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Vinet Sciandra, celebrating her birthday surrounded by family and friends in an empty lot between her grandfather's Andy's Café and Graziano's grocery store.

An Italian Birthday Party on the Lower Terrace, early 1940s

My name is Josephine De Antonis. My siblings, Lawrence, Joseph, Faye and my parents, Michael and Jennie Grisanti worked in our family-owned grocery store at 24 Garner Avenue. That store was the center of many neighborhood activities from 1933 to 1947.

Our living quarters were above and behind the store. There we ate many fractured cookies, spotted apples, oranges and soon-to-be stale cold cuts. Then, Garner Avenue was a community; a congenial neighborhood, a pleasant mixture of Irish, Scots, English, Italian, African-American and Native-Americans located parallel to West Delevan and Bird Avenue. Whenever there was a tragedy or an illness, people contributed twenty-five cents to the cause!

We had a black-upright party-line dial phone. Neighbors without phones used ours. Over the years



Grisanti family, 1944

Jennie, Larry, Michael, Faye (back), Josie and Joe

many generational friendships were formed on Garner Avenue, a street with few autos. Our business had a panel truck. When it was used for pleasure, we children sat in back on orange crates.

In the morning, children walked to P S 19 or to Annunciation

School. After lunch, at home, they returned to their respective schools. On various neighborhood streets children played marbles, kick the can, or buck-buck-how-many-fingers-up. During the Great Depression, toys, bikes, wagons, dolls and buggies were few. As Lawrence and Joseph became adults, our parents dreamed of a large business for them.

However, in 1941, when WW II started, Larry, the oldest son, entered the Army, and Joe went into defense work. In the interim, our parents bought property they remodeled and sold. These ventures brought in enough money to buy a building with four stores and six

apartments at the corner of Potomac and Hoyt. In addition to the capital, many hours of hard labor was invested in remodeling this site. As such, in 1948 those successful efforts gave birth to the Potomac Superette, the first, large independent self service grocery store on the upper West Side. Along with our brothers, my sister Faye and I worked there until our lives led to marriage and other accomplishments.

After our father passed in 1951, brother Joe had many original ideas. He created "Buy One, Get One Free," a retail concept still used today. He also put into effect the idea of selling groceries obtained from railroad sal-



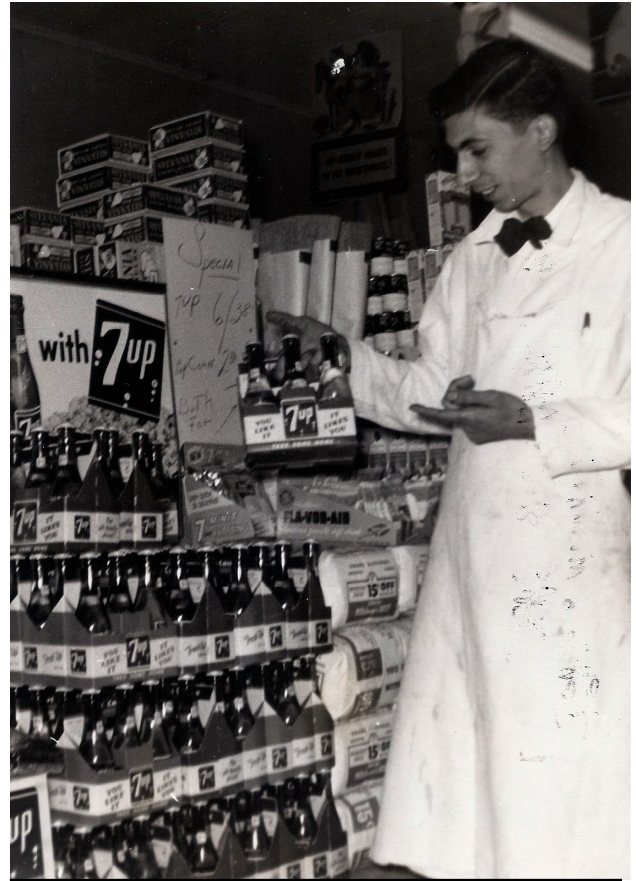
The Grisanti's store at 24 Garner Ave

vage. Word spread and many consumers took advantage of these values. Larry was in charge of employees, sales rep meetings and replenishing stock.

My mother was known for her generosity. Her motto was *Work Hard and Achieve Your Dreams*. For many years large amounts of Potomac Superette food stuffs were donated to the Loaves and Fishes Food Kitchen as well as to the needy on St. Joseph's Day. When she passed on January 4, 1977, mourners lined the street to pay their respects. She still is vividly remembered by her many grandchildren.

After forty-years the Potomac Superette and adjoining property was sold. Joe retired to take care of his ailing wife, Yolanda, who passed in February 1988. Larry enjoyed his retirement until he passed in November 2001. Josephine, Larry's wife, passed in February 2006.

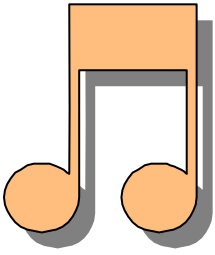
Today, Joe, at age 86, continues his busy life with his wife, Marge. They are avid dancers and bowlers and active members of St. Margaret's Seniors. The Grisanti girls, this writer, 83, and Faye, 78, are also active and enjoy their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



Joe Grisanti stacking soft drinks at the newly opened Potomac Superette



Opening day at Potomac Superette - the corner of Potomac and Hoyt Street.



The year was 1971. I had just received my BA and Masters in Music from the University of Buffalo. For the most part, exciting things were happening in

my life. I would soon be a married man. I was a young musician who had studied with some of Buffalo's greats: John Sedola, Carlo Pinto, Farina Boldt, Livingston Gearhart, Roland Martin, Bob Mols, Carlo Annibale and Sam Scamacca. Since age twelve, I had performed throughout Western New York with many of the area's finest musicians on the recommendation of the late Sam Scamacca who became my dear friend. Despite the fact that music leaves one broke, the musical experience left me with many wonderful friendships and stories I shall always treasure.

That involvement gave me the opportunity to meet countless talented local and nationally known musicians. Without a doubt, Buffalo's Joe Guercio who went on to national prominence as Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme's pianist and conductor and who later flourished as Elvis Presley's conductor, was one of them. What excited me most about Joe Guercio? He had great influence in the hiring of musicians in Las Vegas.

In June of '71, my bride, Judy, and I honeymooned in San Francisco and Hawaii. I suggested we return home via Las Vegas. Neither my wife nor I are gamblers, but there was a method to my madness. Vegas at the time was a two-sided several-mile-long "strip" with casinos surrounded by many miles of desert. Included on the "strip" were such famous hotels as the Sands,

Stardust, Riviera, and Thunderbird. The recently erected Caesar's Palace had stunning architecture that surpassed all the others. The "Baudos," though young, were a class act. So, without a doubt, Caesar's was where we chose to stay.

In those days Vegas was the place to be if one were an entertainer, gambler, or musician. Then, every casino had house bands or orchestras in the main rooms, and perpetual music and entertainment in the lounges. So, with my diploma, several degrees, musicianship and a decent vita, Vegas was mine for the taking. Not to mention that I was young, vibrant, muscular, intelligent, good-looking and all of those other traits that a conceited person could possibly possess. Despite those attributes, it never hurts to know someone who might help you get your "foot in the door." Welcome, Joe Guercio.

Ten years had passed since I had met Joe in Buffalo. As luck would have it, I re-introduced myself to him at Caesars. I told him of my musical ambitions, gave him a brief history of my accomplishments, and name-dropped some of the musicians from Buffalo we knew and with whom we performed. Feeling the cockiness of a young musical stud, I said to myself, "Baudo, be bold and ask him to help get you a job." So I asked. Joe recommended that I attend the show in the Circus Maximus that evening. This would give me an indication of what I should expect as a house musician. I was to let him know what I thought about the experience, and more specifically, the pianist/organist who was performing there.

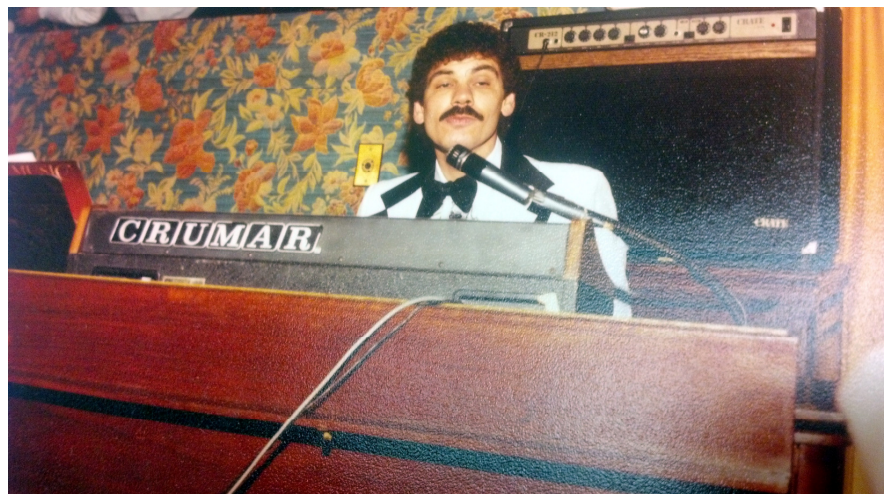
That evening my wife and I attended the show. Though Ann-Margret was the headliner, I was more interested in seeing and hearing the person whom I thought I could “cut” and would ultimately replace. In the jargon of jazz, “cutting” is when one musician believes he can play better than another. In this case, I would be cutting the pianist/organist in the show at Caesar’s.

Prior to the start of the show, I watched as the musicians walked on stage. To my delight, I see this “old dude,” strutting, using a walker and shuffling his way to stage left very slowly and methodically until he reached the piano/organ. He cautiously sat on the organ bench and began to crank (terminology for starting) the Hammond organ. Although I have a doctorate, medicine is not my strong suit. Still, It was obvious to me that this “cat” had very little physical ability. I had no doubt that his physicality would hinder his performance. The dude was old, inept, and his career was obviously over. I also knew how old people were forgetful, so there was a chance that he would lose his place in the music. Wow! The gig was mine for the asking!

