



Christopher Columbus Italian Society

Il Cuore Italiano

Issue 2

November-December 2019

in this issue >>>

- *[Christmas, Italian Style](#)
- *[The Presepe: Italian Christmas Memories](#)
- *[Fall Italian Class Ends](#)

- *[Benefits of Learning a Second Language](#)
- *[Procession-CCIS Spaghetti Dinner](#)
- *[Loving Abroad: A Sicilian Honeymoon](#)

- *[Member Review: "The Italian-American Podcast"](#)
- *[Ricette di Famiglia: Struffoli](#)
-And More

Presepi & Bagpipes: Christmas, Italian Style

by Geraldine Merola Barton

We Italian-Americans delight in keeping our families' Italian Christmas traditions. Many of these traditions were brought over from Italy and others were created as we assimilated in America. In this sampling of Christmas as it's celebrated throughout Italy, perhaps you'll find some of *your* family's traditions.



In the U.S., have you noticed that Christmas season begins as early as marketers can slip their glittery wares onto store shelves? For Italians, the season of *Natale* begins on December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, when homes and piazzas are transformed with trees, lights, wreaths, and painstakingly crafted *presepi*, or nativity scenes. Outdoor Christmas markets hawk Christmas sweets, nativity figures, decorations, and gifts.

The nine days before Christmas are the time of Novena, a period to prayerfully prepare for the birth of the Savior Jesus. During Novena, carolers begin to sing. In Calabria, *zampognari*, the shepherd bagpipers, traditionally come down from the mountains

[Cont'd on p 3](#)

'Tis the Season!

Happy Thanksgiving e Buon Natale!

From our hearts, *grazie mille* for your warm responses to the first issue of *Il Cuore Italiano*. We're off to a good start!

This newsletter was created as an outlet to stay in touch, share our stories, traditions, travel experiences and more. Without you, the newsletter will cease to exist. Please keep sending us your submissions and responses.



In this issue - At the holidays, we turn to the comfort of our family traditions and feel warmed by being a part of customs and beliefs that go back much further than we can trace our ancestors. In this issue, we hope to convey a taste, both figuratively and literally, of how Italians celebrate Christmas. There are some differences between Italian and Italian-American traditions, but we were delighted at finding so many similarities.

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

CCIS Board and *Il Cuore Italiano* Editors

The Presepe: Italian Christmas Memories

By Anne Di Candido Griffin

The scent of a fresh Christmas tree, the sounds of familiar Christmas carols, the taste of a peppermint candy cane and images of bustling crowds of holiday shoppers all evoke some of our fondest American Christmas memories. While we can make most of the same associations with Christmas in Italy, there are some notable and uniquely Italian differences. Of course, we expect that Italians would serve grand Christmas feasts featuring special holiday foods, but many are unaware of the long tradition surrounding the *presepe* or Nativity scene.



Typical Presepe. Credit: La Gazzetta Italiana

The *presepe* is such an important part of the Italian Christmas season that many families choose to have a *presepe* rather than a Christmas tree in the home. Children and their parents plan for weeks in advance to create the most elaborate nativity scene possible. Twinkling lights, tiny Biblical-era buildings, miniature fountains and rivers with running water and electric mill wheels that turn are just some of the detailed features in a typical home *presepe*. It's not unusual to see a grand *presepe* occupying half of the space in a small living room. Ancient Bethlehem is recreated with camouflage-type paper crinkled to form mountains and dark blue foil to represent the night sky. Children gather small pebbles and moss from local forests to add to the realism of these backdrops. When paying a Christmas visit to an Italian family, you can expect to be led into the room occupied by the *presepe* to admire the family's handiwork.

Nowhere is the *presepe* tradition more central than in Naples. Beginning on December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception or *L'Immacolata*, Neapolitans flock to the famed Christmas market on Via San Gregorio Armeno to shop for their *presepi*. Artisans sell exquisite hand-crafted figures in *terra cotta*. It's not enough to have the usual cast of characters – Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, the shepherds and the Three Wise Men. In



Credit: outdoornativitystore.com

The Presepe: Italian Christmas Memories, continued

typical Neapolitan fashion, the *presepe* is an exaggerated, over-the-top extravaganza. The fruit seller, the fish monger, the blacksmith and their wares and any other village personage imaginable will be featured among the figurines in a true Neapolitan *presepe*.

