

VOCE *DI* GCICS

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 1811, #317, ENGLEWOOD, FL. 34223

WWW.GCICS.ORG

Mary Rinaldi, Editor



A Word From Your Board of Directors,

As the 2024 year draws to a close, it is time for us to look back and reflect as well as to look ahead to a bright and promising New Year. In the past year, GCICS enjoyed continued support of its membership with a well-attended Town Hall Meeting, an enjoyable Carnivale, a well-received St. Joseph's Day, a successful Scholarship Festa, and a scrumptious Welcome Back Luncheon. At this time we are all looking forward to the festive Holiday Party.

We would like to thank Sandra Russell for her untiring work for our Scholarship awards. This year \$2000 was awarded to six deserving students. Also, we would like to thank the DiMiceles for hosting the Holiday

Party for the past several years as well as the 2024 Carnevale celebration.

Unfortunately, this year saw some tragic moments with the passing of Frank Figari, Ellie Stoll, Gabriella Mariani Thurston, Russell Thomas Heifner, and Bob Tate. All were active participants in our many events through the years.

As we look forward to the coming year, many exciting events are planned which we hope our members will enthusiastically welcome and enjoy.

May you have a Blessed Christmas, and a Happy Hanukkah, enjoying all the festivities of the holiday season. Buon Natale and Buone Feste a tutti.

GCICS ANNUAL MEETING/TOWN HALL/LUNCH/LECTURE



Each year GCICS holds an Annual Meeting that includes a "town hall style" feedback session, a no-cost luncheon, and a film or lecture. This year we are delighted to welcome one of our own, Camille Kramer, who will present : "Italian Influence & Inspiration in Sarasota". I have attached a photo of Camille who found us on the Internet (GCICS website) and became an active member in Sept 2024.

Event: GCICS Annual Meeting/Town Hall/Lunch/Lecture

Date/Time: Saturday, January 11, 2025, 11:30-2:30 pm

Location: Peridia Golf & Country Club, 4950 Peridia Blvd. E., Bradenton, FL 34203

Program: Plated lunch (no cost to members), Annual Meeting, Town Hall, Lecture

Seating: Seating is limited. A timely RSVP is recommended. Do not delay.

RSVP: E-mail Ellen Roderick: itrain@erols.com; provide name/s of those attending, and their entrée selection (match name with entrée).

Entrée Choices:

- 1. Chicken Cordon Bleu OR**
- 2. Grilled Salmon Filet: finished with a champagne dill sauce; OR**
- 3. Eggplant parm (vegetarian option).**

Guests: GCICS members will be given priority. Guests will be on a wait list and will be charged \$35. I will accept checks from guests on the day of the luncheon if a guest is confirmed.

Deadline: E-mail Ellen by Friday Jan. 3; we need a count of entrée selections for the club.

No Shows: Please cancel in a timely manner-the sooner the better. If you are a no-show, we must pay for the luncheon, and this hurts our treasury. Also, I might have a wait list so I would appreciate timely cancellations.

**Bring: Your name badge & thoughts on GCICS 2025-2026 programs/activities.
Agenda:**

11:30-12:00 noon: Check-in & Socializing (there will be a cash bar).

12:00 Noon: Welcome, Lunch served along with salad, rolls, dessert & coffee/tea.

1:00: Business Meeting, Julie Bondarenko, GCICS President, presiding.

1:15: Town Hall, Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary

1:40: Introduction of Speaker: Ellen Roderick

*****Program: "Italian Influence & Inspiration in Sarasota", Camille Kramer: former Adjunct Professor, U. of Bridgeport, CT; and sta member, The Tow Foundation; joined GCICS in Sept, 2024**



Member Camille Kramer

2:25 pm: Closing Remarks: Julie Bondarenko

2:30 pm: Adjournment

**Ellen Roderick (301-775-1344)
GCICS Secretary**

BOCCE CORNER NEWS



Saturday, February 15, 2025

We have some exciting news. . .our annual Bocce Invitational will happen after all. It will be GCICS Bocce Invitational IX. Yes, we have held eight of them, competing with residents of The Cascades. For new members, this annual event is a friendly Bocce competition between GCICS and Cascades teams which takes place in the early afternoon (usually a gorgeous day) and by 4 pm the games are finished, and we adjourn to the clubhouse for dining, socializing, and dancing. There is a nominal fee (it was \$18 in 2024). Details will be released later, but please mark Saturday, Feb 15, 2025, on your calendars. And kudos, Tom, for staying on top of this and helping to make it happen again.

This event had been canceled because the Italian Club at The Cascades, CIAO, which

was having leadership problems and those in charge of this event were just plain tired! The bocce players enjoyed this day and have coerced the bocce chairperson to “bring it back.” Discussions are early and details need to be worked out. Some changes will occur but the general format will remain the same. In the past we have usually had eight teams of four. Please think about playing! We also encourage and welcome spectators!