With the orchestra in place, the conductor gave the cue for a tympani roll.....broooooooooom. An announcer welcomed us to Caesar’s and introduced the act. To my surprise the “old dude” opened the show with an organ solo. His two hands were literally flying

up and down the keyboard with all the technical ability that anyone could possibly possess. The organ emitted melodious sounds I have never heard or ever dreamed of hearing. How could it be? He was old, physically inept, mentally incompetent, washed up. With the exception of his hands, none of his appendages or limbs even worked. A definite medical miracle. I sat in amazement and wondered if his fingers were still attached to his hands.

Needless to say, I didn’t ask, I didn’t want, nor did I get the job. I immediately fell into a depressed state and ordered several bottles of champagne to ease the pain. When the show ended I put the two empty goblets with the Caesar’s Logo in my pocket. Upon leaving, I stumbled into a large statue of Julius Caesar. The goblets shattered, and glass fragments fell at Ceasar’s feet. Et tu, Julius? The honeymoon was over. The moral of my story? “Never judge a musician by his walker.”



Young Joe Baudo at work



Salvatore Privitera

My father, Salvatore (Sam) Francis Privitera recently celebrated his one-hundredth birthday. In 1862, his maternal grandfather, the newly married Orazio Barone, and his wife, Francesca, left Valledolmo, Sicily. They were the first Sicilians to arrive in Buffalo where they raised seven children: Frank, Francesco, Charles, John, Joseph, Sarah (our grandmother) and Josephine (Buffamonte.)

My fraternal grandfather, Charles Privitera, whose parents were also from Valledolmo, was born in Buffalo as were his brother Joseph, and sister, Mary (Palermo.) In 1910, Charles Privitera met and married Sarah Barone and on October 22, 1912, their first and only child, Salvatore, my father, was born. He attended P S# 1, and Lafayette High. During the Great Depression my father was accepted at the University of Buffalo Dental School but subsequently surrendered his dream of dentistry due to financial difficulties. But while there he was a collegiate light-weight boxing champ. He proudly displays his gold medal award and

Meritorious Service Award
For
Honoring your Italian Heritage
with Honesty, Dignity, & Integrity
For
100 Years
To
Salvatore "Sam" Privitera
October 22, 1912 - October 22, 2012

Special thanks to Jim DiFiglia, who, on behalf of the Per Niente Club, presented a gold medal to Sam Privitera in honor of his 100th birthday.

the newspaper articles to prove it. He later worked at the Mohican Market on Grant Street earning \$15.00 a week, twelve of which went to his parents .

In 1934, Jean DiGiulio, my dad's friend, invited him to a party. She wanted him to meet her girlfriend, Mary (Mae) DeBartolomeo, a recent and beautiful transplant from Boston, Massachusetts. When dad saw and met her he knew immediately that she was the beauty who boarded a bus every day that would take her to Hutchinson Central High School: the girl he dreamed of asking out but he lacked the courage to do so. However, it was meant to be.

They dated for three years and were married on September 6, 1937. In January, 1939, I was born. In September, 1940, Chuck was born and finally, in 1945, Mary Grace arrived. At the time, dad was working for Prudential Insurance as Staff Manager and was soon promoted to District Manager. My fraternal grandparents owned a three-family home on Massachusetts between Lawrence and Fifteenth Street. They insisted mom and dad take the upper three bedroom flat. My siblings and I have fond memories of growing up in that neighborhood. Chuck spent his time at the Butler

Mitchell Boys Club and could always be found playing ball or shooting craps in the playground. Oh, if mom and dad only knew! Mary Grace and I loved the playground as well as the arts and crafts at the club. We also enjoyed Ganci's Grocery store and Conte's Pharmacy.

In 1946 dad purchased a cottage in Thunder Bay, Canada, where we spent our childhood summers. When school let out we were packed and ready to leave. Every Sunday in summer upon returning from Church, we'd approach our cottage to see many cars of friends and relatives who knew the sauce would be on and that cases of beer would be piled high. In 1956 my dad finally got the nerve to tell his parents that he bought a home in Eggertsville. A terrible blow to them. They knew they would miss us terribly. I continued at Mt. St Joseph and Chuck and Mary Grace went to Amherst High School. My dad retired in 1972. Somehow, he felt that many years of productivity were still in the offing. That feeling led to part-time work at Western Savings Bank. There, he set numerous records in insurance sales. Subsequently, his good looks led to his becoming the on-air-talent for the bank's TV commercials.

In 2001, after sixty-four wonderful years together, mom passed away. Dad was devastated. We insisted he sell his Eggertsville home. He did and moved to a lovely condo in Snyder. After a few years, and in his 90s, dad moved to his present home, Amberleigh, where he has won over everyone's affection. Men love being with him - as do women.

Ultimately we knew it was time to sell his car. He has never forgiven us. But wait, there's more! Oblivious to us he tried leasing a car, borrowing a car, and buying one. He once hired someone to drive him to a nearby bank to the tune of ninety-dollars. We thought when he renewed his license at age ninety-six his request would be denied. It was not to be! His license was renewed for an additional ten years! It was silly of us to think we were off the hook. Recently, he said he needed a car. I asked, "why,?" He answered "there's a couple of ladies at Amberleigh I'd like to take out and

I have no transportation." Approaching one-hundred years and still dating!

At his birthday celebration at Salvatore's Italian Gardens (my dad's favorite restaurant) the adult children of dad's many deceased friends were there.

My dad's only living relative, his cousin, Frances Buffamonte (Frantina) was present as were her son, John and wife, Corry. Dad's oldest living friend, my Godmother, Josephine Parisi (O'Connell), ninety-seven years young, and who looks fabulous, was there with her daughter, JoAnn and her husband, Larry DiGiulio. Also in attendance were dad's six grandchildren, and thirteen great-grandchildren who always light up his life when he sees them.

In a speech to the guests my dad said the party was more for his children, since they knew everyone there and he didn't remember anyone except the aforementioned! While meant to be funny, it was sadly true. But we know he was having the time of his fruitful life when he surprised us all by singing one of his favorite songs .

Dad is frequently asked the secret to his longevity. His answer: "Motion is Lotion." He has always had a passion for fitness long before it was deemed vital to one's health. Due to his physicality, he was invited by Linda Pellegrino to demonstrate some of his exercises on her TV show. My dad also has a strong belief in prayer and the Sacred Heart. As such, we thank God he has no aches and pains and requires only minimal medications. We are so proud of our father! We love him ever so much and we will accept whatever time God gives us with him.



Located at 680 Seneca Street, the Larkin Building was demolished in 1950.

Several months after graduating from Grover Cleveland High School in 1934 at the age of 17, I was hired by the Larkin Company, a national mail order house located on Seneca Street in Buffalo, New York.

I resided at 423 Seventh Street with my parents, two brothers, grandmother and uncle. To get to work, I boarded the streetcar at the corner of Niagara and Hudson Streets and transferred to the one headed close to the Larkin Administration Building, a majestic structure of red brick, fronted by waterfall-like fountains. Frank Lloyd Wright, its renowned architect, designed inscriptions for the building consisting of numerous sets of three-word inspirations. I recall "imagination—judgment—initiative." The entrance door was made of glass with 12 cement steps to its approach.

My predominate duties were to file all the correspondence as well as the billings in both alphabetical and numerical [date] order. The huge drawers were situ-

ated from floor to ceiling and wall-to-wall along the spacious entrance to the mezzanine area of the second floor accounting department. An electrically controlled ladder was available for me to climb as I inserted letters and invoices into these containers. Rows of desks and chairs were set up with an aisle in between for the approximately 36 employees.

The pleasant work environment was further enhanced by melodious strains from an enormous organ console situated in the interior court area. An extraordinary sense of fellowship among the workers was prevalent and we looked forward to enjoyable picnic-like lunches frequently provided by the company. Large wooden tables and benches set on the spacious grounds were surrounded by rows of majestic trees. The aroma of steaks, hot dogs and hamburgers grilled by the chefs permeated the air and to this day are "delicious" memories of those happy times.

Monthly newsletters covering Larkin's progress and events included contributions from employees. I submitted numerous rhymed poems regarding the company, as well as my personal reflections of that era. Evidently the comptroller of accounting was impressed with my writings and offered me the position of corresponding secretary. This afforded me the ability to create my own method of formulating the extensive daily communications.



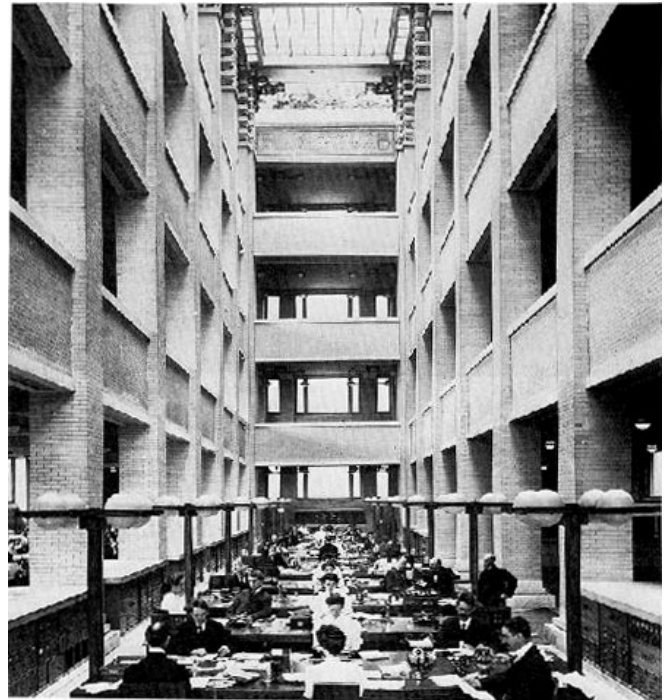
Larkin employees at lunch

In 1938, John D. Larkin Jr. promoted me to the position of secretary to the manager of the retail store, located directly across the street from the Administration Building. An underground tunnel between the two buildings was accessible to employees, thus avoiding the necessity to cross Seneca Street. It also shielded us from winter snow and summer heat.

I was elated to be working among the top executives and making arrangements for the guests they received from throughout the country. The company's history fascinated me. It was founded by John D. Larkin in the 1800s. It began as a soap manufacturer and evolved into a national mail-order supplier. The retail store provided items from soap and personal goods to every conceivable household item.

I recall buying freshly baked rolls and cold cuts from the food section. With 25 cents, one could buy lunch that also included dessert (freshly baked) and a drink. Weekly employee wages averaged about \$12 to \$15.

