



Christopher Columbus Italian Society

Il Cuore Italiano

Issue 1

September 2019

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Arte Rossi is Our Winner!

Y'all siete molto creativo!

Our members submitted over 50 intriguing names for the e-Newsletter Naming Contest. Some submissions were funny, others heartfelt, poetic, charming or straightforward. The judges scored each submission based on creativity, pronounceability, and relevance to CCIS.

*Please join us in congratulating Arte Rossi, who submitted the winning name, *Il Cuore Italiano* (The Italian Heart).*

Il Cuore Italiano will be a wonderful part of our Italian Society for years to come.

Complimenti, Arte e grazie mille!

Torniamo! ***Our Digital Return***

In September 1997—exactly 22 years ago—the first issue of the CCIS newsletter, *La Nostra Voce* (Our Voice), was published in print form thanks to the Christopher Columbus Ladies Auxiliary (CCLA). *La Nostra Voce* printed its final issue in 2010.

Today, some things have changed. Now, women stand side-by-side with men as fully inducted members of CCIS. Digital newsletters have become the norm, but unchanged is our strong desire to honor our roots, join in fellowship with other Italian-Americans, and contribute our passion and labor to make our wonderful San Antonio an even better place for all.

Il Cuore Italiano is a renewed opportunity to connect in print with members old and new, share our ancestral pride with all interested in the Italian-American culture, and look to a future that is ours to shape thanks to the remarkable Italian-Americans who came before us.

In each issue, you'll find events and topics of concern to our Society, reports of our non-profit's impact on the community, members' family stories, recipes from members' kitchens, recommendations and reviews of Italian books, movies, restaurants, wine, and more.

We invite you to share what "being Italian" means to you through your responses to each issue and especially your submissions of items for *Il Cuore Italiano*!

We are excited to share this new adventure with you. Andiamo!

-CCIS Board and *Il Cuore Italiano* Editors

100 Club Spaghetti Dinner!

On July 12 and 13, the 100 Club of San Antonio in association with CCIS raised \$100,000 for the families of fallen San Antonio heroes. From rolling tens of thousands of meatballs to serving more than 6,300 plates, more than 100 volunteers came together for a tremendous cause. The week of fellowship culminates on Saturday and Sunday with delicious food and friends. Some of the proceeds are shared with CCIS, who, in turn, donate to several charities in San Antonio.

CCIS will host its next Spaghetti Dinner on Sunday, October 13. Check your email or www.ccis-satx.org for ticket information.



Christopher Columbus Celebration

Join Us for Worship, Fellowship, Food & Ancestral Song

Join us Sunday, October 13, for back-to-back celebrations of San Francesco di Paolo's feast day and Christopher Columbus Day.

Both celebrations will be graced by the presence of Padre Francesco Bramuglia, who kindly accepted our invitation to join us for the events this year. Padre Bramuglia, a Franciscan priest with a remarkable voice, is a pastor at Convento del SS Ecce Homo, a storied church in Mesoraca, Crotone, Calabria.

This special day will begin with the 95th annual Procession around Piazza Columbo in honor of the namesake church's patron saint, San Francesco di Paolo. Each September, San Francesco di Paolo is celebrated with a day-long festa in Spezzano della Sila, in Cosenza, Calabria. The tradition was brought to San Antonio by the original families who immigrated here from Calabria.

The Procession will be followed by Mass at San Francesco di Paolo Church. Auxiliary Bishop Msgr. Michael Boulette will say Mass along with Father Victor Valdez, Pastor, and Padre Bramuglia.

Our CCIS Spaghetti Dinner to honor Christopher Columbus Day will immediately follow.

During and after the Spaghetti Dinner, Padre Bramuglia's unforgettable performance of Italian songs will resound through the CCIS Hall. Pastor Bramuglia's rich tenor voice is not to be missed.

