Hand bombing attempt in the 1920s. The plotter, one of many who threatened to kill Smaldino, got 35 years in prison. Smaldino today, right, is chief investigator for the National Bureau of Scientific Investigation.



Paul Palladino

5/8/1940 - 5/8/2012

The family of Paul Palladino would like to express our appreciation to all of you who came to pay their respects to Paul and to pray with us. We were truly overwhelmed! He was a wonderful family man who showed so much love and brought much happiness to our family. He adored his six grandchildren and they adored him. Paul made all of us laugh often and I'm sure his humor made some of you laugh too. He was fearless and strong but unfortunately not strong enough to overcome his illness. Our hearts are broken but we are so grateful for the memories we have with him.

*Thank You Friends,
Love, Jo Ann, Michael, Marc & Patti*

A Friend

How do you say goodbye to a friend of fifty years? In all our years together, we never exchanged a harsh word. Ours was a friendship filled with love, respect and goodwill for one another. Paul was more like a brother.

Paul was a man of contrasts. A gentle bear, he possessed remarkable strength, but on the dance floor floated like a butterfly. His home and gardens reflected his love and talent for decorating. "Pauly Flowers", his nickname, wasn't a fluke. What a delight it was to visit his various backyards. His pool and deck on Bird Avenue resembled Miami Beach as did his botanical garden on Coriander Court in East Amherst. In the '60s and '70s we owned similarly constructed homes. Paul's was on Bird and ours on Brantford Place. During our years in these homes we probably remodeled every room at least once, painting, wallpapering, knocking down walls, refinishing woodwork, building decks, etc. What strength and endurance we had! We tried out some new ideas and ran into some surprises, but were so proud of the final results.

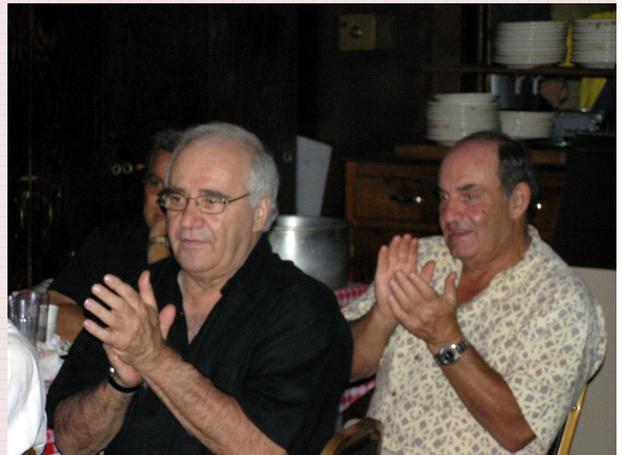
Tuesday night was, and is, a time for our group of friends to dine out. We loved laughing and making gentle fun of one another. I'd feel his kick under the table when somebody said something with authority and was wrong, or when someone ordered a second or third drink. I can't count the laughs we had or the sore knees afterwards. Over the years we enjoyed listening to jazz, especially our too few concerts at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery and Lewiston. We all laughed as Paul used his deep voice to sing "You've Changed", but never got past the first words

as he didn't know the rest of the lyrics (and neither did we).

His love for football and his knowledge couldn't be matched. He would come up with a college player no one every heard of and he would say "Watch this guy." Come draft night for the NFL he would be right. Fishing was another favorite pastime. Once we took the girls fishing in Canada and shared a cabin. That's when we learned what real snoring is. His love of the outdoors is now enjoyed by his children and grandchildren.

And so we try to say goodbye to Paul, beloved by Jo Ann, his children and grandchildren, family and friends. To them we say how lucky we were to know Paul and experience so many, many wonderful times together.

Sam and Sue Maggiore





Rocco J Diina

Per Niente new member Rocco J. Diina's involvement with law enforcement causes has increased – locally, nationally and internationally – since he retired as Buffalo Police Commissioner.

A highly-regarded security consultant

and former owner of RJD Security, a private security firm that had 900 employees and 130 clients throughout North America, Diina was known for advancing a business team concept and management style for the Buffalo Police.

A graduate of the FBI National Executive Institute and the Senior Management Institute for Police, he is the Private Sector Liaison Committee Chair for the International Association of Chiefs of Police. He has received numerous awards, including one from the New York State Bar Association for Outstanding Police Contributions, and the Federation of Italian-American Societies' God, Family and Country Award.

Diina brings all those experiences and skills to the Law Enforcement Foundation of Western New York. His professional commitment and volunteer leadership as Chairman of the Foundation is making a difference to the quality of public safety in this area.

"The Law Enforcement Foundation is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3) corporation that assists in providing resources, programs and services to the area's law enforcement community," Diina said. "We advocate expanding the interaction between business and law enforcement that enables law enforcement to deliver the highest level of professional excellence to the citizens of Western New York."

He added: "Our organization promotes ongoing communication with and within the law enforcement community across our multi-county region. The Foundation enables us to work together to advocate for safe cities, towns, villages and neighborhoods that benefit families and are conducive to business enterprises.

"In these tough economic times, it is important for police agencies to apply solid business principles in their administrative and management operations and to possess the tools and resources to keep our community safe," he stated. "Our Foundation's activities are directed toward providing funds for leadership training, equipment and support services."

The Foundation emphasizes professional development and provides scholarships for select officers to attend Leadership Buffalo and Leadership Niagara. It often steps up to help purchase new or replacement equipment, including window tint meters for the Lackawanna Police, new technical rope rescue items for the New York State Police Special Operation Response Team (SORT), a two-wheeled Segway for the NFTA Police patrols of the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, a state-of-the-art radar unit for State University at Buffalo's police fleet.

Foundation grants have helped injured officers, supported the New York State Sheriffs Association's training conference in Buffalo, and benefited the Erie County Sheriff's Mounted Unit.

The Foundation is funded by annual member sponsorships from area businesses and individuals. Foundation events bring members together with law enforcement executives to forge working partnerships. Several Per Niente members are avid supporters of the Foundation. New supporters always are welcome.

The Foundation sponsors an annual 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony and Breakfast. Its Fall Reception will take place on Thursday, October 11, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., at Acqua, 2192 Niagara Street. Various police agencies will present law enforcement-related exhibits. Further information is available from Rocco's office, 362-1205.



