

Italian-American CULTURAL CENTER OF IOWA



NEWSLETTER
JAN/FEB 2024

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A Message From The President

by Paolo Bartesaghi

Ciao a tutti! Hello to all of you!
Anche le Feste sono finite. Also the Holidays have come to an end.
Spero che abbiate iniziato bene l'anno nuovo e noi dell'Italian American Cultural Center ve ne auguriamo uno stupendo. I hope you had a good beginning to the new year and we, from the Italian American Cultural Center, wish you a great one.



So much is going to happen this year at the Italian American Cultural Center and I hope you will stay tuned and in contact with us to experience the growth we will be having.

Naturally, during the past Christmas season, sweets and chocolates were something present in every home. Here is a short story of something that goes from Christmas to Valentine's Day and beyond in Italy. The story of the Baci Perugina.

Baci Perugina must be the best-known Italian chocolate in the world; With their silver wrapping covered in blue stars, they look like a precious stone and they are pretty enough to be gifted just like that, on their own and out of your hand. Then, when you open them, you not only find a delicious chocolate, but also a tiny piece of white wax paper surrounding it, which contains a love message. Written in blue and in several languages, it is a gift within a gift and often puts into words what that bacio means. Because Baci Perugina are the chocolates of Valentine's Day, they are a symbol of passion and enduring love between two people. They are the most romantic of all candies.

Baci Perugina was created by Luisa Spagnoli, in 1922. Spagnoli was looking for a way to recover the processing waste of other products and imagined this sweet with gianduia chocolate inside, chopped hazelnuts and a whole hazelnut inside, all covered with dark chocolate. Bacio Perugina was called "Cazzotto" at first because it originally had a shape that resembled the knuckles of a hand closed in a fist. Giovanni Buitoni, young administrator of Perugina (and secret lover of Spagnoli) was the one who changed the name of the sweet to a more romantic "Kiss" which means "Bacio" in Italian. But the real turning point in the history of "Baci" comes thanks to Federico Seneca, painter, graphic designer, advertiser and artistic director of Perugina in the 1920s. Seneca invented the iconic pair of lovers on a blue background, inspired by the famous Kiss painting by Hayez.



continued

We Reflect & Remember

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Sam Tumea
Steven Civitate
Santina Punelli
Jane Pigneri Lipovac
John P. Civitate
Evelyn Caligiuri
Msgr. Frank Chiodo
John "Baby John" Scaglione
Peter "Pete" Tursi
Samuel Leto
Ralph and Victoria Leto
Susan Costanzo
Angelo Costanzo
Frank Fazio
Paul Leto
John Leto
Anna Costanzo

Friends of The Center

Società Vittoria Italiana
www.vittorialodge.com

Society of Italian Americans
www.siadm.com

Italian-American Women of IA
www.italianamericanwomenofiowa.com

Italian Folk Dancers

Grant Supporters



POLK COUNTY
Leading the Way



GREATER DES MOINES



A Heartfelt Thank You To Our Volunteers, Donors & Fundraisers

From the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa Board of Directors

As we reflect on the incredible journey of the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa over the past year, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the unwavering support of our dedicated volunteers and generous donors. Your commitment to our mission has been the driving force behind our success, and we wanted to take a moment to express our deepest thanks.

To our Volunteers:

Your selflessness and dedication have been the heartbeat of our organization. Whether you've spent countless hours helping at events, lending your skills, or offering a friendly smile to those we serve, your contributions have not gone unnoticed. Your passion for making a positive impact in our community has been a source of inspiration for us all.

To our Donors:

Your generosity has been the financial bedrock upon which we've built our initiatives. Your belief in our mission has enabled us to reach new heights and expand our classes and programs. Your contributions have not only supported these programs, but have enabled us to plan for the future by creating a destination Center for the State of Iowa.

To our Fundraisers:

We are filled with gratitude and admiration for each and every one of you. Your tireless dedication, strategic insight, and unwavering commitment have played an instrumental role in making our campaign a resounding success. Throughout this journey, your passion for our organization has been a driving force, inspiring not only us but the entire community, igniting a sense of unity and purpose among our supporters.

Together, we have achieved remarkable milestones. As we look ahead to the future, we are excited about the possibilities that lie before us, knowing that we have such a dedicated and compassionate group of individuals supporting our cause.

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for being the backbone of the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa. Your commitment to making a difference is truly commendable, and we are privileged to have you as part of our family.

Wishing you a joyous holiday season and a New Year filled with continued success and fulfillment.

grazie!