I was particularly attracted to the clothing displays. In spite of high quality and attractive styles, sales of apparel were not productive, probably because of the Great Depression. I made a written suggestion to the top executive to implement a charge



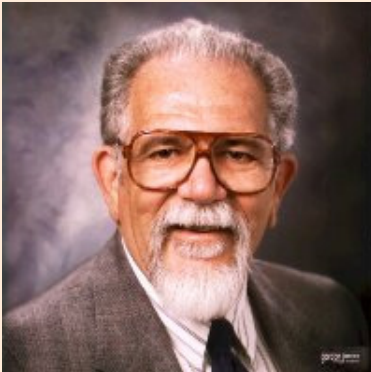
system for customers, outlining a procedure for Larkin Company credit cards. I didn't get a response. However, when that top executive left Larkin to become head of Flint & Kent, on Buffalo's Main Street, he used that idea. I left Larkin in 1939, when I married Richard Lepeirs.

Maintaining friendships with some of my co-workers was a permanent plus and we enjoyed recollecting Larkin episodes. Now, at age 96, I wonder if any other Buffalonians remember the existence of that storied place and of the underground passageway.

I appreciate that the editors, Joe DiLeo and Joey Giambra, have allowed me the opportunity to write about my past experiences. To me, "Per Niente" is a "Per Tutti" publication.



Center front: Sara Lepeirs with co-workers



Angelo Coniglio

Some readers may know that in recent years I've been doing genealogy research. One tool in that re-search is the re-view of United States federal cen-suses, which have

been recorded every ten years, starting with 1790. These records aren't made public until seventy-two years after the census date. Until recently, only that of the 1930s was available. There, I found information about my parents and older siblings, and other immigrants of that generation, but records that included myself and my contemporaries weren't available until this past April, when the 1940 census was released.

At first, searching the 1940 census was a tedious on-line process. I had to start with a street address and then find the "enumeration district", a group of several blocks that encompass the address of interest. I soon discovered the upside of the process: when a page of the census was displayed, I saw so many names of families that I knew, it was like "walking" through Buffalo's neighborhoods, as they were in 1940.

For example, my family hadn't yet moved from Myrtle Avenue in 1940, so I found the Coniglios at 309 Myrtle, where my father Gaetano was listed as a "laborer on a WPA sewer project". Next door at 307 was the Modica family, whom I later discovered were relatives of Joe Di Leo. At 305 Myrtle Avenue were the Marcones, around the corner at 480 Swan Street were the Pepes.

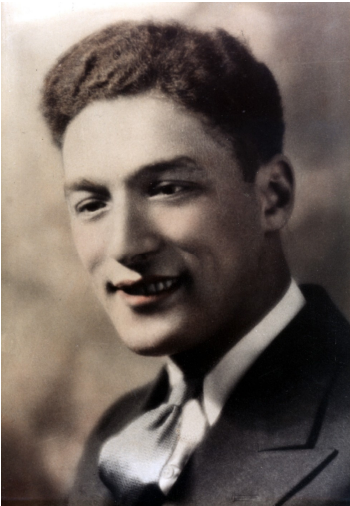
Looking at the neighborhood around West Avenue and Breckenridge, I saw the Calogero Butera family at 971 West, across from a shop that would eventually become the Battaglia's Vieni Su Pizzeria. A Butera son, Sam, was a Golden

Gloves champion, and his brother's Ange and Libby had a barber shop on Main Street years later. At 105 Breckenridge Street lived their cousin, Charlie Butera, now the proprietor of Charlestowne Floors. The Buteras were from Serradifalco, Sicily, my parent's home town.

Around the block, at 224 Plymouth, the census revealed the names of the Manganos: Angelo, a bricklayer, his wife Louise, and their children Jacqueline and Robert. I hadn't met Bobby yet, but I would, and he would remain a dear friend to this day.

A bit further down the West Side, at 144 Hudson, lived the Scimè family. I didn't meet their son, Vincent, until seventy years later, but it turns out his mother's side was from Serradifalco, and now he's my Per Niente buddy, and my fifth cousin, Vinnie. And on Efner Street another Serradifalco native, Gregorio Giambra, who, like my father, was listed as a "laborer on a WPA sewer project". Gregorio was a "paisan" and my father's friend. They worked side by side in the sulfur mines of Sicily, and on the construction projects of Buffalo. Shown living at 73 Efner Street with his father, Gregorio, his mother Josephine, and his sisters Dorothy and Concetta, was our own Joey Giambra.

On Niagara Street near Massachusetts were the Bronzino, Albanese, Gengo, Castellani and Maniscalco families, and at 908 Niagara were the Bongiovannis: Samuel, Mary and their daughter Angela. They eventually moved to 93 West Ferry, and the daughter used to stop by my house at 973 West Avenue to walk me to Lafayette High School. She would come to the door and ask for me. My mother, Rosa, would tell her, "Angelo no home!", and I would sneak out the back door to walk with Angie. I may remember that connection more vividly than the rest, because I have now been married to Angie for fifty-one glorious years!

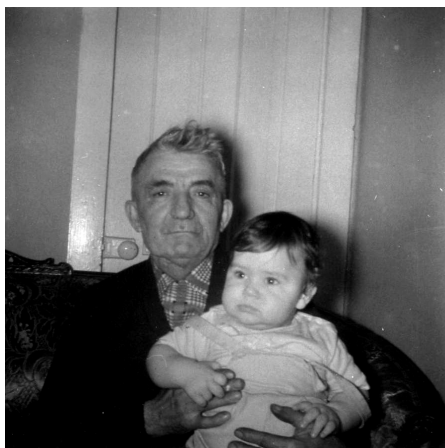


Charlie Agro

My story starts at 67 Efner Street between Georgia and Carolina Streets. My parents, Charlie Agro and Dolores Giambra were married on June 8, 1946. I was born on January 19, 1948. I am an only child and the first grandchild of my maternal grandmother, Josephine Sperrazzo Giambra. To say I was lavished with love and attention is an understatement.

She was the sweetest, kindest, most giving woman I have ever known. She lived at 203 Busti Avenue with my grandfather, Gregorio, my uncle Joey, and my Aunt Connie. Next door, at 199 Busti Avenue lived my paternal grandmother, also a Josephine, and my Godmother, my aunt Mamie. My grandmother Giambra taught me how to speak the Sicilian dialect at an early age. I was bi-lingual at age three. That I speak the language still amazes my husband, Joe Cipolla, for whom I feel sorry! He didn't know Efner Street or Busti Avenue or Seventh Street. He was from the Central Park area.

My grandmother Giambra and my mother gave me the greatest gift of my life – the gift of Faith: “Co va co Dio – Dio La Auito,” Who goes with God, God will help them. My mother reminds me of this all the time; I remind my children and my grandchildren as well. Our beloved church, Saint Anthony of Padua was the center of our existence. I viv-



Gregorio and Gregory Giambra

idly recall the Novena on Monday to Mother Cabrini who gave us much solace and refuge as well as the Tuesday Novena to Saint Anthony.

My childhood memories are precious. My father managed The Academy, a movie theatre at the foot of Main Street. As such I grew up watching cowboy movies. I love reminiscing with my dear and treasured childhood girl friends from Saint Anthony's Church and my beloved PS # 73 on Seventh Street between Georgia and Wilkeson Streets. All that is gone. Gone are the streets, the houses, the schools, the corner stores, chicken and fish markets and bakeries. All that remains in the air of those few precious Sicilian acres is the memory of the love, kindness and generosity of those who endured. Urban Renewal may have destroyed our neighborhood but it can never eradicate our memories of that space.

The fairness and street smarts acquired there have left an indelible mark in my heart! I left Efner Street long ago - but that beloved street - has never left me.



Dolores Giambra Agro



JoFrances Agro Cipolla

In early twentieth century Buffalo, Southern Italian immigrants, denizens of the lower West Side and of a waterfront tenement area called the Hooks, spent their summers on area farms picking berries, tomatoes, and beans. There they lived in kerosene-lit shanties and relieved themselves in an outhouse (the backhausu) where the smell of life was covered by lime. It was indeed a different time.

Those who didn't farm, helped the Abbruzzi, Neapolitans, Campobassese, San Fele, and Calabrese in building Buffalo's City Hall. Their meager earnings, from the nobility of that labor provided shelter and pasta for their families and coins for church.

In Autumn, blonde, black, and red-haired chisel-faced laborers with sprigs of basil above their ears went to Diego Capraro's cellar on Busti Avenue to crush grape into a pale-purple juice that non-Italians called "dago red." In the process they opined about Opera, Verdi, Puccini, Joe Louis, Primo Carnera, blasphemed and cursed women who smoked and drove cars. They rekindled rites of passage: love, fear, soup kitchens and bread lines. They discussed Mary Scarfini, the widow who screamed, "all men's is no good," when her husband died in a wall of concrete; a death for which she blamed all wine makers. They spoke of children who drowned in the Erie Canal or at the foot of Georgia Street. They discuss their lives in a new world for which they cared, but whose social structure and laws seemed unfair. An immigrant wine maker was deemed a habitual alien, a criminal and foreign element in society's midst.

From Capraro's Victrola the wine makers listened to Enrico Caruso and the colatura Nina Morgana, a Hooks dweller whom Caruso discovered while dining at Dante's Inferno in the Hooks. They discussed the 1901 Pan American Exposition in Buffalo and how thousands admired the ten-year old Nina Morgana who sang there. They reflected on her performing with Caruso at the Metropolitan Opera, and that in 1921 Caruso was best man at her wedding and that Morgana sang in recital with Caruso before his death in 1922. Pride turned to ignominy when they spoke of the anarchist who shot President William McKinley at the Exposition. Because the assassin had black hair, Italian men were brutally

beaten by police and citizens alike. When McKinley died, Italian men hid in fields and under bridges. The winemakers discussed the energy, the ethos and the days of their lives. They recall Naples, the Mezzogiorno, or Sicily, their ancient island home and how in America, in 1919, the drinking of alcoholic beverages was prohibited. At Capraro's they knew this was folly. Americans



drank excessively. Devious activity has always filled drunken American minds. The generative semen of Prohibition impregnated a virgin America that ultimately spawned a national criminal cartel.