Program



PROCESSIONAL

- "STAR SPANGLED BANNER" Audience
- SONG—The Open Road Graduates
- GREETINGS—Class of 1951 Salvator A. Farrauto
- SELECTIONS—Chung Ling Orchestra
- MESSAGE FROM DR. BENJAMIN C. WILLIS Antanine Azzarella
- SONGS—By The Bend Of The River..... Graduates
The Dancers

PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS AND AWARDS

- SELECTION—Lolita Orchestra
- SONGS—Recessional Graduates
May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You



Orchestra

Violins

- Marie Torregrossa
Ida Carlo
Nelda Bravo
Angelo Pintabone
Marie Mauriello

Trumpet

- Sam Incardona
Frank Duminico
John Loffredo

Clarinet

- Robert Nasca

Piano

- Petrina Saia
Robert Bongli

Drums

- Louis Marino



Safety Patrol

- Salvator Farrauto
Benjamin Baia
Leonard Genco
Jack Mancuso
Richard Marotta

- Marigrace Buscaglia
Dawn Clarke
Roberta Mauriello
Nancy Busch
Janice Petrella

Graduates



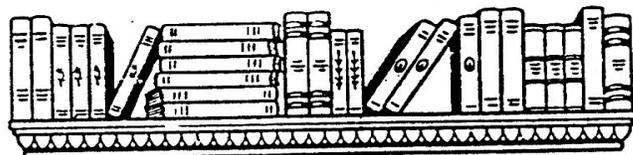
Gloria Ann Abbarno
 Marie J. Angilella
 Philip C. Ansolone
 Antanine M. Azzarella
 Micheal A. Baglio
 Benjamin V. Baia
 John Barile
 Basilio Battaglia
 Robert T. Bongì
 Marigrace C. Buscaglia
 Nancy Sarah Busch
 Pasquale Joseph Calabrese
 Angeline Calandra
 Jacqueline M. Carlucci
 Marie F. Chimera
 Peter M. Cherico
 William Gary Chudik
 Josephine J. Cicero
 Dawn V. Clarke
 Gwendolyn B. Cornwell
 James H. Croom
 Jerome Devers
 Robert C. DiIimone
 Leonard W. DiSalvo
 Mary R. Duckworth
 Leonard F. Falzone
 Salvator A. Farrauto
 Dolores Susan Ferraro
 Joseph J. Gelsomino
 Leonard Michael Genco
 Carmela Rita Giambra

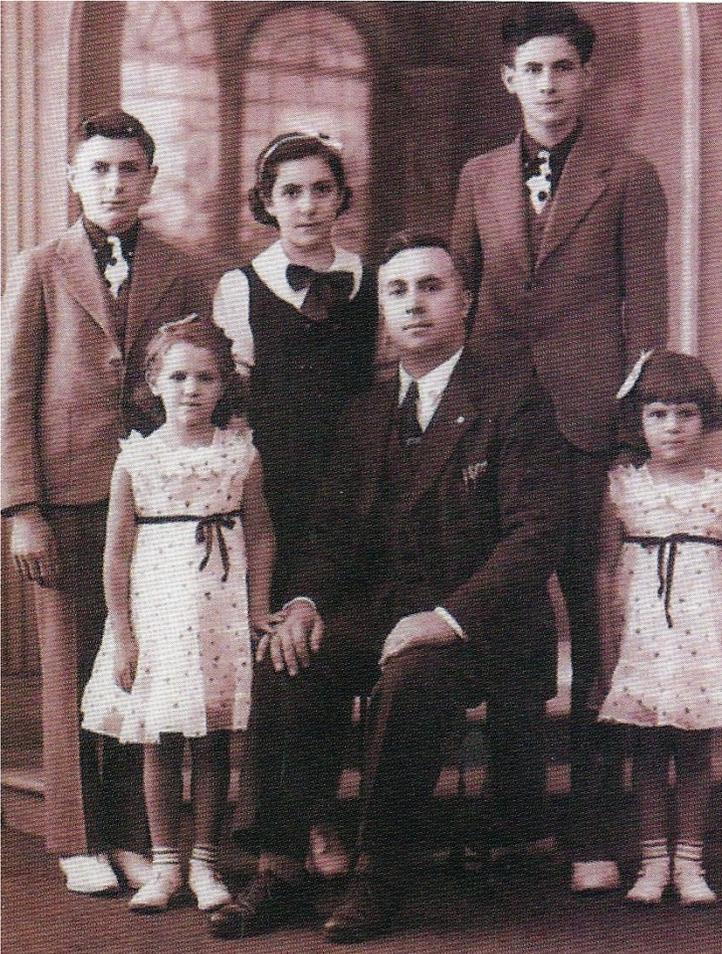
Catherine Gibson
 Thomas L. Gioia
 Nancy Ann Lagattuta
 Ronald A. Leone
 John Charles Loffredo
 Helen A. Lusiak
 Marie Lois Luman
 Jack G. Mancuso
 Mary Christine Mantione
 Louis David Marino
 Richard J. Marotta
 Roberta A. Mauriello
 John Joseph Merlino
 Mary S. Mola
 Mary R. Morano
 Barbara Burnette Moyer
 Margaret M. Olejniczak
 Thomas A. Parlato
 Janice Marylin Petrella
 Louis R. Pisa
 Dotsie M. Robinson
 Jacquelyn R. Sagliani
 Fadora Mae Summerville
 Marie R. Torregrossa
 Jenny Marie Torrisi
 Donald A. Vacanti
 Russell William Vella
 James Charles Viggiani
 Joseph Peter Viggiani
 Frances Clara Zanghi



Class Officers

President..... Salvator A. Farrauto
Vice President Benjamin V. Baia
Secretary..... Antanine M. Azzarella
Treasurers..... Mary R. Morano and Richard J. Marotta





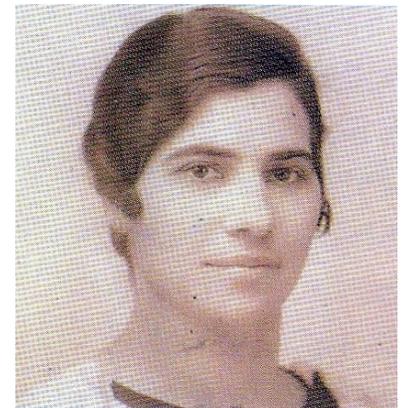
Bruccoleris: Michael, Mary Daddario, Emanuele Antoinette Custode, Joseph , Ida Del Grosso

God Bless America ... these words were spoken by Guieseppe Bruccoleri on February 24, 1915 as the 'Dante Aleghiera' pulled into port in New York City. My Dad was only 16 years old when he ventured to a new land by himself from Grotte, Sicily. Joe Bruccoleri was the only son to Emmanuel and Maria Bruccoleri of Grotte, Sicily. He had three sisters—Josephine, Maria and Elizabeth - but being the only son, his father did not want him fighting in the war that Italy was in at the time. So ... the most logical thing to do was to send Joe to his sister, Josephine, in Wyoming, Pennsylvania. When he arrived in Wyoming he worked as a coal miner for a little over a year. He never liked working in the mines. Receiving news from relatives in Niagara Falls, New York,

that prospects were better there. He then moved to that Industrial City and found work at the Carborundum Company. During this time he met and married Gaeten Infantino. They had five children - Manny, Mike, Mary, Antoinette and Ida. Tragedy struck their lives when Joe's wife Gaeten passed away at the young age of 32. Ida, the youngest child was only five months old.

Time passed for this young Bruccoleri family until Joe met a young widow, Josephine Bevilacqua, who lived in Wyoming, Pennsylvania, near Joe's sister Josephine. God, working in strange ways, this young girl was also from Grotte, Sicily - the Bruccoleri and Bevilacqua families knew each other in the 'old country.' Josephine Bevilacqua was left a widow at the young age of 21, with two young children - Jim and Netta Cipolla, when their father was killed in a mine disaster.