Services begin at 10:00 am. See the website for more details on these and additional events on this day. www.ccis-satx.org



About Convento del SS Ecce Homo, Mesoraca, Cortone, Calabria:

"Ecce homo" or, "Behold the man," refers to Pontius Pilate's declaration upon presenting Jesus, scourged and bound, to the mocking crowd before his Crucifixion.

The church, which recently celebrated its 600th anniversary, has documented several miracles in its region. In 1912, a terrible infestation of grasshoppers plagued the town, swiftly devouring acres of wheat crops. The Padre called for a procession and 40,000 people from across the region arrived at the tiny, mountainous town of Mesoraca. The procession made its way around the entire town as the prayers of the people were sent en masse to the heavens. The next day, the grasshoppers were gone.

How Our Italian Teacher Spent Her Summer Vacation

Once students closed their notebooks and officially entered summer mode, so did our very own Italian instructor, Professoressa Tanja Stampfl. She and her family headed back to her hometown of Bressanone located in the Northern Italian region of Alto Adige for the summer.

Nestled between the southern Alps where the granite Dolomites tower above steep slopes clothed in green forests and meadows, Bressanone sits just 45 minutes away from the border of Austria.



Above: Alpe di Villandro/Villanderer Alm, a region above the town of Chiusa/Klausen.

Because of its close proximity to its German-speaking neighbor, residents of Alto Adige are bilingual in both German and Italian. In fact, one part of Alto Adige is officially trilingual, where Ladin is added to the existing two official languages. Spoken by only about 30,000 people in Northern Italy, the Ladin language is a part of the Rhaeto-Romance branch of the Romance languages and is closely related to Friulian and Romansh.

In order to take a position in public service, each applicant needs to prove proficiency in all three of the official languages!

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Italian Classes Began August 20

Professoressa Tanja Stampfl kicked off another successful “school year” with our new Italian Language students. Beginner & intermediate students met in the CCIS Hall to practice the art of speaking Italian.



It was a full class with 19 students in attendance! Over the course of the class, students will practice reading and writing Italian through workbook and dialogue exercises. Our wonderful Professoressa creates a “no judgment zone” where learning is Italian fun, not intimidating.

At the last class, students traditionally enjoy trying out their new Italian skills while sharing a beautiful Italian meal prepared by CCIS members.

CCIS offers free 8-week Italian classes twice each year, in August and January, with individual classes for beginners and intermediates.

Posto dei Membri

A CCIS Opera Club? Are you moved by the beauty and emotion of Italian opera? If enough people are interested, let's get together to listen and learn, and perhaps attend the opera together. Contact Geraldine Merola Barton, gmerola123@aol.com. (Don't miss Puccini's Tosca, Sept 12 and 14 at Tobin Center).

Want to start a club or make contact with other members? Email ccisnewsletter@gmail.com your Posto dei Membri (Member's Place) items for the next issue. Also, be sure to use the [CCIS Facebook page](#) for more immediate contact.

Welcome New Members



Being sworn in by the CCIS Board, L to R: John Roppolo, Tom Griffin, Anne Di Candido Griffin, Jared Hoehing, Mike Colasanti



Elizabeth Assunto is welcomed by CCIS President Sam Guido

Elizabeth Assunto is originally from Tyler, Texas and made San Antonio her hometown after graduating from St. Mary's Law School. She practices law as a transactional attorney. Her hobbies include, gardening, cooking and wine tasting. Elizabeth's family immigrated from Sicily and settled in Louisiana.



John Roppolo grew up in Central Texas where his ancestors settled in the early 1900s, along with settling in New Orleans, LA. John graduated from St. Edward's University with a B.A. in Public Administration and Criminal Justice. He is the Chief Investigator for the Hays County Criminal DA's Office where he has been employed for the past 27 years. John and his wife Debbie live in San Marcos with their two sons, Jonathan and Joseph.

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Members Recommend...