Around The Center

By Patricia Civitate

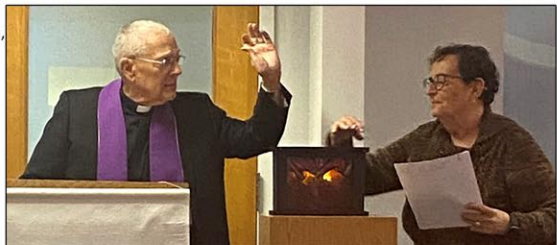
Family and friends of the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa gathered at the Cultural Center to celebrate the feast of Santa Lucia, patron saint of the blind, and the start of the Christmas season in Italy.

Attendees were welcomed by Therese Riordan, Chair of the Heritage Advisory Council. Patricia Civitate then spoke about the history of the celebration as an event of the Cultural Center. Msgr. Frank Bognanno officiated, blessing the Christmas Fire and leading the prayer service. He was joined by Michelle Murrow, who read the names of the people remembered during the memorial service.

The statue of St. Lucy was carried to the altar and blessed by Msgr. Bognanno. Guests lit their candles and processed to the altar, where the candles were placed in memory of loved ones. The altar displayed pictures and obituaries of the people being honored.

Following the ceremony, guests sampled the *cuccia*, the traditional Sicilian wheat porridge, with the toppings of their choice. Toppings offered included cream and sugar, honey, grape jelly, or wine, as enjoyed in various regions.

On display were Italian Christmas items. These included two different sizes of the *ceppo* (a wooden frame which was sometimes used instead of a Christmas tree), a variety of *Babbo Natale* (Father Christmas) statues, and assorted sizes of *panettone* (Italian fruit bread). Handouts available for the guests included directions for making a *ceppo*, recipes for making *panettone*, and a booklet of Christmas legends.



La BeFana To Visit The Cultural Center

La Befana, the friendly Christmas witch, will be greeting children at the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa on Sunday, January 7, beginning at 3:00 pm.

The party, sponsored in collaboration by IACC of Iowa and the Italian American Women of Iowa, is open to all children ages 3 - 11 years. There will be fun and games for all. Refreshments will be served.

There is no charge to attend the La Befana Party.

Please contact Patricia Civitate with names and ages of children who will be attending by calling 515-250-8804 or by sending the information to civitate@iaccocfia.org. Deadline for registering is December 4th.

Our First Ever Holiday Market Was A Success!

A big thank you to all of our vendors: Sweet Blossom Pottery, Rosso & Wine, Box 53, Califall Studio, Saporì, Cooking with Alessandra, Lola's, Dee Dee Underwood, Tammy Frank Design, Mary Patrizia, T's Home Baked Goods, and the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa.

A huge thanks to our volunteers who helped fill the space with Christmas spirit: Dennis Allen, Andrea Barutta, Francesco Dalla Vecchia, Susan DeFazio, Mario Fenu, Madalyn Leinen, Michelle Murrow, Mark Pritchard, Gina Righi, Michael Righi-Ryner, Terri Righi-Ryner, Therese Riordan, Teresa Russo, DeWayne Studer, and John Turner.

And a special thank you to: Santa Claus and Ariel Minervini – our facepainting artist.

We had many supporters come and help us to make this event successful.

Stay tuned for next year's event.



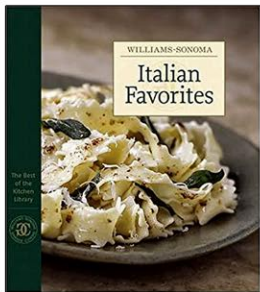


According to the legend, the first messages inside the silvery envelope (color of the moonlight) were inserted starting in the 1930s by Federico Seneca, inspired by the small messages that Luisa Spagnoli secretly sent to Giovanni Buitoni, hidden among the chocolates. From then on, it became history and those iconic sweet messages hidden in a little chocolate remain to this day. A perfect gift for Valentine's Day or a sweet way to say "I love you" to your loved one.

Luisa Spagnoli was a woman ahead of her time and had great business instincts. She hired mostly women to work in her factory and incorporated childcare in the company and allowed for paid maternity leave. She also provided business courses for her employees and gave Christmas gifts to her employee's children. She became the founder of the famous Luisa Spagnoli fashion house that still exists today.

And also this time, I hope you found this interesting. As always thank you for continuing to support the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa as we spread the Italian culture throughout the community.

In Our Library



As the cold weather approaches, you may find more time to prepare and taste some different Italian foods. The book, *Italian Favorites*, from the Williams-Sonoma Kitchen Library, will lead you to try some favorites and give you ideas for some new foods to try.