The grape crushers were protective of their daughters but not of their entrepreneurial sons who readily fought non-Italians for the right to shine shoes on downtown streets. The pennies, nickels and dimes earned went to St Anthony's Church and to The Academy on Lower Main Street to see cowboy movies. Then, in the autumn of their lives, their wine-making fathers, grew old and waited only to die. The sons frequented the watery depths at the foot of Georgia Street, where dutiful birds were winging. In the nude, some swam with dormant fish in moss-filled Lake Erie, a cove of stinking urban loneliness worthy of Steinbeck's Cannery Row. Ultimately they ran from baton swinging cops past Sullivan's saloon into a silent prairie of ironweed and the

rusted Georgia Street Bridge, under which slept the drunk Jumbo Malone embraced by a crescent moon.

Amid the scent of a warm river that merged with that of a lake, was the “Ice House” where ice was made and sold and boys climbed, dark-wooden lampposts to envy people boarding lake steamers to Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Canada. Foghorns, tugs, and police sirens were in their sensory reach: a polyglot concerto of hoboos and mugs; all pinched in paddy wagons and off to the jug.

Tenement men showered at the public bathhouse on the Lower Terrace where a nickel equaled a towel and a piece of Lava soap. Near Lunghino’s Italian Bank on Evans Street they played “Moda,” a game where numbers are spoken and fingers are displayed.

On Lower Main Street, at Frank and Teresa’s Anchor Bar, for pasta fazool and tripe, boys scrubbed moss from crab shells. Then on Main Street they looked into windows to observe diners in fine restaurants, and watched as lowly skid row bums were thrown out of bust-out saloons. They admired strangers who were exiting buses and trolleys at Shelton Square so as to shop in J. N. Adam’s; Hengerer’s; Hens and Kelly; Adam, Meldrum and Anderson; Oppenheim Collins; Posmanturs; Flint and Kent; Edwards; Weeds; Neisner’s; Woolworth’s; and Kresge’s.

In 1930, Emolino Rico’s recorded music from New York City filled the air in tenements, bakeries, Scaduto’s store, the Tivoli Gardens, Vella’s pool hall, the Peacock Grill and finally in Dante’s Inferno. But live music, in the form of ragtime would soon pour from Dante’s, a Hooks fixture since 1900. Its proprietor, Santo Carozza, was a twenty-five year old widower when he arrived in Buffalo in 1895 from Montedoro, Sicily, with his five-year old son, Vincent. People desirous of great cuisine and the Hooks lifestyle came to Dante’s Inferno.

In 1906, Santo lured the famous Palermo String Trio from the elegant Genesee Hotel on Main Street to accompany the fourteen-year-old coloratura genius and pre-Metropolitan Opera star, Nina Morgana. By 1910, when the music at Dante’s Inferno became as popular as it’s food, Vincent Carozza, now a fifteen-year old devotee of ragtime music, urged his father to hire the Fontinos, who played guitar and mandolin ragtime. The Palermo

Trio, the Fontinos, and the Bracco Sisters, who replaced Nina Morgana, played Dante’s for ten years. But trends come and go and times change. In 1916, over his father’s protests, Vincent revamped the music format at Dante’s Inferno: “All Ragtime, All The Time.” But that too would change. On January 16, 1917 Vincent received a letter from Giuseppe Busto, an erudite twenty-seven year old Buffalonian living in Brooklyn, who, unlike most Sicilians spoke proper Italian and perfect English. Giuseppe’s letter spoke of “jazz,” a new American art form created by five young, untrained New Orleans musicians who called themselves, “The Original Dixieland Jazz Band.” Giuseppe’s letter stated “the ODJB play again on Saturday evening, January, 27, 1917, in the “400 Club” Room at Reisenweber’s Café. He added, “jazz will soon be America’s favorite. Can you be at Reisenweber’s on Saturday, the 27th of January? If so, I will see you there.”

At 8:00 PM, on Friday evening, January 26, 1917, an excited twenty-seven year old Vincent Carozza, and a thirty-year old Italian immigrant, “Little John Bird,” left a frigid Buffalo in a 1915 Ford “Tin Lizzy.” They drove four-hundred miles over rough, snowy roads for fifteen dismal hours to meet Giuseppe Busto in New York City. However, for reasons unknown, Giuseppe Busto never appeared at Reisenweber’s that evening. Vincent and Little John Bird listened astutely to The Original Dixieland Jazz Band. Their last set with its syncopation, riveting spirit, melodic color and varied dynamics drove Vincent and others to a frenzy. Vincent was converted. He knew the originators of America’s newest phenomenon that would revolutionize modern American music would, and must play Dante’s Inferno. He made his proposal to the band-leader, Nick LoRocca who politely said, “Buffalo? Someday.” It would take twenty-two years for that to happen. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band remained at Reisenweber’s for two decades. On Vincent and Little John Bird’s return to Buffalo in a raging snowstorm, their Tin Lizzie collided with an oil truck and both perished.

The Original Dixieland Jazz Band never played at Dante’s Inferno, but in 1939, A Manhattan agency, GBJT (Giuseppe Busto Jazz Talent) booked them for a two-week engagement in Buffalo at The Silver Slipper, an East Ferry Street jazz club.



The brothers Capraro, Thomas and Diego

For many Italian families growing up on the Westside of Buffalo, nothing was more important than spending time with your family. We lived in simple times and appreciated our families and even more, our extended families.

The togetherness brought a bonding that is missing in today's generation. I vividly remember the fun times I had growing up with the Capraro's.

My maternal grandparents were Diego Capraro and Mary Stefena Burgio. They had 8 children; 6 girls and 2 boys; Mary, Concetta (my mother), Josephine, Grace, Rosalie, Lucille, Vincent (Jim) and John. Diego (also known as Dick) was born in Canicatti, a little town in Sicily and came to America in 1913. My grandmother, Mary, was born in Racalmuto, Sicily, and also came to America in 1913. They met in Buffalo and were married at St. Anthony's of Padua Church in 1922. A few years later, they bought a house at 213 Busti Ave in which to raise their family. It was a 2 1/2 story double that also had another 2 story cottage-like house in the rear whose rental income helped pay the mortgage. As the family grew and later married, most of my aunts and uncles had lived in one of the back cottage flats with their spouses at one time or another to start families of their own. I remember a visit to grandma's also meant a chance to play with some of my cousins who lived in the rear. Hopscotch, tag, hide and seek, playing catch with a baseball or football

were some of the games we played that kept us amused for hours. I also remember the fun times at our family picnics. My aunts and uncles would bury an assortment of pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and half dollars in a couple of mounds of sawdust. My cousins and I had to find as many coins as we could and keep what we found.

Diego and Mary were hard working people. For many years, Diego worked long hours for Lake Erie Engineering as a chipper in the foundry. As the metal cast cooled, his job was to chip off the excess metal, called slag. He also was known to have the largest wine press in the city of Buffalo. Diego knew that once grape season was upon him, he would be busy squeezing grapes for customers anxiously awaiting to ferment their own perfect barrel of wine. My grandmother ran the house like a well-oiled machine. She would assign the daily household chores to each of her 8 children. Making beds, doing laundry, ironing, sweeping, taking the garbage out were just some of the tasks that had to be done. Like it or not, grandma made sure all my aunts and uncles were busy doing their fair share because that's just the way it was!

Grandma was a great cook. She was able to whip up a meal in 20 minutes. I remember her making homemade bread, froschia, sauce, braciola, caponatina, fried eggplant and of course, her favorite: "GREENS." How she loved her greens! My favorite was her pizza. I can still taste her sauce on thick



Rear: Mrs. Mary Capraro & Maggie Burgio

homemade dough with anchovies that was topped off with grated cheese. She always made three or four sheets of pizza for all the birthdays and holidays. And who could forget how we made a meal on snails (bubbalucci). The patience we had removing the snails with a needle or toothpick then slurping the sauce from the shell. Someone would always supplement the meals with sweets from Virginia Pastry Shop or Muscarella's. When grandma didn't make the homemade bread, we would enjoy crusty bread from Costanzo's or Balistreri's Bakery. Oh, what a life!

Christmas Eve parties at my Uncle Jim's house were always fun and exciting. The hustle and bustle of the season was finally here and when you're a kid, the anticipation and excitement was magical. My aunts were upstairs preparing food while my uncles were in the basement playing cards and telling stories. As for me, I knew I was able to stay up late, have fun and play with all my cousins. We sang Christmas carols, played games and even had a visit from Santa who gave us all presents. Before the night was over, one of my aunts would say, "Lets call brother Johnny in California and wish him a Merry Christmas." So we all took turns wishing Uncle John a Merry Christmas. Believe it or not, one year we even celebrated Christmas in June. Uncle John came to Buffalo for my Aunt Lucille's wedding and because he's missed so many Christmas parties, the family decided to surprise him. So my Uncle Jim and his family decided to pull out the Christmas tree and everything else to make the house look festive. The Buffalo Evening News even did an article Celebrating Christmas in June.

Early in 1960, many surrounding families who lived between Virginia street to Court street and from Niagara Street to the Lakeview projects received a letter from the New York State Department of Transportation telling

them that they were interested in buying their homes for the development of the Niagara section of the Thruway known today as the Niagara Street interchange on the I-190. Within one year, it became a reality. The State made each family an offer to buy their homes and hundreds of families were uprooted without any disregard on how they were destroying a wonderful neighborhood.

Change is never easy. Grandpa's health was declining and his emphysema made his breathing difficult, therefore needing round the clock care. As a veteran of WWI, he was able to get the care he needed at the VA Hospital. He stayed there until he passed in 1968. Grandma, who was always independent, ventured into the work force to support herself. She worked in the kitchen at Children's Hospital and later in the cafeteria at D'Youville College. She was a true inspiration to everyone who knew her. She never said an unkind word about anybody. She loved her family and loved life. Bouncing each of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren on her leg humming the tarantella brought her much joy.

In 1996 grandma passed leaving us with great traditions and priceless memories. A toast to the Capraro family...La Bella Famiglia!



Jimmy Capraro, 1940s

Every once in a while we stumble upon something that truly surprises and pleases us. I recently received a newsletter from my old high school which has been closed for over 35 years. As I read it, I couldn't help smiling in amazement. The pride and devotion of so many of the alumni of Bishop Fallon High School and its predecessor, Holy Angels Collegiate Institute, continue to astound me. In its entire history, the school produced fewer than 3000 graduates; never more than 140 in a year. Holy Angels averaged 200 students enrolled at any one time and Bishop Fallon approximately 400 at its apex, yet they produced disproportionate numbers of judges, lawyers, doctors, teachers, priests, bankers, businessmen and, most importantly, good Christian family men. Most were first or second generation Americans of Italian or Sicilian descent who grew up on Buffalo's West Side. Their successes were always as important to their families as to these young men themselves. It usually meant financial sacrifices for their parents to pay even their modest tuition, but they did so, happily.