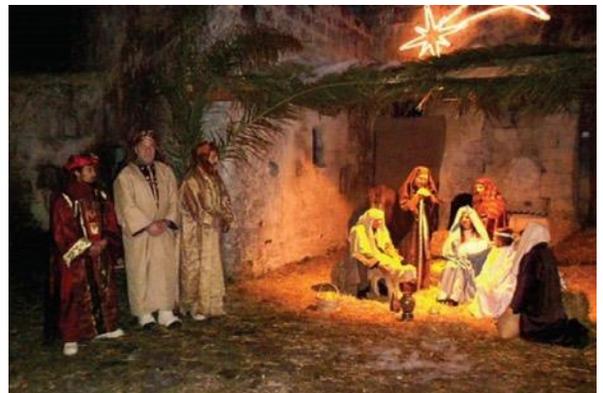
And why stick to just ancient Bethlehem? Politicians past and present – Giuseppe Conte, Matteo Salvini, Giulio Andreotti and Donald Trump; world figures such as Queen Elizabeth II or Nelson Mandela; soccer stars like Diego Maradona or David Beckham can all be found among the characters offered for sale.

These aren't mass-produced figurines. A long tradition of *presepe* artisans dates back for many centuries and spans multiple generations in Neapolitan families. The figures are expensive, but the craftsmanship is exceptional. Families build up their collections slowly over the years adding one or two new characters each season.



Year-round Christmas Market, Via San Gregorio Armeno, Napoli. Credit: italy.org magazine

During the Christmas season which officially spans from December 8 until the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6, the *presepe* becomes part of the civic celebration as entire Italian towns re-enact the Christmas story with a *presepe vivente* or living nativity drama. Townsfolk dress as the Holy Family, shepherds and Wise Men, Roman centurions and King Herod with local livestock, donkeys, horses and wagons helping to re-create the Biblical narrative.



La Nativita del Presepe Vivente di Matera Ambientato nei Sassi di Matera, the largest nativity scene in the world with more than 1000 actors and 7 Nativity scenes. Credit Materalife.it

If you find yourself in Italy during the month of December, seek out one of the famed *presepi viventi* for the quintessential Italian Christmas experience. In this era of the commercialized Christmas, you'll be grateful for this opportunity to celebrate Christ's birth with the locals and experience the true meaning of the holiday.

[Christmas, Italian Style cont'd from p 1](#)

to play folk Christmas carols. (Follow [this link](#) to see and hear contemporary *zampognari*.)



Zampognari from Vintage Postcard

Not until Christmas Eve is Jesus lovingly placed in the creche. *La Vigilia* or *Vigilia di Natale* is meatless and many Southern Italian families observe the Christmas Eve tradition of the Seven Fishes. Typical Calabrese Christmas Eve appetizers are *crespelle*, a fried yeasted doughnut stuffed with salted anchovies and bottarga, and tuna roe preserved in salt and stuffed with mussels and olives. A typical pasta course is *spaghetti alle vongole e cozze*, (spaghetti with clams and mussels).



Feast of the Seven Fishes

After the sumptuous *cena della Vigilia*, Italians attend midnight Mass. Afterward, they may snack on Panettone and make a toast – *brindare* - with spumante or prosecco. Children leave milk, nuts and cake to welcome *Babbo Natale*, Italy's version of St. Nicholas, leaner and more regal than Santa Claus. In Cortina d'Ampezzo in the Dolomite Mountains, torch-bearing skiers welcome *Natale* by schussing down the slopes.

Gifts are opened on Christmas Day. A multi-course feast begins at lunchtime and features regional dishes such as salumi, pasta in brodo, lasagna, insalata di mare, salmone or tonno, and roasted meats. According to region, desserts might include panettone, chocolates, and all manner of cookies and pastries. Calabrians might again enjoy *crespelle*, a.k.a. *turdidri* or *turdilli*, this time, covered with honey. A similar Christmas treat called [strufelli](#) is favored by the Napolitani; the same confection is loved by Abbruzzese but called *cicerchiata*; and by Siciliani who call it *pignolata*.