This book offers recipes for some mouth-watering soups, pizza and calzones, pasta, desserts and other interesting dishes. Some of the recipes are easy to follow and prepare while others will require more time and effort. Some will use easily found ingredients while others may require a hunt to acquire them. Each recipe is accompanied by a full-color photo which will help in your quest for possible new favorites as you decide which recipes to try. I know I found some I want to experiment with and taste.

Here is one of the recipes I found interesting:

Tagliatelle with Butter and Sage

Ingredients: 1 lb. (500 grams) fresh tagliatelle (Use your favorite pasta recipe)
½ cup unsalted butter
20 fresh sage leaves
¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
Salt

Bring a large pot three-fourths full of water to a boil.

In a small saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the sage and cook, stirring occasionally, until the butter begins to turn golden and the sage darkens (about 5 minutes).

Add the Tagliatelle to the boiling water and cook until the pasta rises to the surface (about 2 minutes). Drain the pasta and arrange it on a warmed platter. Pour the sage-butter mixture over the top. Sprinkle with half of the Parmesan and salt to taste, tossing gently.

Sprinkle with the remaining cheese and serve at once. Serves 6.



Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa Community Involvement

During the past few months, the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa has had the opportunity to participate in several community events. We pride ourselves on being present in the community and are striving to extend our reach throughout Iowa.

Launch of the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 Study: The results of surveys from ten communities and regions in Iowa, including the Greater Des Moines area, were presented on Thursday, November 16, at the Blank Park Zoo. Talks, along with a slide show, highlighted the social impact of the nonprofit arts and culture sector across the state. It was an opportunity to meet with our other BRAVO cultural partners and learn about the programs available throughout the State.

Christkindlmarket Des Moines: IACC of Iowa was chosen to participate in this year's tree auction. Thanks to the time and creativity of Melissa and Carolyn Hawk, the tree was decorated with one of a kind ornaments featuring Italian words and places of interest in Italy. A hand-made tree skirt was designed to accompany the tree. The tree was auctioned and the winning bidder picked the tree up at the end of the event. The money received was for the benefit of the Center.

Botanical Center Volunteer Event: The Italian-American Cultural Center, along with several other ethnic groups, agreed to share their food and culture at this year's volunteer event at the Des Moines Botanical Center. Panettone was served and various containers used to bake the different shapes and sizes of this Christmas bread were displayed. Also on display was a Ceppo, and directions on how to make one were available to those interested. Attendees were also offered a booklet with Italian Christmas folk tales.

Hard-Working Italian Origins of the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree

Nearly lost to history are the tree's origins with men who worked in construction, most of them Italian immigrants, who were glad for a job during the Depression.

Dressed in overalls and jackets, wearing work boots and hats, the men lined up five dozen strong on Christmas Eve 1931 for that week's pay at a Midtown Manhattan construction site. Behind them stood a fine Christmas tree. It had been mounted by the men and draped with the traditional cranberry strings and garlands.



The 10 Most Beautiful Ghost Towns In Italy

By Paolo Bartesaghi

Italy is the country of villages par excellence. In this European peninsula, there are around 8,000 of them, many of very ancient origins and of great historical and artistic interest, as well as very small in size. Unfortunately, it sometimes happens that these small towns are subject to progressive abandonment which transforms them into ghostly ghost towns. The Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) speaks of at least 1,000 abandoned cities on Italian territory. Significant numbers that derive from precise historical reasons. I'd like to showcase ten of the most beautiful in the country:



Pentedattilo (Calabria): a fortress with castle of which there has been certain information since the 7th century. It takes its name from five rocky ridges that emerge from Mount Calvario, extending towards the town like five fingers, from the Greek "penta daktilos". Following a violent earthquake in 1793, a progressive migration began which ended in the 1960s with the removal of the last resident. Despite the passage of time, the town has been well preserved. Pentedattilo is also famous for an event from 1686, the so-called "Alberti massacre", that is, a bloody war between noble families which gave rise to stories of tormented ghosts who still today roam the village in search of peace.



Craco (Basilicata): one of the most important Italian ghost towns, Craco is located 400 meters above sea level and is still partially inhabited: in fact, around 700 inhabitants live in the rebuilt part of the municipality. When the village was abandoned due to a landslide in the seventies, its historic center reached 2,000 residents. Due to its almost intact architectural structure, it has been the setting for dozens of international films, including *The Passion of the Christ* by Mel Gibson and *007 Quantum of Solace* by Marc Forster.



Apice Vecchia (Campania): located in the heart of Irpinia, Apice was populated by over 6,000 inhabitants when it was abandoned after an earthquake of the sixth degree on the Richter scale which struck it on the evening of 21 August 1962. Due to its perfect conditions and the "suspension in time" that it conveys, as if everything had stopped in a precise moment of time, Apice has often been called "the Pompeii of the twentieth century".