Fr. Daniel O'Leary, OMI, is probably the most remarkable and unique individual among this group. He came to Holy Angels Collegiate from Massachusetts as a young seminarian in 1939. He was a student, then a teacher, and finally he was Bishop Fallon's last Oblate principal until it closed.

The spirit of this little school, which produced its last graduates in 1976, somehow endures and thrives. So many remember it fondly. Its alumni conduct

four different events annually; most notable of which is the Michael P. Kirwan Golf Tournament. Over the last few years it has raised almost \$45,000 to support Catholic education and tuition assistance for deserving but financially needy young students.

There is also an annual "all class reunion," which is attended by approximately 100 people each year, many from far away places, who come occasionally to reconnect with their roots. Many graduates also meet with classmates on a regular basis. One class, the "Fighting 58ers," meets monthly for breakfast. The turnout is usually 10-15 most of whom are retirees. When one considers the class was only 100 strong at graduation in 1958 (and accounts for deaths and out-of-towners) that is amazing. They also have an annual class barbeque that brings 25 to 30 together; some from far away California and Florida.

The alumni maintain an active website and mail a newsletter. They also sponsor a dinner for Hall of fame inductees that is attended by hundreds. They sponsor a mass and a breakfast at the old Oblate Parish, Holy Angels. All this with an ever shrinking base. And it's more remarkable when one remembers that Holy Angels Col-

legiate only existed from 1939 until 1953, and Bishop Fallon from 1954 until 1976: a grand total of 37 years.

You might ask, "Are the alumni running out of candidates for their Hall of Fame?" No! Recently, Michael Andriaccio, one of the world's great classical guitarists was inducted. The alumni haven't yet

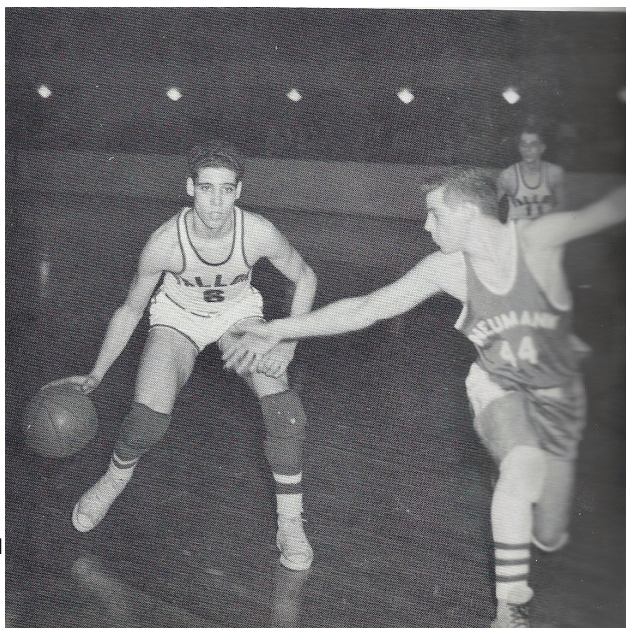


Frank Longo references recent Hall of Fame inductees to Rev. James Fee.

reached a man who quite literally saved a small Catholic college from closing. And there was a businessman who died unexpectedly and left hundreds of thousands of dollars to be invested in Catholic education.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate came to Buffalo in July, 1852 when they purchased land in what was then a "suburban area" known as Prospect Hill. There, they opened Holy Angels Parish. Their educational ministry in Western New York began in 1891 when Holy Angels Collegiate Institute was first opened. Low enrollment and financial realities led to its closing in 1910, except for seminarians, who actually took classes at Canisius High School and Canisius College. Holy Angels Collegiate Institute reopened in 1932 but only for seminarians until 1939. By 1950, the little school on Porter and West had outgrown its facility and happily accepted Bishop Burke's offer to move into the Main Street site that had recently been vacated by St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute upon its move to Kenmore. The school was renamed Bishop Fallon High School for a former pastor of Holy Angels, who later became the Bishop for London, Ontario.

The school and its alumni owe a special debt of gratitude to Peter Durham, Russell Valvo, and Russell Digati, who worked tirelessly to get the alumni effort started in its early days. The late Fr. Jim Higgins, S.J., who was then running Canisius High School, offered to hold all of Fallon's events at Canisius High School. He commented that the Oblates of Mary Immaculate had done something very special for education in Western New York and he desired to capture some of that magic. He often said that the Fallon graduates were



Charlie Tedesco looks for opening in play-off game.

his adopted alumni and he looked forward to the Jesuits having an opportunity to educate their sons, just as they had done from 1910 to 1932.

The soul of Holy Angels Collegiate Institute and Fallon High School lives on because of the seeds planted by the Oblates. As long as there are alumni who celebrate and reflect upon what the experience meant to them, the little school will not die.

Long live Bishop Fallon High School/Holy Angels Collegiate Institute. Go Flyers, go!



Alumnus Peter Durham, a strong alumni supporter, amid mementos of the former Bishop Fallon H.S. - Holy Angels Collegiate Institute.



Tony Tibollo and Dick Verso

Italian, Irish, Polish or German, we are the last link between the big wave of the turn of the century immigrant European families and our children. What you see on the reality TV show, *Jersey Shore*, are white bread Americans, ethnic only in their surnames and caricatures of Hollywood's depiction of Italian-Americans.

Early Italian immigrants living in big city tenements could never imagine that of their grandchildren would become Mayors, Governors and even Supreme Court Justices, much less great-grandchildren with purple hair, tattoos and nose-rings. I'm sure most members of my grade-school class were the first in their family to graduate from college.

After marriage, we rented and saved until finally we could buy our own house. It's sad there isn't some way to let our children know what their parents and grandparents endured to get them to where they are now. There's no way they can imagine the struggles of their immigrant grandparents, starting a new life in America, to the nice houses that they grew up in a generation or two later.

Now that most of my friends and I are, at best, retired, we've been spending much time at breakfast or lunch recalling stories about growing up in Buffalo. The more we talk about our childhood, the more we realize that our generation was really the end of the chain that connected us to the old country.

For them, buying a house shortly after the wedding is almost a given.

When we reminisce about growing up we realize it's over fifty-years since we left our old neighborhoods; neighborhoods that today are described as ghettos. Then, Buffalo, like most northern cities, was segregated - but segregated - by choice.

Other ethnic groups were comfortable living among their culture, food and language. Today those neighborhoods might be described as ghettos. What we had was simple. We grew up in a community. Most of the Italian immigrants to Buffalo came from the poor Mezzogiorno regions of Italy: Abruzzi, Campania, Molise, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia --- and they're still poor today. Not many from prosperous northern Italy came to Buffalo. The southern Italian immigrants were poor but were determined to have more for their family than what they had.

The families of the West Side where I grew up were primarily, but not exclusively from Sicily or a little Southern Italian town called San Fele. Everyone knew the names of the little towns or regions in Italy where their parents or grandparents were born.

Many Calabrese and Napolitani lived on the lower East Side while the Bruzesse settled on East Delevan and went to Kensington High School with "*American kids*."

We didn't have much but I don't know anyone who



Jim Verso, Jim LoDico, Sam Russo, unknown, Dick Verso, Bob Timineri, Anthony Chiavetta, Joe Timineri



West Side Kids, P.S. # 1

would trade their youth for that of today. Almost every neighborhood family was bi-lingual. It was common to buy a loaf of Wonder Bread and a loaf of pane scanato at a corner store.

When I enrolled at Canisius High School I was surprised to learn that my classmates didn't have clam stands or lemon-ice in their neighborhoods. And what a difference in bagged lunches. Later, in college, I couldn't believe that guys went to bars to just drink beer without ordering something like a plate of fave. Italian bars served food as well a drinks. In time, they became the Salvatore's, Chefs and Di-Tondo's which today are thought of only as restaurants.

Students from PS # 1, 2, 3 and 76 were brought together by the Butler-Mitchell Boy's Club, the Marlowe and Shea's Niagara theatres, but primarily by Holy Cross Church and it's Youth Center on Seventh Street near Maryland. I don't know about other parts of the city but for anyone growing up in our segment of the West Side,

there was only one degree of separation between two people. It didn't matter if you were a laborer or a Doctor; you knew where you came from.

Introduce any former West Sider to another the conversation begins with "Where did you live? What school did you go to? Do you know?" Suddenly they're acting like long lost cousins or they actually are cousins. And that's what our children are missing.

Today, they're bussed to school, driven to little league or dance class and have only a few close friends. Because of our local economy, after college, my four children moved to California, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Texas with no hesitation. I wouldn't dream of moving - snow and all - I have too many friends here. It's home! I could never explain to my children why my life has a satisfaction they will never understand.



Father Joseph, Dick Verso, Angelo Caligiuri, Matty Andresino
1950 Holy Cross School, Maryland & Niagara



Rosemary Maggiore in Sicily

I am Sicilian-American. What I don't talk much about is that my boyfriend of three and a half years, Kevin Christiana, is also Sicilian-

American. It took me 38 years to find him, but when I did, it just made sense. You know how people say, "you just know when you meet the love of your life?" That's how I felt when I met him and have ever since. Sure, we've had our ups and downs, but we always make it through because the love is there underneath it all.

He recently surprised me and I still can't believe it is true. We traveled to Sicily to visit his mother's family, who happens to live near my father's home town (which explains many things about our relationship). His family lives in a bucolic, tiny town, un paese to be exact, a small village in the countryside. It was the classic story you hear when people from America visit relatives from their native town. Three women, wearing aprons, came out of a house to greet us with open arms. They welcomed us in to a big "pranzo" or lunch, which in this town is still the most important meal of the day.

La Famiglia

On my first day, they made a classic meal, Pasta al forno, a very rustic and hearty dish, which I never had prepared this way. Il forno means "the oven," so this is literally a baked pasta dish. In this town it is made with ground beef, peas, little circular pasta, ham, cheese and tomato sauce. I am told that

some add cubed eggplant as well. It was delicious.