Crespelle with anchovies. Also known as *cudruriaddri*, *cullurielli*, *zappole*, *grispelle*, depending on region. Credit: Bottega di Calabria

Christmas, Italian Style, continued

The very next day, December 26, the Feast of Santo Stefano, is a national holiday, when families gather yet again for leftovers and new delicacies.

On *Capodanno* (New Year's Eve) the party commences in late afternoon with *apertivo*, followed by *il cenone* ("big dinner"). Festivities continue into the night and resume with lunch on New Year's Day, when the menu includes foods sure to bring luck through the year to come, such as *cotechino* (pork sausage), *lenticchie* (lentils) or *uva* (grapes).

The Christmas season extends all the way to January 6, the day of Epiphany, when the Three Wise Men arrived in Bethlehem with their gifts for the Messiah.

That day is also *Giorno della Befana*, when the witch *La Befana* rides her broom and comes down the chimney to leave candy or coal for children.

Much of Italy including Roma, Bologna and Venezia celebrates this uniquely Italian good witch, who is said to have followed the Three Wise Men to see the Christ child but lost her way. Still searching even today, *La Befana* leaves gifts for the children, "because the Christ child can be found in all children." In Venezia, *La Befana* arrives by boat, of course. In Northern Italy, *Pan e vin* celebrations feature all-night neighborhood bonfires burning *La Befana* on her broomstick, while folks feast on yet more traditional foods.



***La Befana*, Painting by James Lewicki, from "The Golden Book of Christmas Tales" 1956**

We Italians have bragging rights over how Christmas is celebrated, because Christ's birthday was first celebrated in Rome in 336 AD, under Emperor Constantine.

Because Jesus was born during a census-taking, some historians believe He was actually born in June, yet Pope Julius I fixed the birth date as December 25. Why?

Peer back far enough, and you'll find a distant mirror of our Christmas traditions in older traditions such as the ancient Roman holiday of Saturnalia. Celebrated around the Roman winter solstice which fell on December 25, Saturnalia was itself adapted from an ancient Pagan holiday honoring Saturn, the Roman god of agriculture. Romans decorated their homes with wreaths and greenery, wore colorful clothing, and by 133-31 BC, spent December 17-25 socializing, feasting, singing, and exchanging gifts. Wax taper candles were common gifts, symbolizing the return of light after the solstice.

Early Christians perhaps adapted the familiarity of the ancient customs and symbols as a natural way of easing converts into celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Wishing you and your loved ones every Christmas blessing, as you rejoice in the old holiday traditions and create new ones.

Buon Natale!

Learning Another Language By Jared Hoehing

A second language can seem daunting, especially when you are learning it from scratch. Many of us have heard how it is easier for children to learn another language, which can only add more anxiousness before starting.

But learning a language is not something solely reserved for the young. In fact, there are reasons to start learning another language at any point in your life.

Here are just a few that psychology experts have proven: Your brain will grow. Many of us may think that as we age our cognition can only decrease, but learning a language fortifies the brain. This isn't limited to just the part of the brain that handles language, either. All areas of the brain grow when you learn a language.

Speaking of the brain, learning another language can help prevent dementia. Studies suggest that learning another language can help delay dementia and Alzheimer's disease by up to *five* years in susceptible adults. There isn't a medication on the market that has an effect nearly as good as learning a language.

Keeping with the brain, studies support learning a language can help improve your memory as well. This can help you think more clearly, read better and communicate ideas.

Multi-tasking is difficult for people to do – that's just science speaking. But there are ways to be better at it. You guessed it, learning another language can help you be a better multi-tasker.

Those are just some of the scientific aspects of learning another language, but there are other perks outside of science that it can add to our life. The first is opening your world to new people. Humans are social creatures; we need interactions with other humans to thrive. Learning another language can open more doors to meet new people.

For many of us in the Christopher Columbus Italian Society, learning another language, specifically Italian, can bring us closer to our roots. We come from Italian heritage and connecting with our family's mother tongue can bring us closer to our family's past. That connection is invaluable to our well-being and can lead us to discover more about our family and ourselves.

Although all of these reasons, and many more left unmentioned, exist, the notion of learning a language can still be daunting. But here is some encouragement; something that I heard a few years back that resonates with me.