"Bitter Almonds: Recollections and Recipes from a Sicilian Girlhood" By Maria Grammatico and Mary Taylor Simeti

Book Review by Donna Granato

After World War II, Italy, like most of Europe, was devastated. Southern Italy and Sicily were especially hit hard. In Agrarian societies, societies with no large cities and many small villages, the people were tenant farmers locked in a feudal system that was the result of generations of absentee landlords controlling the land.

In her book *Bitter Almonds*, Maria Grammatico describes the affect the war and landlords had on her life.

After the war everyone was hungry and people died of starvation. As a child she remembers stepping over dead bodies in the street. When her father died while working in the fields, her impoverished mother sent Maria, age 11, and her sister, age 6, to live with the San Carlo Franciscan Nuns, a cloistered convent. There were 15 nuns in the convent and 17 orphans.

Many of the nuns had been sent to the convent as orphans or unmarriageable daughters and had stayed in the cloistered environment for the rest of their lives.

Maria held only a fifth grade education when she entered the convent. She was not permitted to continue her education. Her sister was sent to school to the fourth grade. The days at the convent were full of prayers and work. She describes an environment that was bitterly cold in the winter with meals of bread and watery milk for breakfast. Dinner was pasta with a small amount of a vegetables mixed in. Maria comented on knowing what day of the week it was by what was served at dinner. She scrubbed laundry by hand in large stone tubs, cared for elderly nuns, and manned the oven in 24-hour shifts. She also helped shell almonds. Eight girls working for a week could shell four salme (eight hundred kilos or 1760 pounds of almonds). Almonds were ground by hand with an old meat grinder.

In this environment the nuns made cookies and pastries to sell. Since the convent was cloistered, pastries were sold via an iron wheel with a grate. The nuns would not tell the children how to make the pastries but would assign them a specific task. Maria would later learn how to make pastries by watching what the nuns did.

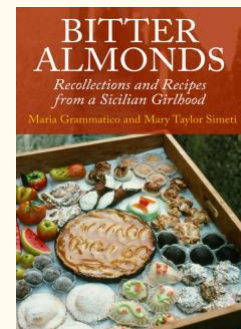
At the age of 20 she was given a choice: she could stay in the convent and become a nun or leave. Maria chose to leave. A few years after she left, the few remaining nuns were sent to other convents and it closed.

Maria had minimal formal education but she had watched and learned. She began baking cookies and making marzipan. Her shop Pasticceria Maria Grammatico in Erice, Italy is now famous, and, today, she ships her cookies to customers all over the world.

The cookbook portion of this book contains cookie recipes with names like Belli e Brutti (Good and Ugly), Sospiri e Desirs (Sighs and Desires). There are recipes for Jams and Preserves, Almond Pastries, Crostatas, Biscuits, Cordials and Marzipan.

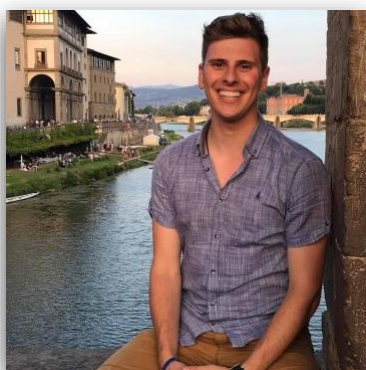
This book is not only a cookbook, it is a testament to the human spirit of a child and her will to survive and succeed. It is a record of the hardships that many poor people have endured.

This book is available at Amazon.com and abebooks.com.





Mike Colasanti was raised in Rome, New York. He served in the Army Infantry 1967-1969, joined the Air Force in 1978 as Captain, and retired as Lt Colonel in 1997. He received his B.S. in Nursing in 1974 from Syracuse University and his Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling in 1981. He worked as Civilian RN until 2014. His wife Marie is a Colonel still on active duty.



Jared Hoehing was born and raised in Metro Detroit and now works as a producer at KSAT 12. He is a part of a big Italian family, and studied the language in college. He loves to cook and read, and you can often find him perusing coffee shops, bookstores and record shops around town, and hiking many parks in and around San Antonio.