Joe and Josephine finally married and Joe took everyone, including his new wife's mother and father, to Niagara Falls. Joe still worked at Carborundum but now he was supporting a family of seven children. As we all know raising a family is not an easy task but with the grace of God, hard work and lots of love this beautiful family survived.



Josephine Bruccoleri

Then as a surprise to all in 1941, Joe and Josephine Bruccoleri brought into the world another child, a baby girl, Geraldine. My Dad worked long hard hours to bring his family up the 'right way.' In 1944 he purchased and operated the Triangle Grill in Niagara Falls, New York. The entire family worked at this business until wartime separated everyone. We are eight children and

we have all been a credit and a blessing to Joe Bruccoleri.

Dad was the greatest story teller of all time. He told us many stories of his home town, Grotte, the stories were so vivid and real that we thought we were there. His proudest moments in his life were walking his five daughters down the church aisle when we all married. He always said "all my children married Italians." To him that was the best 'honor' we could give him.

Our whole family has always worked hard - we have professionals, business owners, laborers and housewives, and from the eight Bruccoleri children, Joe and Josephine have twenty-six grandchildren and fifty-seven great grandchildren, and the list continues to grow.

On November 28, 1964, I married a wonderful man from Buffalo, New York - Phil DiRe. At the time of our marriage my husband was in the military.

Phil was a musician stationed with the Army Field Band in Maryland. After leaving the Army Band, Phil was asked to continue his military service with the 'President's Own' Marine Band in Washington D.C. Three of



Phil Di Re

our four children were born in the Washington area. Our fourth child was born in Buffalo, after returning home from our tour of duty.

Phil continued his musical career in Buffalo. There was a surge in the music venue in Buffalo in the early '70s and Phil had a major role in this undertaking. The concerts still held every summer at the Buffalo Art Gallery were started by my husband and his friends. Phil's

career lead us to Las Vegas, Nevada where he became a musical conductor for Keely Smith and Sam Butera, during which time he had the opportunity to perform with many other great entertainers and musicians.

Buffalo is Home ... needless to say, we left Las Vegas and returned to Buffalo. Our daughters grew up in Williamsville and graduated from high school and colleges in our 'home town.' Phil subsequently formed a software company in Clarence - SuccessWare - which employs 15 people, and has clients all over the country.

Our children are Maria Angela, Michelle Elizabeth, Michael Joseph and Deanne Marie. Unfortunately, Michael was called home to God at the young age of 13. His memory is alive in all of us! Our beautiful daughters and son-in-laws have given us twelve wonderful, fantastic grandchildren. Maria lives in Las Vegas with her husband Patrick and their four children - Michael James, Patrick William, Mackenzie Terese, and Madison Marie. Michelle lives in Clarence with her husband Michael and their three children - Blair Elizabeth, Thomas Michael and Nicholas Joseph. Our youngest daughter Deanne also lives in Clarence with her husband David and their five children - David Michael, Matthew Joseph, Daniel Thomas, Jennifer Marie and Julianne Marie.

The love of family my father taught me continues to grow every day in my family.

So to you Daddy I say thank you for the wonderful life and history you have given to all of us.

WE LOVE YOU.



Josephine, Joseph, Gerri Di Re



Henry "Snow" Flakes

It was mid-December 1953, a cold and snowy day in Buffalo, New York. A municipal ash and garbage truck with four workers: a driver, two lifters, and a can shaker were at McKinley High School on Elm-

wood Avenue. The

lifters were to heave heavy steel, ash-filled cans atop the truck to the shaker who would empty them.

One lifter was twenty-six year old Henry "Snow" Flakes, a jovial black-six foot-plus former boxer born in Opelika, Alabama. In 1948 the State Athletic Commission barred Flakes, a physical specimen with a record of 24-2 and a contender to Joe Louis throne from boxing, due to cataract problems.

On this day, Henry was wearing two sweaters over a wool shirt covered by overalls as he waited to lift cans onto the truck. He smiled and looked with disbelief at the second lifter, a frail, inappropriately dressed twenty-year old, and half-laughingly said to him, "what's your name, little man?"

"I'm Joe,"

"It's your first day on the gig, huh?"

"Yeah. I know who you are," Joe said. "I was at the Aud the first time you beat Lee Oma! I went to the fights every Tuesday. You were great! Too bad about your eyes. I think they said a detached retina?" Henry frowned, "Yeah. That's a long time ago little man." He studied Joe. "You're the smallest guy I've ever seen on this job. You must know somebody!" Joe shook snow from his head and nodded. Henry observed his garb, "why do you come to work dressed like that? No hat, no overalls. You sure do tickle me little man."

"I'm buying some overalls," Joe said.

"Let's go," said Henry.

Angelo, the shaker, an elderly man was preparing

to climb to the top of the truck. Before doing so he handed Joe a pair of gloves. "Thank you, Angelo," Joe said. Henry, witnessing this removed a sweater from his person, gave it to Joe and said, "I'm a bouncer at The Savoy near the Moon Glo. Tonight I'll take a jacket off of someone for you." "No, that's okay, I'll get one," said Joe reaching into his pocket for a fried pepper and egg sandwich that he offered to Henry who consumed it immediately. "Hey little man," Henry said, "what kind of bread was that?" Joe's eyes sparkled and he said, "my mother baked it." Henry responded, "tell you what, you bring me sandwiches with that bread every day and I'll be your genie."

"What," said Joe?

"I'll do the lifting for the two of us, Henry said. "What's your weight?" Joe responded, "One-thirty five. I'm a musician, the only thing I lift is a trumpet." Henry laughed and said, "I'm at my fighting weight. You're gonna make eleven dollars and six cents a day for bringing me good food. Is it a deal?" Joe, shivering looked at the cans and said, "you'll be my genie?" Henry said, "You got it." Joe, reaching into his pocket, said, "okay, here, take this, it's a Saint Francis of Assisi medal. It was my mother's." Henry laughed and put the medal in his pocket. He then literally picked Joe up and threw him onto the truck where he landed near a dead rat.

"Stay up there. Help the old man," said Henry. Angelo shouted, "Hey, melenzano," "I'm not an old man, understand?" Henry picked up a can and gestured angrily as if to throw it at Angelo, "I'll give you melenzano! My managers were dagos you dumb bastard!" Joe grabbed Henry's arm and said, "no, don't



Joey Giambra, 1950

throw that! He's my friend's father!" Henry lowered the can. "Let's go. Let's go," he said.

Henry fired the first of many cans onto the truck as if shot from a cannon and Angelo emptied them, judiciously utilizing space, creatively engineering a perfect load of ashen beauty. While Joe watched Angelo's performance he looked with dismay at his once powder-blue dress slacks now totally pink and soiled.