The mayor of Hamtramck, Michigan – a small municipality like a Windcrest or Alamo Heights that is completely bordered by the City of Detroit – once spoke about learning a second language and starting later in life. Hamtramck has historically had a large Polish population and the language permeates the fabric of the city. When elected, the mayor decided to learn the language of the city. She was "over-the-hill," she said, and was nervous because she thought it was too late to start. But after she started, she realized that any time put in learning a language paid off these same dividends mentioned in this article.

More so, many of us have more time than we think. If a person is 50 years old, by the time they are 60 they will have a decade of experience with a new language – and isn't that an exciting endeavor to embark on? So, if you are nervous about starting to learn a language, take a deep breath. You are surrounded by a community who wants to interact and learn with you; you have more time than you think; and learning a new language will provide more benefits than demerits in your life – and that's just science.

Fall Semester of Italian Class Draws to a Close

On Tuesday, October 8, students and Professoressa Stampfl closed out a great semester of Italian Language course with a fun pizza and wine party. After 8 weeks of classes, the students put their learning to the test with some special guests. Members of the Italian Club at Trinity University joined us for the evening! With most of the members conversationally fluent in Italian, the students and club members were able to practice speaking Italian to one another.



The CCIS, in collaboration with the Trinity's Italian Club, hopes to offer more events to not only practice the Italian language, but also to spread awareness about the Italian culture within our community.

A very special *Buon Compleanno* to Cosmo Guido who turned 97 years young on October 8th!

We hope you had a wonderful birthday and wish you many more years of health and happiness.



Posto dei Membri

Are you interested in studying genealogy? Learning about Italy's twenty regions? Cooking regional Italian foods or sampling wines? Want to practice speaking Italian? Reach out on *Posto dei Membri* (Members' Place) to find CCIS members who share your interests. Email your free ad to ccisnewsletter@gmail.com for inclusion in this section.

CCIS Opera Club -- Opera novices and experts, if you're moved by the beauty and emotion of Italian opera, let's get together to listen and learn. Perhaps a group of us can even attend Giuseppe Verdi's "Rigoletto" at the Tobin in May 2020. Contact Geraldine Merola Barton, gmerola123@aol.com or text 210-722-9428.

Columbus Procession & Spaghetti Dinner

The CCIS annual Spaghetti Dinner on October 13th was unlike past events. This year, CCIS and the San Francesco di Paola Church joined forces to host a special Mass and celebration in conjunction with the CCIS Spaghetti Dinner.

The festivities kicked off with a wonderful procession around the Piazza di Colombo in honor of our patron saint, San Francesco di Paola along with a celebratory Mass.

Photos Credit: Javier Fernandez



Special guests assisting with Mass on this special occasion were Auxiliary Bishop Michael Joseph Boulette of the Archdiocese of San Antonio and Padre Francesco Bramuglia, known as "The Singing Priest" from Calabria, Italy.



After Mass, members of our community gathered in the CCIS Hall for a delicious meal of our Society's famous spaghetti and meatballs, salad and Italian bread.



As a special treat, Padre Francesco serenaded the diners with Italian song in his heavenly voice, leaving smiles on everyone's faces. Diners clapped and sang along with him, filling the hall with a wonderful display of Italian spirit.



Columbus Procession and Spaghetti Dinner continued



In front of the CCIS Hall, folks going in and out were treated to a fascinating vintage Vespa exhibit, thanks to Dawn and Dave Baamonde.



The success of this event, as always, was thanks to the big-hearted volunteers who organized, prepared, cooked, cleaned, collected tickets, helped with parking, served, did the accounting, and thought of everything.

CCIS Gives Back

There was a time when Italian immigrants were not warmly welcomed to this country and their way was not made easy. In May 1890, Italian immigrants in San Antonio chartered the Christopher Columbus Italian Society, a fraternal organization to help one another adapt to a new language and way of life.

Over the years, these Italian-Americans prospered and assumed leadership positions in the community. Wishing to give back and to promote Italian culture in the community, they extended their benevolent services to the community at large. CCIS donated a room at the Santa Rosa Children's Hospital, provides shoes each year to children of St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Orphanage Home, supports the Carmelite Day Care Center, offers twice yearly free Italian language classes, and supports many other projects and organizations with in-kind donations and countless volunteer hours.