Tom Griffin and **Anne Candido Griffin** met in San Antonio in 1998 and married at St. Anthony Claret Parish in 2000. They have three grown children and eight grandchildren. Both Tom and Anne are retired from the federal civil service. Anne works part time teaching American Culture and English as a Second Language at the University of Texas at Austin. Anne's father was Italian American, and his parents were from Abruzzo/Molise and Caserta. Anne lived in Southern Italy from 1988-1993 and taught English at the University of Salerno and the University of Basilicata. Tom and Anne love and enjoy planning trips to their favorite spots in Southern Italy.

CCIS Gives Back

Since its inception in 1890, Christopher Columbus Italian Society members have donated countless thousands of hours helping others in the San Antonio community. Etc etc

In 201**, Christopher Columbus Italian Society was granted 501C-3 status, making us a charitable non-profit organization.

We have donated to just to name a few.

Etc etc Members look forward to using our non profit status to help etc etc

Italian Heritage Month

October 1 marks the beginning of Italian Heritage Month (formerly known as National Italian-American Heritage Month). Coinciding with Columbus Day, this month the nation recognizes the many achievements and contributions to our country by Italian-Americans and Italians.

Wedding Bells



Patti and Sam Guido are pleased to announce that their son Matthew Guido and Christine (Brijalba) Guido, members of CCIS, exchanged wedding vows Nov. 10, 2018 in San Ignacio, Belize at the Cahal Pech Mayan Ruin.

Fifty-five relatives and friends attended. It truly was a night and week to remember!

They spent their honeymoon on the Belizean islands of San Pedro and Caye Caulker.



Above: Plose, a mountain above Bressanone/Brixen.



Above: Daughter Alexa (7) swinging up into the mountains "like Heidi"!

Below: Lukas (3) refreshing himself in a trough with very cold fresh water.



CCIS Welcomes Order Sons and Daughters of Italy In America to the Riverwalk

In July, members of the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America traveled to San Antonio for their 56th Biennial National Convention. Several CCIS members attended to help welcome our fellow our Italain-Americans to our great city.



L to R: Dawn Baamonde, Tinker Kotchwelp, Councilman Clayont Perry, Rosalie Benevnuta, and Brenda Perna.



Kathy and Sam Greco.



L to R: Kim Rash, Dawn Baamonde, and Andrew Guido.

Founded in 1905, the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America® is the largest and oldest national organization for men and women of Italian heritage in the United States.

This Month in Italian History>>>

September 9, 1943

Allied Troops Land in Salerno

The first wave of an invasion force that would eventually take control of much of the Italian peninsula on behalf of the Allies landed on the beaches around Salerno in Campania.



Allies Land at Salerno

September 20, 1870

Completion of Risorgimento (Unification of Italy)

Although Italy was unified in 1861, Pope Pius IX refused to give up his temporal power in Rome, and the French supported the Pope with troops in Rome. Vittorio Emmanuel II attempted a peaceful settlement with the Vatican and negotiated French withdrawal from Rome in 1864. In 1867, Garibaldi fought Papal forces who were supported by the Vatican's French allies, and he was defeated at Menana. Pope Pius IX refused another peaceful offer by King Vittorio Emanuele II. Finally, crack Bersaglieri troops besieged and took Rome.



Vittorio Emmanuel II

September 20, 1934

Actress Sophia Loren is born in Rome.

Sophia Loren was raised in poverty in Pozzuoli, near Naples, and suffered through Italy's devastation in WWII. She began her prolific film career in 1950 and came to be regarded as an iconic actress and among the world's most alluring women. Many of her more than 40 films were set in Italy, including "Two Women", "Marriage Italian Style", "It Started in Naples", "Scandal in Sorrento", "The Priest's Wife" and "Boccaccio '70". She famously said, "Nothing makes a woman more beautiful than the belief that she is beautiful." and "Everything you see I owe to spaghetti."



Sophia Loren

Come si dice?