After a large square of this I was ready for a nap, but out came the meat course, which was breaded veal and chicken cutlets, followed by a green salad and then the ultimate-homemade cannoli. The cannoli shells were so light, crispy and airy that I kept begging for the recipe, but to tell you the truth, I am not sure they know the recipe. They just make cannoli from memory! Another interesting thing to note is that they do not fill their cannoli with ricotta, but rather they make a sweet cream filling which is completely different, but very good. I thought about buying a cannoli rod to learn how to make them, but when I asked where to buy one, one of the women pointed out the window to a field of reeds. She said "the metal rods you buy in a store are not good," so she makes her own by whittling an outdoor reed and drying it.

Since lunch is so big, the dinner that night was a simple Sicilian pizza, square, as you could guess, but made with a sweet sauce, onions and grated pecorino cheese. The dough was thick, but flaky, almost pastry-like. It was just enough to end the day and was served with whatever didn't get devoured at lunch, and of course, homemade wine.

The next day, I awoke to find a woman beginning to prepare one of my favorite dishes, pasta con sarde, or pasta with sardines. She was painstakingly cleaning and de-boning the sardines.

Eventually the dish was prepared with spaghetti, sardines, raisins, fennel fronds, pine nuts and a sprinkling of breadcrumbs that were sweetened with brown sugar. I noticed the raisins weren't shriveled like I'm used to seeing, nor were they hard like currants, but instead they were tender,



La Famiglia La Spisa



Cugina Agata makes Pasta con Sarde

dried grapes. Yet another thing they made themselves.

This dish was followed by homemade sausage (they raise their own pigs) and fruit.

That night, there was no mention of dinner. I was only instructed to come back to the main house for a party and to dress nicely. When I arrived, there was a table set up with a few desserts and as the night progressed, more and more cousins arrived, each bearing a tray of some handmade confection. This was our “going away party,” or so I was told. There was even a cake made with our photo atop. I was so touched by all of the efforts of people I barely knew.



Cugini: Francesco, Kevin and Ciccio

Of course, the best part of the trip was when I went outside to find my boyfriend and heard a brass marching band that was strolling up the driveway playing classic Sicilian music. The entire party, about 30 people, were clapping and dancing. Little did I know they were really watching me; they knew what was coming, I did not. My boyfriend, carrying a bouquet of roses, rode in on a white donkey. It dawned on me what was happening. I started to cry. He jumped off the horse, knelt before me and asked me to marry him. I could not have asked for a more memorable proposal, one surrounded by family, friends and food.



Fidanzato e fidanzata: Kevin Christiana and Rosemary Maggiore

Disbursement of Christmas Funds

as told by Joe Di Leo

at the Per Niente Club Christmas Party

Westwood Country Club

December 17, 2012

This is our Twenty-first annual Christmas Party and attendance wise it is a record breaker. Thank you.

Let me begin by thanking Bob Mangano for an excellent job in organizing this event. Getting twelve people to agree on a dinner location and then to make seating arrangements for a group this size is not easy. Thank you, Bob.

Also, I thank those who contributed so generously to help the less fortunate via our Christmas Fund. As such, the Fund has increased dramatically allowing us to help more and more of those in need.

This Christmas the Per Niente Club donated a record \$9000. \$2000 of which was spent on turkeys and staples for fifty-five families ensuring that they enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving dinner.

The remaining \$7000 was dispersed as follows:

\$500 was donated to assist the family of Chase Britton, a disabled five-year old boy with serious medical problems who requires a wheel chair conversion to the family van. We wish them Godspeed in their endeavor.

Through the auspices of the Independence Foundation, a group that assists the physically disabled to live independent self directed lives, we learned of a young man, Joseph Collen Shaw, who is afflicted with Muscular Dystrophy, and who, in order to function within his disability dreamed of a special-needs computer. The Independence Foundation was given \$700.00 to purchase that coveted computer for Joseph.

Another group we assisted is the National Alliance on Mental Illness in Buffalo & Erie County, an organization of more than 450 families and friends whose loved ones have serious mental problems. The Alliance sponsors *Christmas Is for Kids!* No child, whether in a hospital, a shelter, foster care or a group home is omitted. This ensures a bright holiday for those who do not have what we provide for our grand children. The Per Niente Club donated \$1000 to *Christmas Is For Kids*.

A Foundation, The Heritage Center, serves as an advocate for children and adults with developmental disabilities. Through them we learned of a family of five whose wish-list was, not for toys or electronic games, but for clothing; things we take for granted. We obtained each family members clothing size. We shopped for - and gift wrapped - \$500 worth of shirts, shoes, trousers and other items and brought them to the Heritage Center for distribution.

We also donated \$800 to the Little Portion Friary, a group of 100 plus volunteers who provide food and temporary shelter for the homeless in the inner city.

St Lawrence Church on Buffalo's East Side, through its Outreach Program, is noted for assisting and comforting the poor, the sick and the homeless of all races and denominations.

Through Deacon Paul Weisenburger and his wife, Mary, we offered to aid families with special needs. They told of hundreds of low income families that frequent the St Lawrence clinic but were quick to mention one family in particular that never asks for anything but whom they know needed a living room couch.

They spoke of an elderly women, a cancer survivor who lives alone and whose medication weakens her. As such her Christmas wish is for a clothes dryer to make her life easier.

The Per Niente Club presented the St Lawrence Outreach program with \$1500 so as to purchase the couch and dryer. We directed that any remaining money should be used to benefit the St Lawrence community.

Last Christmas, we gave a \$500 scholarship to a South Sudanese refugee, a young boy whose name is Garang Doar. He now attends Canisus High School where he founded a not for profit to raise funds to build a clinic and develop clean drinking water for the Sudanese village from which he came. A remarkable feat. Needless to say, Garang Doar is a bonafide success

story proving once again that education is the road to success for our next generation.

Through your help, the Per Niente Club has put \$1000 in trust for scholarships for two students, African refugees currently enrolled at Catholic Academy. Both students are altar servers at Holy Cross Church, they and their families, are active in the parish community. Upon graduation from Catholic Academy they will attend Canisius High School.

Msgr. David M. Gallivan, the pastor of Holy Cross Church made us aware of a young immigrant Sudanese boy stricken with Downs Syndrome and whose family faces a bleak Christmas. In a Christmas Card we inserted \$500 worth of gift certificates for them to use at Tops and Target Stores.

Msgr Gallivan personally delivered our Christmas Card. Upon seeing it the boy's mother said "what's this?" Msgr replied, "I don't know? Open it." She did. It took a moment for her to realize the contents of the card. Immediately, upon seeing the monetary value, her face filled with tears at which point she fell to her knees, looked up and thanked God.

A week later, I returned to Holy Cross with an additional \$500 worth of Tops Gift Certificates for others who may need help this Christmas. This is what you have done! Thank you!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, one and all.



Joseph Collen Shaw
On receiving his laptop computer,
a gift of the Per Niente Christmas
Fund

To the Per Niente Club:

First, I must thank you for your consideration in the matter of my notebook computer.

Second, I shall list below the reasons that having a personal computer, specifically a laptop, for my personal use in my group home is beneficial to me:

Writing is my life, and as long-hand writing pains me after a short while, writing on a computer is almost necessary for me to continue my practice as a writer of stories, screenplays, and plays. Though I am able to write on desktop computers at my day program, I feel that I do my best work at home, where I have considerably more privacy.

Having internet access at my group home, the computer has become a virtual social vehicle. With it I stay in touch with friends and family.

As getting to the public library is not always an easy outing, having internet access right in front of me has been so very helpful to the research that feeds my writing projects.

My most recent goal is to produce a "silent" film of one of my screenplays, and at home with a laptop, I could be editing the raw video footage we gather at my

Day Program.

Finally, I ask that you understand my position as an individual with a disability. I have the same dreams and desires as any human being, and my old computer, which was beyond repair, was an assistive technology for making my dreams come true and for staying in touch with the people in my life I still very much love but rarely if ever see.

Sincerely,

Joseph Collen Shaw

Anthony Greco was twelve-years old when he came to America from San Stefano Quisquino, Sicily on July 12th, 1893. Upon arrival he went to Florida to stay with his older sister. During this time he learned to be a tailor. In 1907 he moved to Buffalo and opened a tailor shop at 209 Seneca St. In 1908 he met and courted Josephine Salamone, She was American born whose family was from Valledomo, Sicily. They married in St Anthony's Church on January 30th, 1910.

In 1917 they purchased 117 Busti Ave where they established a steamship ticket agency to help people bring relatives here from the "old country". A Post Office, Real Estate, Insurance and Travel agency were soon part of their business. It became a place for neighborhood men sat talking and laughing throughout the day. I remember sitting behind the counter selling stamps for a penny while my grandparents were helping neighbors make travel arrangements, wrap packages or send money to family members in Italy. There was a small private office in back where they read letters for families who received them from Italy. This was always the highlight of their day.

Then my grandparents evenings were spent going to meetings of the many Italian clubs of which they were members. They loved the West Side and



Anthony and Josephine Greco

enjoyed helping people.

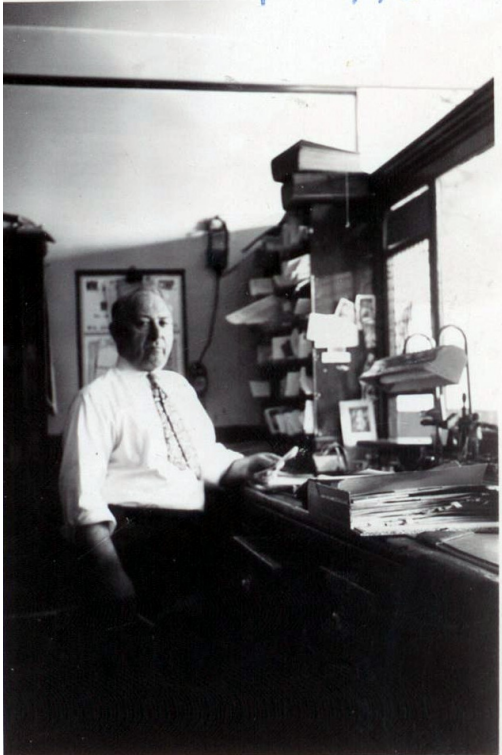
They resided upstairs from the business where they raised four children; Angeline, Rosalie, Vincent and Salvatore. A rear apartment was rented by the Bottita family who operated a grocery store across the street at 134 Busti.

In 1925 my grandparents attended the Buffalo School of Embalming, received their Funeral Directors license and then their funeral home opened next door at 115 Busti Avenue.