Monterano (Lazio): another film set par excellence! Several films came to life in Monterano, such as the great classic *Ben Hur* and some works by the great director Mario Monicelli. The city, which probably dates back to the 4th century BC, was abandoned in 1799 after the looting and violence of the French troops during Napoleon's Italian campaign.



Civita di Bagnoregio (Lazio): often defined as "the dying city", Civita di Bagnoregio, a hamlet of the municipality of the same name, has become a ghost town very slowly, over the centuries, with its abandonment which began in the eighteenth century and it ended, in a disruptive manner, in the second half of the twentieth century. Despite its 2,500 years of history, the town continues to survive thanks to the tourists who visit the streets of the ancient town every day.



Castel D'Alfero (Emilia-Romano): the first certain news of this village dates back to the early 1200s, with its medieval monuments which have survived to this day despite the high seismicity of the area. Today a part of the municipality of Sarsina, it was recently subjected to monumental restrictions by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities.



Savogno (Lombardy): small village perched in the mountains of Val Bregaglia, reachable only on foot after passing a staircase of 2,800 steps, inside there is a church in honor of San Bernardino, dating back to 1465. The abandonment started in the 20th century and ended in the 1960s, with the exodus of the last inhabitants towards the nearby cities, in particular towards Sondrio.



Balestrino (Liguria): set of the film Inkheart, where it appears under the name of Capricorn Village. Due to the dangerous level of seismicity and the heavy damage suffered over the centuries, the town was slowly emptied over the years, only to be rebuilt a short distance away from the original village in the 1960s.



Bussana Vecchia (Liguria): this small thousand-year-old village is today a fraction of Sanremo, in the province of Imperia. It was abandoned after the strong earthquake of 1887 and re-founded a few kilometers from the original site. It is known for having hosted for years an artists' commune which still organizes events and took the name of International Village.



Gairo Vecchio (Sardinia): ancient village abandoned in 1963 due to a great flood, it was rebuilt, also in this case, near the original village. However, many survivors decided to abandon the area forever, moving to what, at the time, was a simple seaside hamlet called Cardedu.

Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici – A Woman Ahead of Her Time

By Paolo Bartesaghi



On October 31, 1737, Anna Maria, the last of the Medici family, signed the "Family Pact", leaving the immense heritage of her lineage to the city, protecting her family's legacy.

Today, millions of visitors and those who live in Florence are able to admire paintings, sculptures, tapestries and porcelains because of Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici, Electress Palatine, last descendant of the Medici. She, in agreement with Francesco Stefano di Lorena, newly appointed Grand Duke of Tuscany, stipulated the Family Pact on October 31, 1737. This pact allowed the collections and cultural heritage of the Grand Dukes (collected over nearly three centuries of political ascendancy) to be forever bound to the city of Florence.

This was an exceptional and important document because, until then, anyone could have, at any time, stripped the city of its treasures. With this agreement, Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici anticipated modern laws on the protection of heritage and territorial constraints.

Anna Maria was born in 1667 and died in 1743 and was the only daughter of Cosimo III de' Medici (Grand Duke of Tuscany) and Marguerite Louise d'Orleans (niece of Louis XIII of France).

Buon Anno! Have You Made Any New Year's Resolutions? *Hai fatto buoni propositi per l'anno nuovo?*

Buoni propositi - new year's resolutions

Mangiare sano - eat healthily

Dormire di più - sleep more

Smettere di fumare - stop smoking

Bere di meno - drink less

Dimagrire - lose weight

Fare ginnastica regolarmente - exercise regularly

Iniziare a meditare - start to meditate

Trovare tempo per se stessi - find time for yourself

Trascorrere più tempo in famiglia - spend more time with family

Usare meno tecnologia - use technology less

Leggere di più - read more

Imparare qualcosa di nuovo - learn something new

Conoscere persone nuove - meet new people

Viaggiare di più - travel more

Risparmiare - save money

Fare nuove amicizie - make new friends

Mettersi in proprio - start up your own business

Trovare un nuovo lavoro - find a new job

Diventare un volontario - volunteer

Rispettare l'ambiente - respect/look after the environment

Ridere di più - laugh more

Buona fortuna con i buoni propositi!
Good luck with your new year's resolutions!

Societa' Vittoria Italiana

Next Men's Meeting January 21st @ 2:00 pm
Next Trustees Meeting January 21st @ 1:00 pm

POKER NIGHT: The men are hosting a Poker Game on Friday January 12 starting at 7pm and is open to all men and Auxiliary members who want to play cards games, wager a little money and have fun socializing with fellow members.