Wonderful Fall weather is here and we welcome everyone back. We play bocce most every Sunday from about 2-4 on a single court, which our Club maintains at The Conservation Foundation grounds at 400 Palmetto Ave. in Osprey. Play is not formal and newcomers are welcomed! No experience is necessary. Come join in the fun!

Any questions? Tom Hurban

Bocce chair

908 507 3048



Italian Bookshelf



Elena Ferrante
My Brilliant Friend TV series
Review by Leita Kaldi Davis

I have written reviews of Elena Ferrante's books about the deep friendship of Lila and Lenu from childhood to treacherous adulthood in the slums of Naples, Italy. Lila, small, dark, not really pretty, has a brilliant mind. Lenu, taller, blonde, and quite pretty, from a more prosperous family, also has a keen mind though not of the ilk of Lila. After what we would call high school, Lila goes to work in her family shoe store, while Lenu goes on to higher education. How Lenu becomes a published author is the crux of the story. Ferrante's Neapolitan series are riveting, revealing an often-sordid depiction of Italian family life – the volatile father, submissive mother, subjugated children, the dirty streets and crummy apartments, the gangsters, and the suckers. Lila and Lenu fall in love with the same man, Nino. Though Lenu marries another, they both have a child at about the same time.

I was thrilled to find the TV series of My Brilliant Mind on Prime Video. It is in Italian with English subtitles, created by [Saverio Costanzo](#) for HBO, RAI, and TIM vision. Named after the first of four novels in the [Neapolitan Novels](#), My Brilliant Friend, the series is an adaptation of the entire literary work into four seasons including the second novel, [The Story of a New Name](#), the third novel, [Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay](#) and the fourth, [The Story of the Lost Child](#).

Having loved the books, I was delighted that the TV series is very true to Ferrante's writing and vividly portrays the drama and honesty of her novels.

SCHOLARSHIP THANK YOUS

Dear Gulf Coast Italian Culture Society,

I am writing to express my gratitude and thankfulness for being a recipient of your 2024 Scholarship. This scholarship reduces financial stress and allows me to continue my educational journey at the University of Florida majoring in Computer Science in the fall.

This scholarship could pay for my room and board, textbooks, meal plan, transportation, or miscellaneous expenses this coming school year. In addition, this funding would change my life for the foreseeable future

because I could focus on my schoolwork and not worry about how I was to pay for college. This would set me up for a successful college career because I could save money to apply towards the remaining semesters of college.

Once again, thank you for awarding this scholarship and recognizing my hardwork over the past four years. Your support will allow me to further my education and be successful down the road. Also thank you for allowing me to perform the piano for you.

Sincerely,

Joseph Labanero



VICTOR DeRENZI, Artistic Director
RICHARD RUSSELL, General Director

September 20, 2024

Gulf Coast Italian Culture Society, Inc.
811 Englewood Rd Unit 317
Englewood, FL 34223

Dear Sir/Madam:


Thank you so much for your gift of \$1,000.00.

Donor support of the Youth Opera & Education Fund is vital to us achieving our mission to educate the youth of our community and build a life-long love of opera. The inclusive, innovative, and unique Youth Opera program accepts all youth, aged 8-18, regardless of musical ability or financial situation. Your support makes that possible. Our broader education programs include bringing kids to the Opera House to see a dress rehearsal of one of our stellar productions and engage with the artists. Your support makes that possible. Further, we are working to expand these programs to take opera out into the schools and community centers in our region with age-appropriate stories that kids can participate in and become better acquainted with this art form we love so much. This expansion is only possible because people like you have raised their voice through their philanthropy to support these important initiatives.

We believe opera is a powerful tool to build a culturally vibrant community. Joining together in our beautiful opera house to experience exquisite art, led by the power of human voices of all ages, strengthens bonds worn down by day-to-day life. From me, Maestro DeRenzi, Richard Russell, and our Youth Opera members and staff **thank you for being a part of the community that makes it all possible.**

If you have any questions about your support or benefits, please do not hesitate to contact me or Patron Giving Officer Brenda Tamm at (941) 366-8450, ext. 250 or btamm@sarasotaopera.org.

Sincerely,

Melissa M. Voigt
Director of Development

Brenda Tamm
Patron Giving and Development Manager

Direct: (941) 328-1331
Email: mvoigt@sarasotaopera.org

Direct: (941) 328-1305
Email: btamm@sarasotaopera.org

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63 N. Pineapple Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34205
Phone: (941) 366-8450 | Fax: (941) 366-5072
Info@sarasotaopera.org | www.sarasotaopera.org



September 24, 2024

Ms. Josephine Fontana
Gulf Coast Italian Culture Society
1811 Englewood Rd #317
Englewood, FL 34223

Thank you!

Dear Gulf Coast Italian Culture Society:

On behalf of everyone at The Sarasota Ballet, I want to express our deepest gratitude for your recent gift in support of Dance – The Next Generation. Please find the details of your gift below.