As Andy Quilt, the truck driver, warmed in his truck waited to take Angelo's ashen landscape to the city dumps Henry threw a large, folded canvas atop the truck. "Canvas up," he said to Angelo. Andy Quilt alighted the truck and complained, "Too fast! We've got eight hours! You'll kill this job." Henry inserted the canvas' dangling rope into steel eyelets above the four truck wheels, tied them, securing the load, looked at Andy Quilt and said, "you drive to the dumps. Don't tell this boy or his genie how to earn their bread, dig? If it's four hours or eight hours, don't make no difference. We're still garbage men." As Quilt entered the truck, Henry shouted to him, "our next school is near Court Street so take us to Buscaglia's Saloon before you go to the dumps and then pick us up there." Angelo, while admiring his canvas-covered creation put a finger to his nose and let out a wail to clear ashen mucus from his nostrils. He then entered the truck and sat with Andy Quilt. Henry and Joe, shaking debris from their person entered the truck to join Angelo and Andy and all four drove to Buscaglia's. It was nine forty-five AM. For some garbage men that's the time for shots and beers.

At Buscaglia's, while drinking at the bar, Henry asked Joe, "so, you saw me fight, huh?" Before Joe could answer, Henry hollered, "more whiskey. A double Corby's."

Outside, on Court Street Joe looked out the window to see his church, Saint Anthony's, now covered with snow blown about by a cold, blustery wind. Joe and Henry Flakes bonded that day. They would work together every day for one more year before Joe quit to play music in saloons, bars and nightclubs. For three years their friendship remained strong. One night Joe visited Henry at The Savoy. Henry, once

touted, as the best young heavyweight in the world, a deadly two-fisted puncher seemed depressed. While drinking excessively he spoke of "lost opportunities, being messed up and cheated by fate" at not being able to fight his contemporary, Rocky Marciano whom he thought he could beat. Then, he showed Joe a 38 caliber revolver and said, "ain't nobody messing with us, here or anywhere else, ya dig, little man?"

In 1957 Joe, by then a fulltime musician went on the road. Upon returning he'd look for Henry at The Savoy. Jasper Evola who owned The Savoy said Flakes was no longer in his employ and knew nothing of his whereabouts. Customers Joe spoke to were evasive. Some said "Flakes was in the can."

On November 7, 1958 Henry Flakes, and Walter Green, a recent parolee from Attica Prison both thirty-one years old drove to Lackawanna, NY. With them were Flakes' twenty-one year old brother-in-law, Dewitt Lee Jr. and his lover, Beatrice Beckman, a thirty-six year old Buffalo high school English teacher and owner of the car.

Green parked Beckman's car in front of Joseph Friedman's Haberdashery on Ridge Road. Lee and Beckman remained in the car as Flakes and Green entered the store brandishing revolvers. Inside, after Joseph Friedman emptied his cash register of ninety-six dollars at gunpoint he was pistol-whipped, shot and killed in the presence of his wife as the other robber stole merchandise. Before fleeing, one robber shot twice at Mrs. Friedman but missed both times.

Flakes, Green and their accomplices were apprehended. Dewitt Lee Jr. was sentenced to life imprisonment. Beatrice Beckman, who became a witness for the prosecution was spared a prison sentence. Henry Flakes and Walter T. Green were condemned to die in the Electric chair at Sing Sing Prison. There, on May 19, 1960, Henry Flakes, prisoner No. 123-881, walked to his eternal throne wearing his boxing robe to which was attached a Saint Francis of Assisi medal.

Angelo Costanzo was 16 when he took over the Dante Place bakery located downstairs from where he and his family lived. It was 1933, the height of the depression, and most of his help came from his younger siblings.

At best, the single brick oven turned out 400 to 500 loaves of bread a day destined for local shops and bread lines.

Today, the depression-era bakery founded by a teenager distributes bread and rolls, mostly rolls, throughout the United States. Nearly 2 million rolls a week come out of the computer-run ovens at Costanzo's Bakery on Union Road in Cheektowaga to be greeted by robots that gently take them off trays and package them.

Costanzo's stands as one of the nation's largest family-owned bakeries. It's a testament to the work ethic of its founder, his wife, his two sons and his grandchildren who now run the business.

Angelo Costanzo worked out of the Dante Place Bakery, a building of perhaps 5,000 square feet, for 17 years. Along the way he hired help, bought two or three trucks and started deliveries throughout the city. In 1950 he moved the bakery to Delavan Avenue near Bailey, a location he knew from his deliveries had much potential for selling Italian bread.

"Everybody thought he was crazy," says his son, Angelo Costanzo Jr. "They couldn't understand why he would move the business to the other side of the city." But Angelo Sr. certainly knew more than just how to make bread.

On Delavan he had a building double the size of his Dante Place bakery. Even better, he had a more modern oven, one with 14 revolving trays capable of producing nearly 9,000 loaves of bread a day. He increased his workforce, built his fleet of trucks to ten and started blanketing the city with Costanzo bread.

Soon, the bakery was turning out up to 15,000 loaves of bread a day and delivering them to supermarket chains such as A&P, Loblaws and Acme.

Still, it was the family that was the core of the business. "As a general rule, he was always there,"

remembers Angelo Jr., now 71. Angelo Jr. started work at the bakery when he was a sixth grader. It was temporary, but there was a bakery strike and his father needed help. "He pulled me out of school and I did all sorts of jobs until the strike ended," Angelo Jr. recalls.

It was in high school that he and his brother Richard, a couple of years younger than he, started working full time, one always there when the other wasn't. "I think I only saw them together twice outside the bakery," says a close family friend, "and one of them was at Angelo's wedding, the only time I saw Mr. Costanzo, Angelo and Richard together outside the bakery."

So much a stickler about work was the senior Costanzo that he bought Angelo Jr. a car as soon as he was old enough to drive. "That allowed me to get to work an hour earlier than taking the bus," says Angelo Jr., smiling at the memory.

His mother, Josephine, now 91, did not escape the business workload, putting in her hours at her husband's side as office manager and bookkeeper.

The move to Delavan proved fortuitous, and the family's sense of the marketplace helped shape what makes the bakery famous today. That came in 1974, when supermarkets started their own in-house bakeries and the Costanzos saw their bread sales declining.

"Every gas station that closed was taken over by a pizzeria," Angelo Jr. recalls. "So we had to make a change. We eliminated our bread routes and started concentrating on sub houses and restaurants."

A few years later, the ailing Angelo Sr., who was 78 when he died in 1990, turned over the day-to-day operation of the bakery to his sons. The bakery continued to prosper, but the brothers soon realized they needed to expand. Neighbors balked at selling them property adjoining the bakery, so they looked elsewhere. The Cheektowaga site beckoned.

The brothers invested \$3 million in 1992 to build and equip the present site of the bakery. It's a far cry from the former location on Delavan. "It's a more efficient operation," explains Angelo Jr. "On De-

lavan everything was by hand; we unloaded the 100-pound bags of flour off trucks and then poured them into the mixer by hand. Here the flour comes in tanker trucks and is blown into our storage vats to be sent mechanically to the mixer, then the dough is loaded automatically into the ovens.”