SPAGHETTI SAUCE CONTEST: Bring your favorite homemade sauce to the Lodge on Sunday January 14th to enter the first annual sauce contest starting at 10am. Judging will start at 1pm. The Lodge will supply the spaghetti. Everyone is welcome to attend.

NEWSLETTER: Member newsletter subscription, who receive a print newsletter paid by the Lodge, will expire after this newsletter. Members can either sign up to receive an electronic version of the newsletter on the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa website or contact the Center to order a subscription to continue receiving a print version.

MEMBERSHIP DUES: Please get your membership dues sent in. If you did not receive your membership statement, please contact Squire at 515-577-4283 or email him at squire@squireweb.net

PRAYER READING: As part of the funeral protocol, the member's (men or women) family will need to ask if they want the ceremony prayer read at the visitation or cemetery.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS: The Lodge and Auxiliary Memberships will be sponsoring its annual scholarship program for eligible students planning to attend college in the Fall of 2024 and related to a Lodge or Auxiliary member. Included in your newsletter is a scholarship application. The application is due June 1st 2024. The recipients of the scholarship awards will be at the June Dinner (June 8th, 2024).

TONINI FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP: If you are a member of the Lodge or Auxiliary and you have a son, grandson, daughter or granddaughter attending Dowling Catholic High School for the 2023-24 school year, the lodge is sponsoring a scholarship through the Tonini Family Scholarship program. Contact Randy Prati at 515-321-8941 for more information.

HAPPY JANUARY BIRTHDAY WISHES TO OUR MEMBERS: Jason Battani, Bob Stefani, Donald Ceretti, Tim Begg, Jeffrey Brown, Raymond Chesi, Alfred Chiodo Jr., Jeffrey Lamberti, A.J. Forneris, Jon Giofreddi, Joe Giofreddi, Andrew Stefani, Todd Lombardi, Kevin Funaro, Terry Magnani, Anthony Ballatini, and Raymond Stefani II **Buon Compleanno!**

HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY WISHES TO OUR MEMBERS: Joseph Tumea Jr., Rick Gentosi, Frank Morano, Angelo Stefani, Richard Giofreddi, Randall Prati, Roger Sledge, Biagio Sicilia, John Marino Jr., and Louis Foggia **Buon Compleanno!**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

January 12th – Poker Night @ 7pm

January 14th – Sauce Contest @ 10am; judging at 1pm

January 21st – Lunch Social @ 12:30pm; Trustee Meeting @ 1:00pm; Lodge Meeting @ 2:00pm

February 18th – Lodge Meeting @ 2:00pm; Sonny's Pizza after meeting

March 17th – Lunch Social @ 12:30pm; Lodge Meeting @ 2:00pm

March 23rd – Cavatelli Set Up

March 24th – Cavatelli Dinner Serving from 11:00am to 4:00pm



Societa Vittoria Italiana

Vittoria Lodge
P. O. Box 1212
Ankeny, Iowa 50021-0975

Scholarship Application

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Age _____

Male _____ Female _____

City, State, Zip _____

College Student ID # _____

Name of Lodge or Auxiliary Member Sponsor _____

Relationship to Member _____

Graduation date if in High School _____

School (Plan on) attending _____

COMPLETE mailing address of school / department the check will be sent to:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Deadline is JUNE 1

No Applications will be accepted at the June dinner

This is the ONLY Official form to be used for 2024 applications.

If the college like, U of I, requires any additional paperwork to be submitted with the check, you are to submit the completely form filled out with your application.

Please submit photo with application

(please include applicant's name on back of photo)

Send Applications to:

Vittoria Lodge
P. O. Box 1212
Ankeny, Iowa 50021-0975

VITTORIA LODGE AUXILIARY

We have had a busy, but very enjoyable, 2 months at the lodge. The "Christmas at the Vittoria Lodge" vendor show and pasta lunch in November was quite successful and we would like to thank all those who attended. In December, our annual visit from Santa had us all believing in the magic of Christmas.

On January 14th at noon the lodge is hosting a sauce contest. This will be followed by a pasta lunch featuring the sauces. You are invited to bring your homemade sauce in a crockpot for all to enjoy.

Our annual June dinner will be held on Saturday June 8th. Appetizers will be served at 5:30 followed by dinner and social time. This is a change from what has previously been done. Mark your calendars and be sure to read the newsletters for details. Reservations will be required and begin in May.

Happy New Year—may you have good health, good experiences, and good company.
Cheers to a new year!

Deb Fleishman
Vittoria Lodge Auxiliary, President