Donation Amount: \$1,000.00
Date of Donation: 9/18/2024
Designation: Dance – The Next Generation

You make the work we do possible. From the breathtaking artistry you see on stage to the inspiring education and community programs that engage thousands of individuals each year, **we simply couldn't do it without you.** Your support is instrumental in fulfilling The Sarasota Ballet's mission to enrich lives, captivate emotions, and strengthen our community through the art of dance. **Thank you.**

Please feel free to contact me directly at mbutler@sarasotaballet.org or 941.225.6512 with any questions about your donation or our program offerings. **Thank you again for your support of The Sarasota Ballet's Dance – The Next Generation program.**

Warmest Regards,

Michelle Butler
Senior Director of Philanthropy

THE SARASOTA BALLET OF FLORIDA, INC. IS A REGISTERED 501(c)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION (EIN #65-0135900). YOUR DONATION IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE TO THE EXTENT ALLOWABLE BY LAW. NO GOODS OR SERVICES WERE PROVIDED BY THE SARASOTA BALLET OF FLORIDA, INC. IN EXCHANGE FOR THIS CONTRIBUTION.

WINE BRICKS OF PROHIBITION

From the Italian Tribune, Jan. 13, 2022

If there is one thing that can be said about Italian Americans when faced with an obstacle, a creative solution will surely be the result. This was certainly the case during Prohibition and the marking of the so-called “wine brick.” This January marks the 125th anniversary of the Volstead Act making the sale of liquor illegal. The entire industry was threatened as the highly unpopular mandate of Prohibition went into effect. While the nineteen twenties became famous for speakeasies and rum runners, wine makers faced a much different problem. Wine was much harder to transport. Rather than risk tearing down their vineyards facing permanent ruin these creative vintners found a legitimate way around the Volstead Act. Instead of making wine on their premises, they created wine bricks from concentrated grape juice for home brewers to dissolve and use in the privacy of their homes since consumption of wine at home was legal.

The Italian wine makers cleverly marked the bricks with warnings that they were for non-alcoholic consumption only. The warning, however, provided instructions on how to make wine at home. On the package would be a note stating: “After dissolving in one gallon of water, do not place the liquid in a jug and store it at home in a cool cupboard for 20 days, or it will turn into wine.”

Presto! A workaround had been found! Some of the vintners became wealthy since the price of grapes rose more than 3,000 percent during the 1920s. The wine bricks did not produce exceptional wine, but that really was not the point. It was a creative means of providing a commodity that had soared in demand, while legally getting around an unpopular law and making money in the process. You must admire such ingenuity!



SAVE THE DATE

(As of: 12/2/24)



***12/15/24 (Sunday) Holiday/Christmas Party/Scholarship Fundraiser at Patty & Mike DiMicele's home, Misty Creek, Sarasota, 5:30-9:00 pm; Potluck; Scholarship donation (\$40 donation per person); BYOB; announced on Oct 28, 2024; 7 seats remain as of 12/2/24.**

***1/11/25 (Saturday) Annual Meeting/Luncheon/Town Hall/Program @ Peridia Golf & Country Club, Bradenton; N/C to members; 11:30-2:30 pm; program: "Italian Influence & Inspiration in Sarasota", Camille Kramer, GCICS member; announced on Nov 30, 2024.**

***1/22/25 (Wednesday) Cultural Presentation: The Shroud of Turin Video at Jacaranda Public Library, Venice; 2:00 pm; to be announced in Dec 2024.**

***2/15/25 (Saturday) Bocce Invitational IX at The Cascades, Sarasota; 12:00 noon onward; begins midday with practice, tournament, party, music, and dancing; \$TBD; to be announced by Jan 2, 2025.**

***3/4/25 (Shrove Tuesday): Carnevale/Scholarship Fundraiser: location TBD; Potluck; Scholarship donation (\$40 pp); BYOB; to be announced by Jan 15, 2025.**

***3/16/25 (Sunday): St. Joseph's Feast Day Celebration - Early Dinner @ Chianti Ristorante Italiano (Clark Rd), 4:00-7:00 pm; \$50 all inclusive; to be announced by 2/1/25.**

***4/12/25 (Saturday): Scholarship Festa Luncheon at Stoneybrook Golf & Country Club, 11:30-2:30 pm; cost and menu TBA.**

NOTE: Cultural events (lectures, tours), La Cena's, and some additional "fun" events are being planned. Happy Hours (Mon) & Bocce (Sun) are ongoing.

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William Korp	2010-2014
Anthony Esposito	2015-2016
Sheryl Lazzarotti	2016-2020

GIFT CERTIFICATES



The following restaurants have recently donated gift certificates. Thank you, Phil Miner, for all your hard work in obtaining all these gift cards. Remember, the monies obtained by raffling off these gift cards at our events helps to fund our scholarships.

ABBY's on Miami Street

Asaro's of Venice Pizzeria & Ristorante

Beckham's Sarasota Restaurant on the Trail

Tuscany Nokomis

Libby's in Lakewood Ranch

D'Corato Ristorante on S. Washington Blvd.