Increasing space from 11,000 square feet to 25,000 square feet allowed the bakery to nearly double production—from 450 dozen rolls an hour to 800 dozen an hour. And it increased the market to all of Erie and Niagara County, until 1997, that is. That year the bakery built its first of three huge freezers to allow its rolls to be shipped, frozen, to distant points. The first two freezers stand 25-feet tall and measure 3,000 square feet. The third, completed in 2000, is 10 feet higher than the others and fills 10,000 square feet.

National distributors came on board in 1999, and the name Costanzo started spreading through the county. From 2002 to 2009, in fact, the family-owned bakery in Cheektowaga supplied the rolls Walmart used to make submarine sandwiches.

The third generation of Costanzos, Angelo Jr.'s sons, Jeffery and Michael, took over the business in 2000, with their father remaining as chief executive. Richard Costanzo left the company in 2004 and moved to Florida.

With their father's guidance, Jeffrey and Michael saw the need for further expansion and em-

barked on a \$15-million addition that features robotic machines and allows the bakery to produce 1,200 rolls an hour and use between 250,000 to 300,000 pounds of flour a week, ten times the flour used on Delavan.

Where once their grandfather started in a bakery of 5,000 square feet, the Costanzos now operate their business in 80,000 square feet. Where once their grandfather needed his younger siblings to help, the bakery now employs 125. Angelo III has joined his brothers in the business and their sister, Kristin Gervasio, runs the walk-in front counter and deli shop.

Costanzo's now has a chief executive officer, a chief financial officer, a human resources manager, an operations manager, a compliance officer and a research and development director. None of them is named Costanzo.

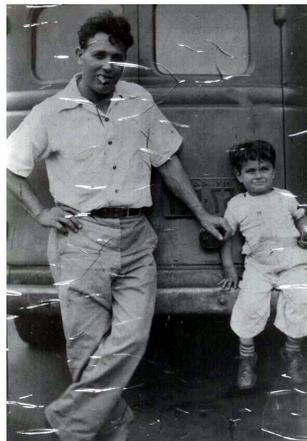
But, in spite of statistics that show family-run businesses seldom last into the third generation, this one does. Perhaps it's because Angelo Costanzo Sr. instilled in his sons the value of hard work and attention to detail, and Angelo Jr. passed that on to his sons. Certainly, were the founder alive today, he'd have trouble digesting what his small, basically one-man operation, has become.

Keep that in mind if, for instance, you order a fish sandwich at a Pincers Crab Shack in southwest Florida. That's because it will be served on a Costanzo roll made in Cheektowaga.



Angelo Costanzo and Michael Bova
at Costanzo's Bakery - Dante Place

The Costanzos 1940s
Angelo Sr & Jr
Dante Place Bakery



Costanzo's, East Delevan Ave, early '50s

Sal Arena has contributed his wonderful recipes to *Per Niente* magazine since its inception. Many of our readers have commented favorably on the recipes and their simplicity of preparation. Thus "The Cookbook." This book is a must for those who love to cook. Sal is an outstanding cook and his wonderful recipes are simple and easy to follow. They were learned in his childhood kitchen along with the practical necessities of cooking for a large family. He really means it when he says "keep it simple".

If you love to cook this is the book for you. It also serves as a great gift.



Books can be purchased for \$20.00 plus \$6.00 for shipping.

Contact Sal Arena at

716-430-0022

716-688-6106

Or

beeb448@aol.com

Remembering by Sal Arena

Many of the things I remember as a child revolved around food. I guess most kids remember their mother preparing dinner and waiting for Dad to arrive home from work greeted by a delicious home cooked meal. I don't. My mother couldn't cook water. We waited for Dad to get home and then prepare dinner. My mother had problems in the kitchen, but my father could cook anything and did. Now that I look back I can't believe the things he cooked, but at the time it was usual fare.

As you peruse the recipes in this book you will come across some amusing stories. All are true and actually happened as written. Some are hard to believe, but nevertheless true. Here is one of those stories, a memory tied to a family dinner tradition, one of the many that led me to write this book...

If you were a kid in an Italian household, I'm sure you remember boboluci (snails). Maybe once or twice a year Dad would cook snails. But before they were boiled some would escape the straw basket they came in. They would be on the walls, on the kitchen floor, everywhere. My brothers and I would claim these for ourselves. Not to eat but to race. With a little prodding they might go one foot in an hour, but before any real racing got done it was bedtime.

The real fun was in the eating. After the snails were boiled, they were cooked again in Dads' homemade marinara sauce for a couple of hours and then served in a bowl like a bouillabaisse, with plenty of Grandmas' homemade Italian bread. I can smell it now, 60 years later.

There were many expert ways to capture the tiny morsels from the shell. There was the toothpick method where you picked the snail from the shell with a toothpick. There was the safety pin style where the safety pin was bent to reach perfectly in the shell and snag the snail, but my fathers' way was by far the best and the most scientific. He used the vacuum method. First he would tap a small hole in the top of the shell, making sure not to make the hole too big. Then he inserted the whole shell in his mouth, covering the small hole with his finger, and in one fluid motion he would suck on the shell and release his finger at precisely the same time creating suction that would have the snail and the wonderful juice in his mouth most efficiently.

Would I know how to cook them? I don't know, but I sure would like to try.

Throughout the book I recall memories like the snail story. All have some humor and all are true. The recipes are good, but the stories are precious. I thought, "leave the kids something to smile about while they're making marinara, shrimp scampi or clam sauce."

I want them to remember their father when he was the happiest, surrounded by family, cooking up a Sunday dinner or barbecuing porterhouse steak over real charcoal. No propane ever.

I hope whoever uses these recipes and reads the stories gets a laugh and a damn good meal.



Sal Arena

Broccoli Salad

Broccoli salad is a summer salad ideal for picnics and outside events. This salad is served cold and features raw broccoli.

Directions

Cut the broccoli into bite size pieces.

Cut the bacon into small pieces and fry until crisp. Discard the bacon fat.

Prepare the dressing by combining the sugar, mayo and vinegar.

Put the broccoli, raisins, bacon and shredded cheese into a large bowl. Add the dressing as needed.

Mix all ingredients thoroughly and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Try this recipe. You will love it. Keep it simple

Sal

Ingredients

2 large heads of broccoli

½ cup of golden raisins

½ pound of bacon

*1 bag of shredded cheddar
cheese (8 ounces)*

½ cup of sugar

1 cup mayo

*2 tablespoons of white
vinegar*



Recipe from cookbook



SAL MAGGIORE

Bread and Onions

The last thing Joey Giambra said to us before going on stage was "break a leg "

Opening night Joey fell off stage breaking his leg. Talk about

drama. He was in the hospital until five a.m., but was back on stage the next night ready to perform his story of growing up on the west side of Buffalo. It's his story of Italian immigrants looking for a better life, with tales of the people he met along the way. It was funny yet poignant, often bringing a lump in our throats on remembering similar past times. The script was poetically and imaginatively written, and Giambra's story telling was brilliant, wheel chair and all.