After my father, Vincent, returned from World War II, he

took over the funeral home. At the time we lived in the upper flat. Back then, wakes lasted until late in the evening, sometimes past midnight. I had to be quiet: no TV, no radio, even walking was done quietly so we didn't disturb those downstairs.

We stayed on Busti Avenue until the very end when Urban Renewal claimed our beloved street, all its homes and small businesses. With the neighborhood's demise, my dad then opened his funeral home in Kenmore where it still stands.



Anthony Greco at his post office



The Greco's annual St. Joseph Table



Anthony and Josephine Greco working



Sal Arena



CORN and CLAM CHOWDER With SHRIMP



I often use fresh corn for dinner during the summer months when it is plentiful and sweetest in WNY. I usually buy more than I need and I dislike wasting it, so I remove the kernels and freeze them in an air tight plastic freezer bag for later use. This recipe is one that calls for corn. PRESTOOUT OF THE FREEZER IT COMES.

Ingredients

Green medium uncooked shrimp
Kernels from 4 to 6 ears of corn
1 large onion
1 carrot
2 stalks of celery
1 cup dry white wine
1 large can of clams (at least 48 oz.)
¾ cup of heavy cream
2 tablespoons of chives
1 can jalapeno chiles (optional)
1 can creamed corn

Directions

Medium chop the onion, celery, and carrot. Gently sauté all vegetables until soft. (I use a combination of vegetable oil and butter to sauté)

Pour clam juice, cream and wine in a large pot and add corn. Cook at a medium heat to reduce alcohol and to thicken the sauce. When you have the consistency you desire, add the clams and shrimp. When the shrimp turn pink the sauce is done. If it's too thick add fish stock. If too thin add more creamed corn.

Note from author:

Thanks to all for making my cookbook such a success. I intend to have a second printing when I return to Buffalo from Florida. The book will be available some time in June, 2013.

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

Sal



SAL MAGGIORE

Traveling With John Ganci

In 1955, as a young man, this writer, and John Ganci, (two immature guys) along with Joe Pepe and Danny Di Liberto, before he became a professional pool player, ventured from Buffalo in search of work. Our first trip was to South Beach, Florida, and it coincided with the death of James Dean, a young, rising movie star who perished in a horrific auto accident. Reading about this tragic event led to our being cautious while driving.

Ironically, I've not seen Di Liberto or Pepe since, but John Ganci is another story. I've known John and his family for more than sixty years. We grew up near the Massachusetts playground where we played all sports. In high school, John, a very good athlete, excelled in football, basketball and pole vaulting. Ultimately he became a top hand ball player and today is a top tennis player.

For our second trip in 1959-60 John and I decided to go to California. I had a new Oldsmobile (family car) but we had very little money. Gas was thirty cents a gallon and though a motel room was five dollars a night, we slept in the car. Our return trip to Buffalo was really an adventure. Since neither of us had ever been to Las Vegas and though we only had enough money for gas and doughnuts, we confidently decided to take a route through that magical desert wonderland. Upon entering Vegas, we observe that the billboard at the Sands Hotel was being changed. Down came Sammy Davis' name and

up went that of Frank Sinatra: ONE NIGHT ONLY. Well, you know what that meant to us in those days. We went to the Sands office and made reservations to see the show.

The clerk asked, "Are you staying at the hotel?" I said, "no, but we'd like to see the show." Again, without looking up she asked, "Are you staying at the hotel?"

By this time we caught on. As there were no credit cards then I ran to the Western Union office and wired home to my sister, Mary (who ruined my life by spoiling me). On the "if come", we returned to the Sands, registered and made reservations for the dinner show. Our ringside table put us at arms length to Sinatra and a live ninety-minute recording session of Sinatra singing many of his hits.

Later we began worrying about money. Having none we ordered the cheapest item on the menu. (drinks and tip excluded) We returned to our room: no word from Western Union. Frightened, we went to the office and enquired about mail that we thought was arriving. We were told that a notice concerning mail was placed under our door. We ran back to our room and found a one-hundred dollar money order under the rug.

Not knowing if that amount would cover our lodging and dinner we proceeded to check out. In those days the Las Vegas hotels would do any thing to get you to gamble. Ready? The room was thirteen dollars as was the dinner. Since I had money left over, I went to the casino and lost everything at blackjack. So off we went on gas fumes and doughnuts. John Ganci wanted to cause me bodily harm, but he didn't. Despite the above we did go another time to California.



DANCE AND SHOW BUSINESS

PRESENTED BY
IGGY FASCIANA, JACK FLOREALE
AND CHARLES LO VULLO

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1950

EAGLES AUD., PEARL AT TUPPER

FEATURING
JAY MARAN'S ORCHESTRA
JOE GALLO, VOCALIST

AMATEUR CONTEST, JAM SESSION, 1 TO 2:30

DANCING 9 TO 1

TICKET 83c, TAX 17c, TOTAL \$1.00

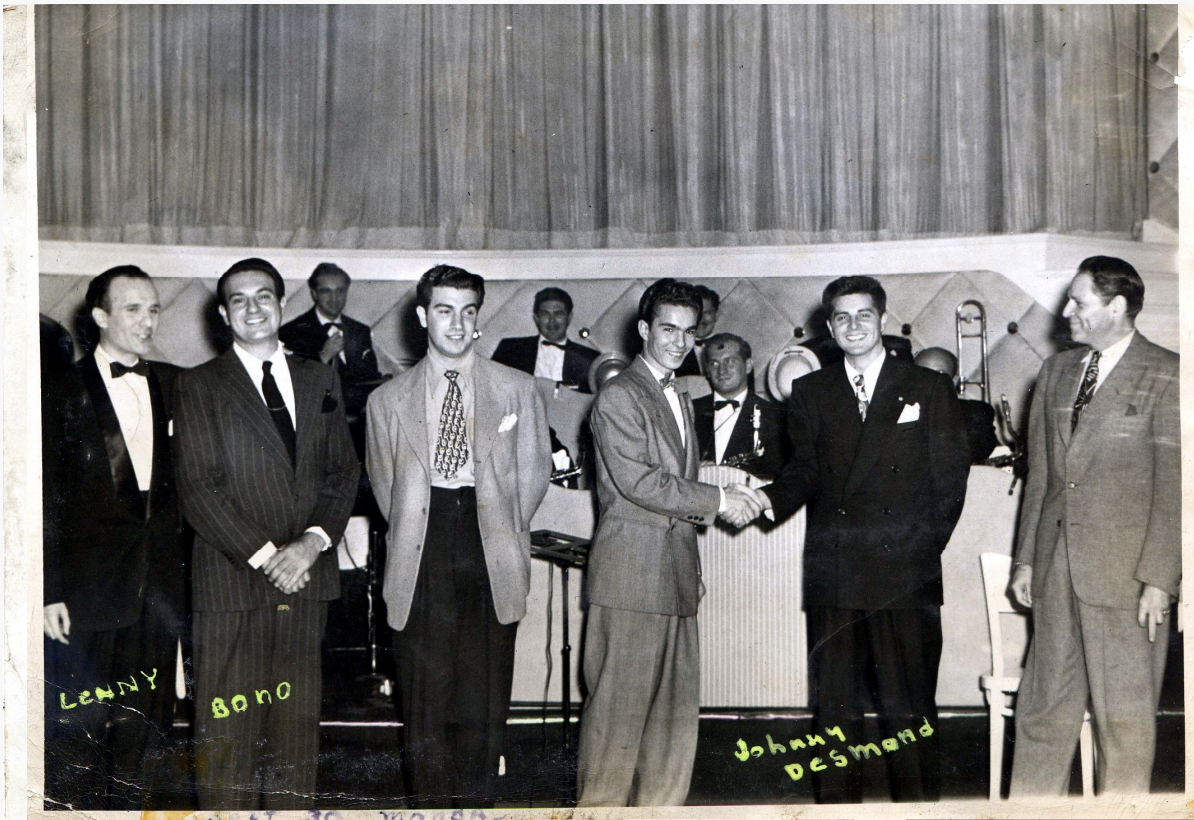
Joey and
Lenny Paige
at the Town
Casino.



Frank and Teresa's
ANCHOR BAR
Main at North Parking in Rear
Now Playing Nightly
PETE ARGIRO
and his Famous Musical Comedy Trio
SONGS AND COMEDY
The finest versatile music anywhere
A Show and a Riot in Themselves
Don't Miss Them!
EXTRA ADDED ATTRACTION!
JOEY GALLO
Fabulous 22-year-old Baritone
Girls! He's Tall, Dark and Handsome
We cater to wedding parties and
social gatherings up to 100
Famous for Our
ITALIAN-AMERICAN FOOD
AIR-CONDITIONED



Bob Eberly, Joey, Lenny Paige.



Top: Joey at the Town Casino with Johnny Desmond.

Bottom: Joey performing at the Ted Mack Amateur Hour.



Dear Joe and Joey,

After a long and concerted effort of work, that I have just finished, I wanted to write you now to thank you for the marvelous issues of Per Niente that both you and Joey Giambra have compiled this past year, 2112.

The interesting selections of both stories and photos both of human interest and of meaningful historical content was fulfilling at all levels. I thought the cover for La Ruotaia (The Lady of the Wheel) was a beautiful illustration for a beautiful story. All your issues were meaningful issues.

However, in the fall issue, Vol. III, Issue IV, Per Niente stated a fact that we are the last generation that can relate to those who came; it gave me pause and a sad moment. Italo-American families who grew out of the traditions and history of the past from the West and East sides of Buffalo, received a total indoctrination of values that they have hopefully passed on. Per Niente constantly offers in reflection, these ancestors as our great source of heritage and pride. Much talent has arisen and has continued through the generations who came out of the West and East sides.

Respectively, the old timer's values and sense of morals and duty was indelible. They were strong oaks. They gave birth to offspring and they, also through their offspring, produced a continuity of that heritage that we have been fortunate to possess in a new time and in a new place as contributors to American society. Congratulations to Per Niente who can help spread the word.

Thank you.

Bernie D'Andrea

Bernard L. D'Andrea enjoyed national acclaim for illustrations in Good Housekeeping, National Geographic and The Saturday Evening Post for almost 50 years from his New York studio. By the late 1950s, he was studying at the Brooklyn Museum School under Reuben Tam, who introduced him to the abstract expressionism of Willem deKooning, Jackson Pollock and Arshile Gorky.