In 2018, CCIS formalized their charitable mission and were granted 501C-3 status, making us a charitable non-profit organization. Along with monetary donations, CCIS and its members make many "in kind" community service donations, such as volunteer time, free use of space in the Hall, and food and beverages.

Following are some of CCIS' benevolent activities in 2019:

January: San Francesco di Paola Spaghetti Supper – Donated money, volunteer hours and in-kind donations.

February: San Pedro Creek Extension – Donated beverages and volunteer hours.

March: Optimist Club of San Antonio, Oratorical Youth Contest

March: Italian Motor Club in Boerne - CCIS representatives presented in Italian.

March: Carfest - Donation of food and volunteer hours serving free meals.

April: Ward Elementary School – CCIS Volunteer talked to students about Italian culture.

April & May: Housing Resource Fair – 4 meetings

July: 100 Club of San Antonio – Money, volunteer hours and in-kind donations.

July: San Fernando Cathedral – Use of the kitchen for 2 days.

October: CCIS Spaghetti Supper – Volunteer hours, in-kind donations. Oct 3,

October: Fashion Group International -- CCIS hosted 6 hours of Hall space as they prepared and staged their fashion show for Fashion Week SATX.

Welcome New Members



Kimberly Ann Dutton

Kim Dutton was born and raised in Lexington, Kentucky. She received bachelor's degrees in English and Political Science from the University of Kentucky. She worked for Kentucky's Cabinet for Workforce Development as a Compliance Auditor and retired in 2010. She and her husband, Barry Bieber, relocated to LaVernia, TX, in 2017, where they live with their dogs, Landry and Derby. Additionally, she is active on the Wilson County Public Libraries board. She enjoys cooking, landscaping, gardening and running.



Robert Lozano shaking hands with CCIS President Sam Greco after swearing in to the Society.

Robert A. Lozano left San Antonio in 1968 after joining the Army and has returned for retirement. After Vietnam, he went to graduate school, earned a Ph.D. in Speech and Language Pathology, and worked with brain injured adults. This began an interest in brain behavior relationships and a return to school for a M.D. degree. He is retiring after practicing Neurology in Brownsville and Harlingen, Texas for 30 years. Robert's great-grandfather was Michele Lucchese, a boot maker and one of the early Presidents of the CCIS. His father R. Robert Lozano was a judge and recognized by United National Italian Charitable Organization (UNICO) for his work with Italian charitable efforts. Robert would like to continue his family's tradition of supporting the Christopher Columbus Italian Society and promoting the Italian-American image in San Antonio.

Members Recommend...

"The Italian-American Podcast"

Reviewed by Samantha Cangelosi Lighty

From newspapers to radio to television, our world has stayed "in the know" thanks to these forms of communication. As they evolve, we find ourselves not only absorbing our news and entertainment faster, but also more conveniently.

One of the latest and most popular ways to enjoy media is through podcasts. Today's modern "radio shows", there are thousands and thousands of podcasts available for listening that cover topics ranging from cooking to true crime to motivation/self-help.

I became hooked on last year when my friend recommended a true crime podcast. Ever since, I've chosen listening to podcasts over listening to the radio in the car, while I'm cooking or getting ready for the day.

When browsing for a new podcast to start, I stumbled across "[The Italian American Podcast](#)". As the name suggests, this show discusses all things "Italian-American" from family traditions and recipes to famous Italian-Americans past and present, to how to accurately begin a genology search. Anything you can think of, they speak on it. With a vision to chronicle the traditions and stories of the heritage they both care so deeply about, creators and hosts Anthony Fasano and Dolores Alfieri Taranto, along with other recurring personalities, spend each hour-long episode interviewing Italian-American guests from authors to former governors to presidents and CEOs of companies, discussing and learning beautiful stories about their Italian upbringing.



Not only do they discuss the hardships of what it was like for many Italian immigrant families traveling to America with only dollars to their name and no understanding of the English language, but also, how hardship shaped not only their lives, but the overall Italian-American culture.

The podcast has been going strong since 2015. Last year, they added a new format to certain episodes called "*The Italian American Power Hour*" that incorporates a "roundtable discussion" approach instead of their traditional journalistic interview style. I began listening to the podcast in chronological order beginning with Episode 1, so I've had a chance to see how the podcast has evolved. The hosts do a great job at giving the guests the spotlight and prompting them into great storytelling.