Now to top it all, J.G. invited his dear friend from the Big Apple, Dominic Chianese. Yes the one and only Uncle Junior from the Sopranos, Johnny Ola from the Godfather, and many roles on Broadway, TV and movies for more than fifty years. Chianese's portrayed his role with ease, sincerity and realism. What a wonderful man! He seemed to love being in Buffalo, with us and his dear friend, Joey Giambra. After Bread and Onions, Chianese surprised the audience with his beautiful singing of Italian songs while playing the guitar. Picture taking and auto-graphs was his pleasure.

Opening this great play we had the pleasure of an

hour of music with vocalist Mary Stahl backed up by the Jim Calabrese Trio & Bobby Militello. Joe Dileo smoothly aided the cast from behind the scenes. His directing and guidance made everything perfect. Joe's brilliant introduction in both Italian and English was a delightful beginning.

For my part it was fun, but it was especially interesting to watch the pros, Giambra and Chianese, work with ease. I had a simple part as a fish peddler of days gone by. Piece of cake. Right? Yes, until you walk on stage with the sold out crowd including my ball breaking friends applauding and laughing thus ending my acting ambitions. I did get a nice word from Uncle Junior. He said, "Sal, you were so good that when you walked by me on stage, I could smell the fish."

If you didn't see the great work of Joe Giambra you missed a great story, a great performance and a great night.

The author, on stage as a fish peddler



Dominic Chianese
 IN A DON ANGELO JOE DIEMASQUALE
 PRODUCTION
 Joey Giambra's
Bread & Onions
*A young man's odyssey through the streets of Buffalo's
 once thriving Lower West Side*

June 15 & 16, 2012
 8:00 pm
 Admission - \$35.00
 Kavinoky Theater @ D'Youville - 320 Porter Avenue
 Call For Tickets 716.829.7668

Pre-show entertainment - 7pm - Mary Stahl,
 Jim Calabrese Trio with special guest Bobby Militello

WITH
 Trumpeter Dennis Tiburzi
 Joe Dileo
 Joe Di Leo
 Joey Giambra
 Jack Gullo
 Sam Maggiore
 Richi Merola
 Lori Francisco McVicar
 Michael Meriold
 Vinny Scime

Directed by Michael Gialombardo



Per Niente Club members, honored to be part of the cast of Bread & Onions

Top row:

- Vince Scime
- Joe Di Leo
- Jack Gullo

Bottom row:

- Sal Maggiore
- Joey Giambra
- Dominic Chianese



"Sera Sotto Le Stelle " Evening Under the Stars July 21, 2012

Here we go again saying the nice things about what a good time we had at DiTondo's. Take it easy. This year was more of everything. Of course the food was fantastic, but there is so much more to praise. The help worked so hard taking care of the record breaking crowd. Sure, Joe Giambra's big band friends were fantastic, but we were also treated to Richie Merlo and Joe's singing. Then we had the pleasure of Phil Di Re sitting in like the pro that he is, playing his sax. Had enough? Not only the night was perfect but the surprise what yet to come. Joe Giambra's good friend, Dominic Chianese and his charming wife, Jane, were here. Dominic treated us with wonderful Italian songs such as the one that brings a lump to my throat "Mama".

Table hopping gave me the chance to see my friends of more than sixty years, Rosella and brother Chuck Privitera. We talked about their handsome father, Sam, who at 99 years young reads our Magazine. HELLO SAM... Angela (Messina) Curtis and friend Tracy Carboni wouldn't miss this night. Too bad we didn't get a chance to see Sam Cala do Mickey Jagger; it's hilarious. Sam, my nephew, attended with his mom and my wife's family, Rachel Cala and Gary and Joan Crosby. Thanks to Nancy Mendola for bragging about my eggplant. Sorry to Paul McGuire and brother-in-law Gary Crosby, who wanted to hear "Danny Boy". Welcome the honorable Sal Martoche. I recalled many years and union meetings with Connie Parisi - nice to see you. Say hello to Marsha. Len and Patti Pepe relaxed the day after a successful Per Neinte golf tournament. The Caruanas from Florida enjoyed the night. Angelo Coniglio offered tips on researching our genealogy as he greeted Lafayette alumni and frat brothers, Bob Mangano and wife Ursula, Bonnie Palladino Bartolomeo and husband, John, Frank and Beverly LoTempio, Peter and Judy Tasca and Charlie and Patti Tasca and many more. Good to see sisters Janet DeJames Mineo and Carol DeJames Alessandra with hubbies Joe and Al. Alumni from Grover Cleveland H. S. once populated by students of almost 99% Italian-American heritage, enjoyed the evening as well including Barb and Pat Palmeri, Louise and Sam Arnone.

Got to go for now. In closing, thanks again to Joe and Toni Di Leo for their hard work and success at this year's bigger and better party. One more thing, I'm not the Sam the author, who created that wonderful cook book. That's Sam Arena who was visiting relatives in Seattle. Good Day.



A few of the boys

Pete Spallino, Bob Mangano, Charlie Tasca, Tom Woodside, Joe Di Leo, Sal Maggiore

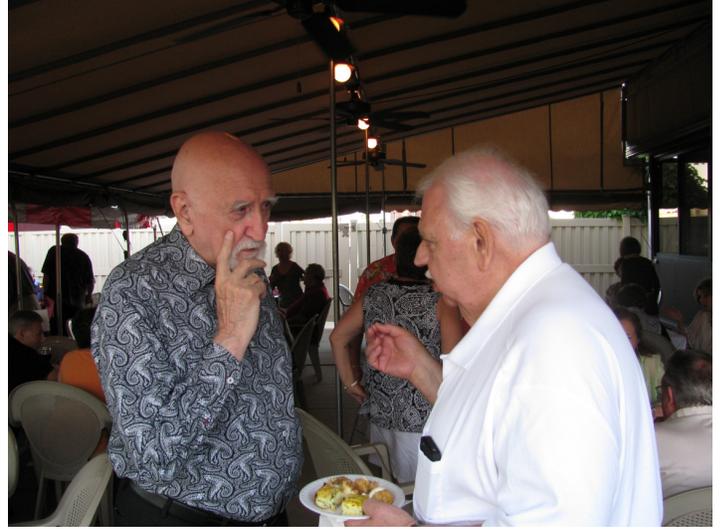
Dominic Chianese is now an Honorary Member of the Per Ninte Club. Joe Di Leo presents Dominic with gifts from the club.



"Sera Sotto Le Stelle "



The crowd gathers



The Actor and the Judge



The band played on



Two Franks
LoTempio and Licata



Shirley Giambra, Maria Dines and Tony LoTempio



John Salerno, Dominic Chianese, Paul McGuire, Bob Mangano

I was born in Pittston, Pa. in December 1916. I was the oldest of 7 children, the only boy. When I was 12 years old my father decided that I should have a profession. His choice for me was to become a barber. His reasoning was that barbering was considered a decent trade, one that could provide a person a livelihood for life.

He made all the arrangements. I was taken to the barber shop and introduced to the owner. Although I still attended school, I was told that I was required to work every day after school and on Saturdays and Sundays. Yes Sundays! It was the day that was reserved for wedding parties. Most of the weddings then took place on Sundays.