"Far d'una mosca un elefante!"

"To make an elephant out of a fly!"

In other words...

"Stop making a mountain out of a molehill!"

Upcoming Events

Sun, Sept 1, 12:30 pm

CCIS General Membership Meeting

Location: Christopher Columbus Italian Society, 201 Piazza Italia, SA

Sat, Sept 7, 7:30 pm

"The Four Italian Tenors" from Rome, Italy

Location: Laurie Auditorium at Trinity University

Information: <https://www.artssa.org/four-italian-tenors/>

Thurs, Sept 12 & Sat, Sept 14, 7:30 pm

"Tosca"

Puccini's operatic tragedy of a great actress who has "lived for art."

Location: Tobin Center

Tickets:

210-223-8624 or [click here](#).

Sat, Sept 28, 9:30 am-2:30 pm

"Italian Cooking at Home" Cooking Class

Location: Culinary Institute of America, 312 Pearl Parkway, Bldg 3 San Antonio, TX 78215

Price: \$185/ person

For more info, visit www.register.culinary.edu.

Sun, Oct 6, 12:30 pm

CCIS General Membership Meeting

Location: Christopher Columbus Italian Society, 201 Piazza Italia, SA

Sun, Oct 13, 10:00 am

Procession to Honor San Francesco di Paolo

Location: Procession at Piazza Columbo, followed by Mass at Church of San Francesco di Paolo. ([See article](#))

Sun, Oct 13, 12:00 pm-3:00 pm

CCIS Christopher Columbus Spaghetti Dinner* Immediately following the Procession and Mass (see above).

Location: Christopher Columbus Italian Society, 201 Piazza Italia, SA ([See article](#))

Purchase tickets by clicking [here](#).

Sat, Oct 26, 3:00 pm-5:30 pm

CCIS Fall Picnic*

Location: Christopher Columbus Italian Society, 201 Piazza Italia, SA

Price: \$12.50 per adult plate

\$5.00 per children's plate (4 to 10 years old)

Free for children 3 & under

Please contact Elizabeth Collette at 210-823-8439 to purchase tickets.

October is Italian Heritage Month.

**Asterisk denotes CCIS Event.*

Send us notice of upcoming Italian-related events.
Email to ccisnewsletter@gmail.com

Ricette di famiglia

Gnocchi with Spinach



Ingredients:

- 1 lb Gnocchi
- 1, 16oz. frozen package chopped or shredded spinach.
- 4-6 slices of bacon
- 2-3 garlic cloves, diced
- 1 medium shallot, or 1/2 medium onion, diced
- 1/2 - 3/4 cup dry white wine (optional)
- 1/2 cup heavy cream (substitute milk in a pinch)
- A pinch of red pepper flakes
- A pinch of salt
- Butter
- Freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano or Grana Padano

Assembly:

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Cut bacon into pieces & fry with a dab of butter, remove bacon from grease & strain. Add shallot/onion to bacon grease & sauté over medium heat 2-3 minutes until not quite translucent, add garlic & red pepper flakes and sauté another 2 minutes. Add white wine and reduce by half. Add spinach, bring to simmer & simmer uncovered for ten minutes.

In the meantime, cook gnocchi until they just start to float then remove & strain, reserving 1 cup of gnocchi water (you want the gnocchi to be finished about when the spinach is hot). Add cream, 1/4 cup of pasta water & a pinch of salt to spinach, then add gnocchi, bacon and toss/stir, adding a bit more pasta water if needed. Cook another minute until everything lightens up & serve with another layer of freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano.

-Gnocchi with Spinach Recipe and Photo by Anne & Steven Davis, Cousins of Samantha Cangelosi Lighty

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Thank you to all who contributed to this issue!

Send us your responses and suggestions! Email ccisenewsletter@gmail.com.

Have a story, event, or pictures you'd like featured in the newsletter? Submit them to us at <mailto:ccisenewsletter@gmail.com>.



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