Responding to the social and political tumult of the 1960s, D'Andrea began to explore the redemptive, spiritual qualities of nature, producing large abstract paintings fraught with personal meaning and emotion. In the 1970s, he visited fellow illustrators Joe Bowler and Coby Whitmore on Hilton Head Island.

1980, Bowler convinced D'Andrea to exhibit his work at the Red Piano Art Gallery, and in 1993 D'Andrea relocated his home and studio to Hilton Head Island and became immersed in the coastal Low country for inspiration that produced animated, stylistic landscapes. Recently, he has created a series of twelve, 24 x 24-inch panels that he describes as an allegory of the coastal islands around Beaufort, Hilton Head Island and Savannah.

Bernard D'Andrea



Luncheon Da Giovanni's

Oil

36" x 36"

Open House

Friday, December 7th • 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

For additional information contact the gallery at
843•842•4433

or to view additional works
www.morris-whiteside.com

Morris & Whiteside Galleries

220 Cordillo Parkway • Hilton Head Island • South Carolina • 29928



I currently subscribe to Per Niente magazine, and I think it is outstanding. I love the stories and the photos... everything is wonderful. Is it possible to submit articles for the magazine? You see, my family were prominent West Side Sicilians, the Bellanca family (well-known contractor) and the Borzilleri family (who established and ran Columbus Hospital. I would love to do a write up on them and have it printed for my mother, who is one of the remaining Bellancas left (as most of the family has passed on).

If you wouldn't mind letting me know what your rules are about that, I would be very appreciative.

*Thank You,
Jim Kontrabecki
Hamburg NY*

Just finished reading your great article on *THE LAST GENERATION*. What a wonderful reflection on life as we knew it.

Len Pepe
Tonawanda NY

A friend recently sent me a picture of the 1945-1946 St. Anthony's kindergarten class. I was 3 years old and was allowed to be in that class with the stipulation that I repeat in the 1946-1947 class. I understand that there is a magazine about life in Buffalo during that time with emphasis on the Italian American community. My mom was an immigrant and we lived on Trenton Avenue (long gone). I would very much like to know how I can get this magazine. I believe (but I'm not sure) that the picture was from the fall 2012 edition. Although I live in the Washington DC area, Buffalo, and my very magical childhood there, hold a special place in my heart.

Arleen Burston
Washington DC

Thank you for my most treasured magazine. I loved your article. Anything that brings back memories of our "old ways" is always near and dear to my heart. Also, thanks to Joe Giambra and the rest of your staff for giving us the beautiful gift of our heritage through the written words.

Marie Licata
Tonawanda NY

Compliments on the most recent "Per Niente" issue. You have created a remarkable tabloid of personalized history of the way life was for all ethnicities.

Your personal article on your family is truly the way it was. Not only on the West Side but also for others. My brother, Larry, and I were raised in the same mold. Thank you for all your efforts to bring enjoyment to so many.

Best regards
Joe Smith
Williamsville NY

Editors note: please visit our website

@ www.perniente.org

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



Roy Carlisi, Sam Manganello, Charlie Carlisi, unknown, Rhode Island Street.



St. Anthony's Lawn Fete 1950s

Marty and Mary Pecoraro, Lucy Di Leo, Josephine Glorioso, Luminata Manuale



This photo was taken at Busti and Porter Avenue. Who are these boys?



Frank Caruso, after giving future television star David Boreanaz his first haircut.



Young Frank Collura, before becoming a world class Symphonic Conductor



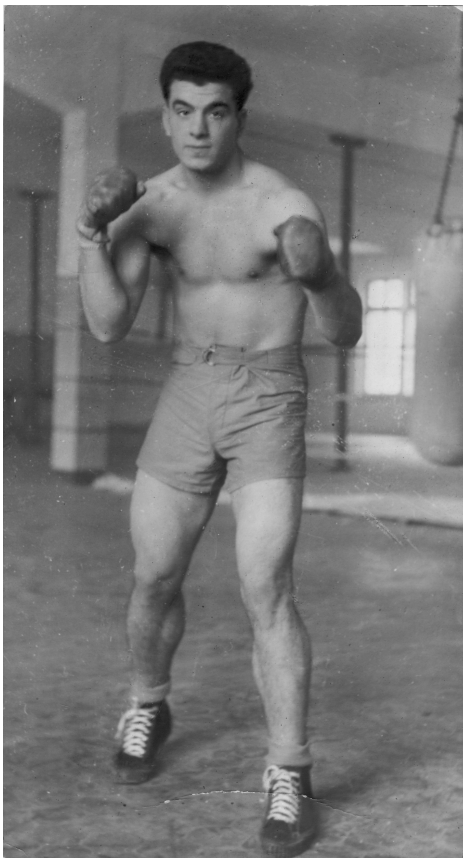
Connie Capraro, Gene Cassaro, Grace Burruano, Tony Alessi



Chris and Dominic Zanghi on the boardwalk in Atlantic City, 1946

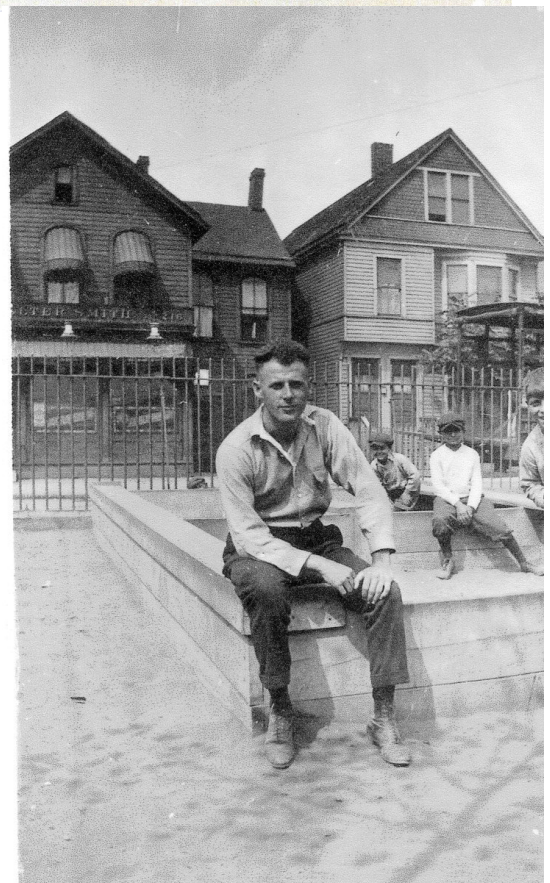


Above - Early Italian immigrant entrepreneurs in Buffalo.



Left - Matty Ferentino, a product of Welcome Hall, South Cedar and Myrtle Avenue.

Right - Todd Healy, who, while at Welcome Hall in a leadership role, instilled sportsmanship and integrity in the lives of many East Side youths.

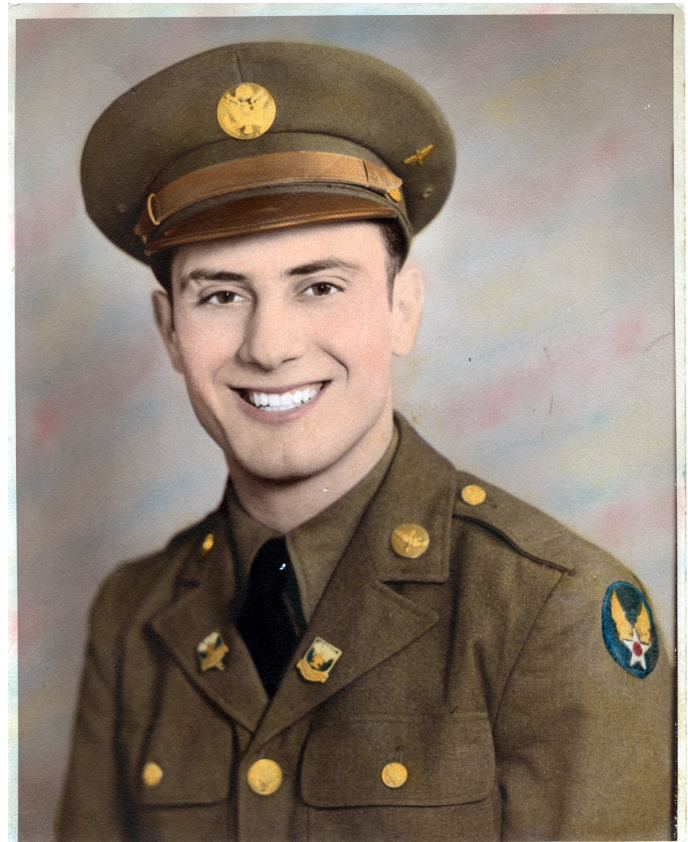




Unknown soldiers at McKinley Monument



Marrinacios:
John, Louis, Peter
Father, Vito



Russell Di Leo



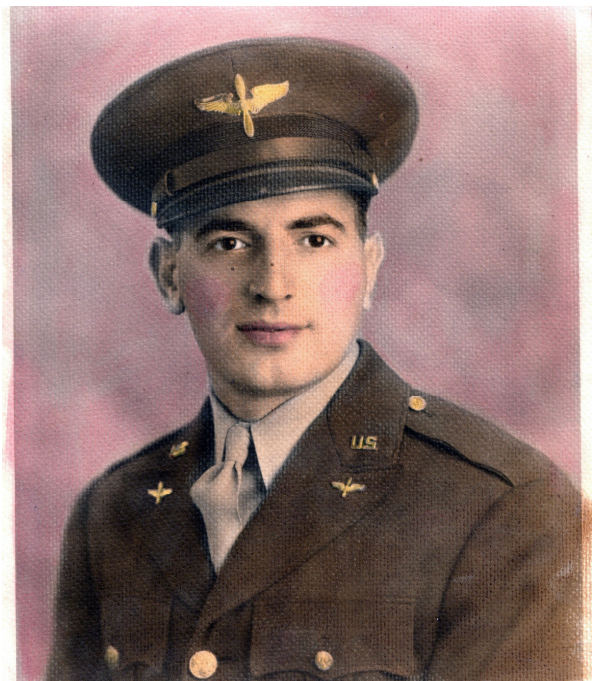
Joe DePerro



Russell Vara



Dan Zendano



Bill Veronica





Hotel Washington bar at Washington and Exchange Street. On right, Dominic Pandolfino, proprietor.

Courtesy, son Joseph Pandolfino



Canal Street — 1920s



Niagara and Maryland Streets - late 1940s