My duties were laid out, I was about to become an apprentice. First, I was told to keep the floor clean. The broom became my trusted companion. I brushed off customers and helped them with their coats. Not too bad, I thought, looks kind of easy. Then came the rest of the duties. The barber looked at me and said that I would have to clean the spittoons at the end of each day. I hated this part of the job, it was disgusting. I wondered why most of the customers had such lousy aims.

The shop was heated by a pot belly stove. When the shop wasn't busy I was sent out to scour the railroad tracks for lumps of coal that would fall from the trains. You had to have a keen eye because most of Pittston was heated by coal and if you were poor, like most of us, you hunted the rails looking for lumps to heat your home or business.

Once I mastered the above I was then allowed to observe the barber cut hair. I stood by his side and observed as he masterfully worked the scissors and comb. The clippers (non electric) took off the bulk, the scissor did the trim and the razor finished the job. He showed me how to shave a customer. I began by just applying the lather then I stood back to watch the maestro perform the shave. Everyone received shaves in those days. I learned to use a hot towel, hone a razor and give massages. At 14 years old I was now able to perform shaves, how I never slit a throat, I'll never know.

At 15, I was now ready to cut hair under the watchful eye of the master. He would taper half of the neck and then I would match the other half. He would then observe my half, fix any miscues and then complete the remaining portion of the cut himself.

I should mention that all of the above was performed without pay. The only pay I received were the nickel or dime tips given to me by customers.

Barber shops, in the '20s and '30s were a lot different than today's shops. It was a combination drugstore, first aid station and meeting place. There were jars of leeches that were placed on customers who had bruises, black eyes, etc... The leech would be placed on the bruise and gorge itself with blood until it was full and fell off. If you could stand it, the leeches always did the job. In the shop there was a guitar and mandolin, customers who knew how to play would strum and sing while they waited for their haircut.

The shop was open daily from 7 AM until 7 PM. On Saturdays we worked from 7 AM until 10 PM. As I said earlier, Sunday mornings were reserved for wedding parties who received the works: shaves, massages, shampoo, etc. The barber, on Sundays, made house calls to sick people who needed haircuts, shaves or medicinal remedies.

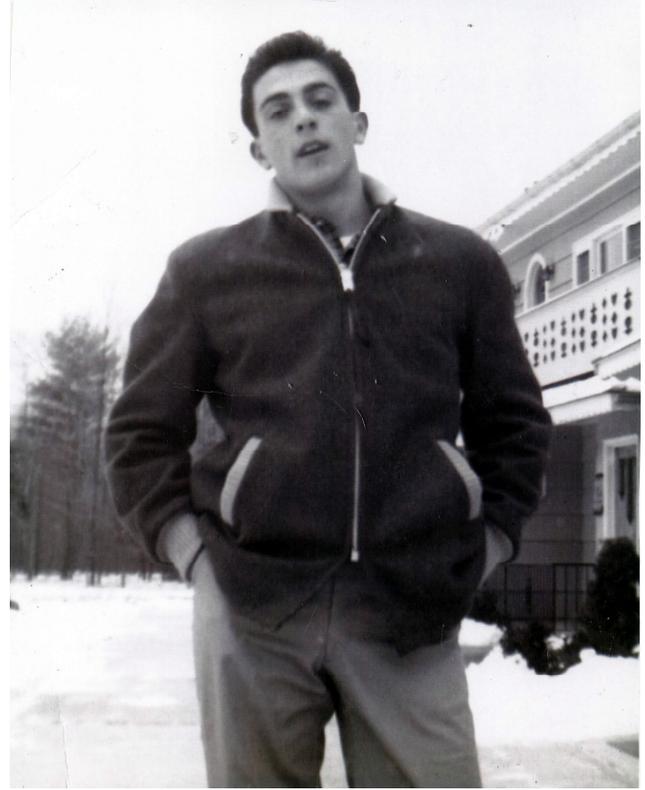
At 16 I became a full fledged barber, no more apprentice. That doesn't mean that I knew it all. One day a customer asked that I give him a singe. A singe is a thin wax candle that is used to singe the split ends of hair. It really didn't do a thing, but was popular back then. Not being too familiar with singes I proceeded to set the guys hair on fire. My boss ran over and put out the fire. I thought he was going to kill me, but instead scolded the customer for trusting a kid to do a singe.

I am now 89 years old and still maintain a few customers that come to my home in St Petersburg, Fl. for haircuts. But now its time to call it quits. On November 25, 2005, I gave my last haircut. As a barber I heard it all. For whatever reason our customers confide in us with their good news, bad news, family problems, you name it we heard it. I prospered in the days when men received haircuts and shaves weekly, and I suffered during the '70s when the Beatles ushered in the era of the long hair. I have met many wonderful people and some not so wonderful. I began in Pittston as a youngster, worked a shop in Buffalo as an adult and finished up as a senior citizen in Florida. It was a great run but the barber shop is now officially closed.

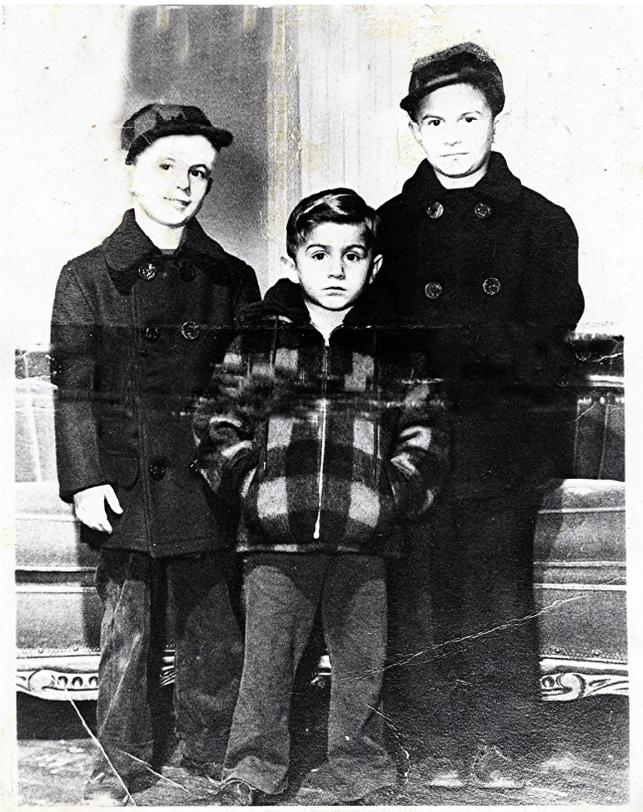
[Note: Article originally published November 2005, Per Niente Magazine. Louis, 89 years of age, passed away January 2006.](#)



Anthony Costanza
At his Elmwood Avenue shoe repair shop



Sam La Monto.



Mazzara Brothers
Jack, Marty, Bart



Joseph Dispenza
At Busti Avenue and Wilkeson Street

Congratulations on another successful productions of Bread & Onions. Friday night was the first time I have seen this work and I was amazed at how successfully you were able to evoke a time and place. My parents, naturally, knew most of the people and places that you spoke of, and enjoyed it immensely as well. In short, it had great pathos, great truth, and great humor. Truly a masterwork.