I thoroughly enjoy listening to the guests speak about their Italian families. I find similarities between the way they grew up with their family and about how I grew up with mine, no matter the generational gap. I'm sure you'll find many similarities, as well!

Interested in listening to this podcast or searching for one on a specific topic? On your iPhone or iPad visit your [Apple podcasts](#) app on your phone to search and listen. If you have an Android phone you can use the Google podcasts app.

Visit and 'Like' the *Italian American Podcast* on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ItalianAmericanPodcast/>.

What are your picks for Italian-related movies, books, local restaurants, wine, products, or experiences? Please share with your CCIS brothers and sisters. It's one way of keeping our Italian culture relevant and strong. Either write a review or simply type your one-line recommendation in an email and send to ccisnewsletter@gmail.com.

Loving Abroad: A Sicilian Honeymoon

By Elizabeth Assunto

Our trip began in Palermo, then we drove to Agrigento, Noto, and Taormina.



Elizabeth & husband William Germany, *Fontana Pretoria*, Palermo, Sicily



Quattro Canti, Palermo, Sicily

In Agrigento, we stayed at a beautiful resort called Mandronova, where they produce their own organic olive oil. I loved its “tucked away” location away from the town, and the food was *fantastic*! We had private cooking classes with the owner’s son who trained under a Michelin star chef. During the class, we learned to make arancine, eggplant parmigiana, involtini, and torta di mandorle. While in Agrigento, we also enjoyed the Valley of the Temples.



Valley of the Temples, outside of Agrigento

After Agrigento, we traveled to our third resort in the province of Noto. While there, we enjoyed several day trips to Noto (we tried the delicious cannolis and gelato from the famous Cafe Sicilia), Marzamemi, and Syracuse. At Planeta Buonivini winery, we enjoyed a tasting and a tour of the vineyard, as well as a lovely spread of cheeses, fruit and bruschetta.



The fishing town Marzamemi on the southeast coast of Sicily

We spent the last few days of our trip in Taormina enjoying a boat tour around the coast, a private guided hike up Mount Edna, and a private wine tour of Destro Azienda Vitivinicola. The Sicilian wines were excellent!



Yummy *panelle e crocche* in Palermo

We fully embraced the culture and cuisine and cannot wait to go back!



This Month in Italian History>>>

November 4, 1918

Italy's End of World War I

IV Novembre is the Italian national holiday known as *Giorno dell'Unita Nazionale e Festa delle Forze Armate*, marking the armistice between Italy and the Austria-Hungary Empire that ended Italy's involvement in "The war to end all wars." Italy joined the war in 1915; by the end 600,000 soldiers and 500,000 civilians were dead, a million wounded, and the country bankrupted. Italy's resultant resentment toward the Allied Leaders, Britain, France and the US, helped fuel the rise of Mussolini and the Fascists.



Italian Alpine Troops 1915

November 30, 1508

Andrea Palladio is Born in Padua

Andrea Palladio, born Andrea di Pietro della Gondola, was a giant among Venetian Renaissance architects. His "neoclassical" style of architecture, later known as Palladianism, was based on ancient Greco-Roman concepts of symmetry, perspective and values. Palladio-designed villas and churches are plentiful in Venezia and the Veneto region. Perhaps best known is the Church of San Giorgio Maggiore (1562, Venezia). He died in Vicenza in 1580. Palladianism continued to be developed by his successors through the 18th Century. Even today, we invoke traces of his design in contemporary Palladian style arched windows.

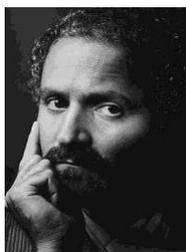


Villa with superimposed portico, from Book IV of Palladio's I quattro libri dell'architettura, English translation published in London, 1736

December 2, 1946

Gianni Versaci, Fashion Designer, Born in Reggio Calabria

Versaci began his colorful and controversial career as his seamstress mother's apprentice and ultimately built a fashion empire. He was proud of his southern Italian heritage and strongly influenced by ancient Greek history which is so prevalent in the Calabrian landscape. He infused into his designs motifs from Greco-Roman art, for example, in the recurring motif of the Greek key. He was devoted to his family and his siblings held key positions in his business. Versaci was assassinated by a spree killer in 1997, at 50 years of age.



Versaci in 1982

December 27, 1983

St. John Paul II's Prison Visit

In 1981, St. John Paul II was shot and wounded in an assassination attempt on his life by Mehmet Ali Agca, a Turkish member of a fascist group known as "Grey Wolves". Agca received a sentence of "life in prison" after being tried and convicted of the crime. On this day in 1983, St. John Paul II visited his attacker in Rebibbia Prison. After the short visit, St. John Paul II pardoned Agca. Thirty-three years after the shooting, on December 27, 2014, Agca traveled back to the Vatican to lay white roses on St. John Paul II's tomb.



St. John Paul II in his motorcade minutes before assassination attempt.

Upcoming Events

Sun, Nov 3, 12:30 p.m.

CCIS General Membership Meeting*

Location: Christopher Columbus Italian Society, 201 Piazza Italia, San Antonio

Tues, Nov 12, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Little Italy's Annual Wine Tasting

Location: 824 Afterglow St., SATX 78216

Price: \$30/ person (Early Bird price)

\$40/ person (General admission)

To purchase tickets and/or for more information on their [website](#).

Sun, Dec 1, 12:30 p.m.

CCIS General Membership Meeting* Voting for New Officers

Location: Christopher Columbus Italian Society, 201 Piazza Italia, San Antonio

Sun, Dec 8, 11:30 a.m.

CCIS Christmas Luncheon* with San Francesco di Paolo Church Altar & Rosary Society

Location: Sonterra Country Club, 901 E Sonterra Blvd, SATX 78258

Price: \$30 per person (adult)

\$15 per child (5 years to 11 years)

Free children under 5 years

Please keep a look out for your invitation!

Wed, Dec 11, 7:30 p.m.

Andrea Bocelli in Concert

Location: AT&T Center

For more information, visit attcenter.com.

Come se dice?

"Girare La Frittata!"

Literal Translation: "Turn the omlette."

In other words... "Turn the tables in one's favor."

*Asterisk denotes CCIS Event.

Ricette di famiglia

Uncle Paul's Christmas Struffoli



Ingredients:

2 c. flour	3 large eggs
1 lemon, zested (about 2 tsp)	1 tbs white wine
½ orange, zested (about 2 tsp)	1 tsp pure vanilla extract
3 tbs sugar	Canola oil for frying
½ tsp salt	1 c. honey
¼ tsp baking powder	1 ½ c slivered almonds or hazelnuts
½ stick unsalted butter, cut into ½ inch pieces, at room temperature	½ c sugar
	Colored sprinkles for decoration

Directions: In a food processor, pulse together flour, lemon zest, orange zest, sugar, salt and baking powder. Add the butter and pulse until the mixture is the consistency of coarse meal. Add eggs, wine and vanilla and pulse until mixture forms into a ball. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Cut dough into 4 equal sized pieces. On a lightly floured surface, roll out each piece to ¼ inch thickness. Cut into ½ wide strips. Cut each strip into ½ inch pieces. Roll each piece into a ball a little smaller than a marble. Lightly dredge the dough balls in flour and shake off excess. In a heavy bottomed saucepan, add enough oil to fill 1/3. Heat oil until a small piece of bread will turn golden in 2-3 minutes. Fry the dough balls in batches 2-3 minutes until lightly golden. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels to drain oil. Repeat for the remaining pieces of dough. In a large saucepan, combine honey, sugar and lemon juice over medium heat. Bring to boil and cook, stirring, until sugar dissolves. Remove pan from heat. Add the fried dough and almonds or hazelnuts and stir to coat in honey mixture. Allow to cool in the pan for 2 minutes. Pile the struffoli and nuts into a rounded tower on a festive platter. Drizzle remaining honey mixture over the struffoli. Decorate with sprinkles and powdered sugar. Can be made 1 day in advance and covered with plastic or foil.

-Uncle Paul's Christmas Struffoli Recipe in memory of Uncle Paul D'Angelo, submitted by Geraldine Merola Barton

Editors:

Geraldine Merola Barton Samantha Cangelosi Lighty

Designed by:

Geraldine Merola Barton Samantha Cangelosi Lighty

Masthead by: Matt Guido

Thank you to all who contributed to this issue!

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

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



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