Furthermore, I am sure it set a record for most Italians in the Kavinoky Theatre at one time. If I didn't see it myself, I would never B-L it. Again, congratulations. Salute!

Sincerely,

*Michael J. LoCurto
Delaware District Council Member
Buffalo NY*

I am writing to you with great admiration and respect that you have shown for our Italian American culture and integrity by means of your publication of Per Niente produced and distributed through the medium of the Per Niente Club.

*Joseph R. Tomasulo
Buffalo NY*

Thank you, Joe. I love your website. What I was thrilled to find were two very special photos that I would love to have; if I subscribe, perhaps I can have back copies—the first photo is of my aunt's father, James "Red Grange" Nicolaio, at his Globe Hotel during the filming of a movie. The second photo is of the Felicetta family, my cumare, the late Viola Felicetta DiVincenzo's family.

Chris Nogaro

I had my haircut at Parkway Haircutting today from dear Mike Mendola!!! I have been going to him for 37 years, formerly living on Lafayette Avenue!

He was showing me your Summer 2012 Issue, and there was my dear departed mother's Godmother on page 39 with my mom's 3 cousins. It was labeled Donna Stella Pellegrino, John Anthony & Angelo Merlino, 51 Busti, early 1940s. For me it was a Hello from Heaven. My mom was named Stella after her Godmother who was a famous mid-wife. And we spent so much wonderful time with our dear Merlino Family, Aunt Angie and Uncle Harry, and then two more cousins Joanne and Richard. Thank you!

How may I subscribe to this heartwarming, sentimental, fun-loving publication of yours? And if I may, how do I get a copy or can you start my subscription with this Summer 2012 Issue. This is the one I sooooo want to have. Please.

Nancy Rizzo

Editors note: please visit our website

@ www.perniente.org

*To subscribe to Per Niente Magazine -
jdileo@roadrunner.com or 716-832-2653*



Mario Quagliana's — 732 Michigan Ave.



Santa Licata's - 280 Lower Terrace



Glieco's - Kensington Avenue



Sedia's - Seneca St, opposite original Santora's Pizzeria



Giuseppe Pizzuto's marriage to Maria Cordaro



Maria and Giuseppe Pizzuto with children Rosario and Ida, mother of Hon. Joseph Fiorella, Judge, Buffalo City Court



Maria and Giuseppe Pizzuto



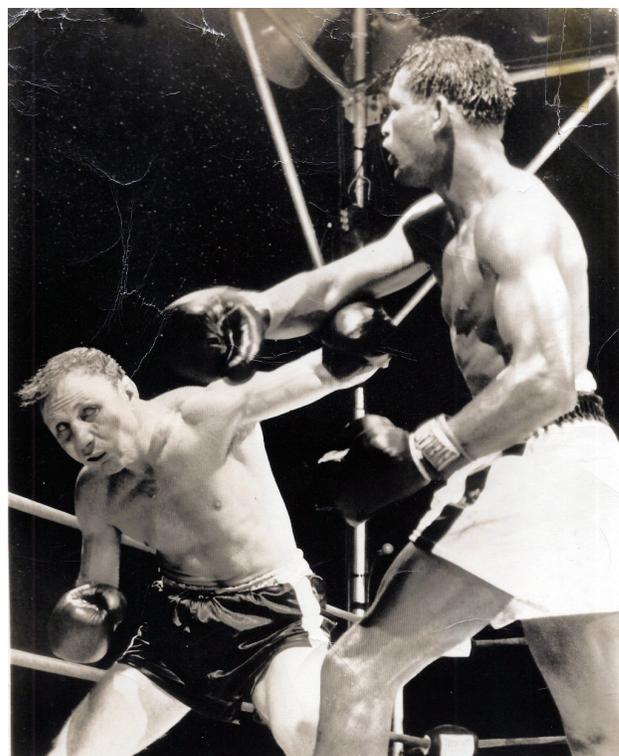
John Salerno and father, Ralph, with former heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey



June 1935 weigh-in for heavyweight title fight challenger Primo Carnera and champ Joe Louis



15th round of Middleweight Championship, Detroit MI. 9/13/1950
On the ropes, losing challenger Laurent Dauthuille vs Jake LaMotta



Charlie Fusari trades punches with Suger Ray Robinson
1950 Welterweight title fight, Jersey City, NJ.
Robinson retains title by decision

ERLANGER THEATRE
 118 Delaware Avenue, at Mohawk Telephone "Washington 0895"
 Direction of DELAWARE AVENUE THEATRE CORP.
 Robert C. Stevenson, Resident Manager Fred E. Ziemer, Treasurer

FIRE NOTICE—Look around NOW and choose the nearest Exit to your seat. In case of fire WALK (not run) to that Exit. Do not try to beat your neighbor to the street.

November 9, 1939 Vol. XVI, No. 6

THE PLAYWRIGHTS' COMPANY
 MAXWELL ANDERSON • S. N. BEHRMAN • ELMER RICE
 SIDNEY HOWARD • ROBERT E. SHERWOOD

Present
PAUL MUNI
 in
"KEY LARGO"
 A Play in a Prologue and Two Acts
 By MAXWELL ANDERSON
 Staged by Guthrie McClintic Settings by Jo Mielziner



CRIQUI, INC.
 Decoration Consultants
 BUFFALO, N. Y.

Wish to express their appreciation for the splendid reception the public has accorded them in their new venture. The enthusiasm shown both in the Decorating Studio and the Gift Shop is most gratifying.

CHARLES A. CRIQUI, JR.
 PRESIDENT

5

ERLANGER THEATRE
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April 10, 1939 Vol. XV, No. 12

RICHARD ALDRICH AND RICHARD MYERS
 present
JOHN BARRYMORE
 in
"MY DEAR CHILDREN"
 A Comedy by Catherine Turney and Jerry Horwin
 with ELAINE BARRIE
 TALA BIRREL PHILIP REED
 Directed by Otto L. Preminger Setting by Donald Oenslager



THE YEAR ROUND
making nite-club history

TABLE D'HOTE DINNERS
 5:30-9:30 every nite
 COCKTAILS EVERY DAY
 from one o'clock

Bonded Liquors Only
 DISTINCTIVE STAGE REVUES
 never a cover charge

A REVOLUTION . . .
every seven minutes!
 Air Conditioned
CHEZ AMI
 THE HOME OF THE REVOLVING BAR
 311 Delaware Ave.

Nation's Smartest Nite-Club

3

ERLANGER THEATRE
 118 Delaware Avenue, at Mohawk Telephone "Washington 0895"
 Direction of DELAWARE AVENUE THEATRE CORP.
 Robert C. Stevenson, Resident Manager Fred E. Ziemer, Treasurer

FIRE NOTICE—Look around NOW and choose the nearest Exit to your seat. In case of fire WALK (not run) to that Exit. Do not try to beat your neighbor to the street.

December 1, 1938 Vol. XV, No. 5

EDDIE DOWLING
 presents
SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE
 in
SHADOW and SUBSTANCE
 By Paul Vincent Carroll
 With The Original New York Cast Headed by
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