

# IL POSTINO

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**St. Anthony's Church  
Raises Over \$30,000  
at the Annual Fund Raising Dinner**

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We welcome submissions, letters, articles, story ideas and  
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Letters to the Editor



Come and support the reconstruction of Piazza Dante  
and join us at the Fund Raising Dinner with the  
Famous Singer Tony Ieluzzi directly from Toronto

Chin Radio, Il Postino, L'Ora di Ottawa and the Italian Canadian Associations present  
the "Reconstruction of Piazza Dante Fund Raising Dinner" on Saturday April 18, 2009.  
Beginning with cocktails at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 7:00 p.m. , St. Anthony's Italia  
Soccer Club 523 Arlington Avenue Ottawa Ontario.

The purpose of this Celebration is to raise funds for the reconstruction of Piazza Dante  
at the corner of Booth Street and Gladstone Avenue. The Piazza was constructed in  
1967 under the Leadership of the Canadian Italian Professional Business Association  
whose President was Mr. Italo Tiezzi in 1967. Since nineteen sixty seven no major  
work to the Piazza has been undertaken. It is the purpose of the Italian Canadian  
Community to reconstruct the Piazza with a new face and dedicate the Piazza to the  
Italian Canadian Community of Ottawa. A plaque for major donors shall be installed in  
the Piazza recognizing their commitment to the project.

Tickets are fifty dollars each including a five course sit down dinner at 7:00 p.m.  
Entertainment will be provided by the renowned Singer Mr. Tony Ieluzzi directly from  
Toronto.

For Information and tickets:

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613-230-9754

**Public Service Announcement**

The Chair of the Fire House Spaghetti Dinner, Mr. Peter Ryan, invites you and your family/  
friends to a special 4-course Spaghetti Dinner:

Date/Time: Friday April 3, 2009-02-08 - 6 p.m.  
Where: St. Anthony's Italia Banquet Hall  
523 St. Anthony Street, Ottawa.  
Tickets: \$25.00

The dinner will be cooked and served by Ottawa Fire Fighters. The recipe for the spaghetti  
and meatballs is taken out of the "Ottawa Firehouse Cook Book", which will be available for  
sale during the evening.

The purpose of the dinner is to enjoy good and satisfying cooking by Ottawa's Fire Fighters,  
while at the same time raising funds for the Fire Fighter Memorial being constructed at Ot-  
tawa City Hall, 111 Laurier Avenue.

For more information and tickets:

Peter Ryan  
Chair of the Dinner  
613- 692-7625

Dave Smith  
Chair of Fund Raising  
613-567-2970



Have something to say?

Email your letters to [information@ilpostinocanada.com](mailto:information@ilpostinocanada.com)

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to / *intestato a:* Preston Street Community Foundation Inc., Suite 101 Gladstone Avenue 865, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7T4

Local Announcements

Villa Marconi Volunteer Builders 1989-1999



Lucio Applloni and Luigi Mion present award to Ermindo Buffone



Lucio Applloni and Luigi Mion present award to Bonnie Favilla



Lucio Applloni and Luigi Mion present award to Dino Chiumera



Lucio Applloni and Luigi Mion present award to Franco Marinelli



Lucio Applloni and Luigi Mion present award to Rita Parisi



Lucio Applloni and Luigi Mion present award to Delio D'Angelo



# General Interest

## THE GIAMMARIA FAMILY

By Ruth Perley Fortin

This is the first in a series of Italian Canadian family-story articles. All information will be catalogued, itemized, and stored in our Italian Canadian Archive. We invite any family wishing to share their story to call IL POSTINO, and make an appointment.

### IN BRUNO’S WORDS

It was minus 39 on that bitterly cold January day when Luciano and I arrived at the Giammaria home on Prince of Wales Drive in Ottawa.

Bruno Giammaria greeted and welcomed us into the warmth and understated elegance that is their home.

The sun streamed in through the back windows, adding natural light and warmth to the surroundings. Two brave ducks paddled in the water below as I gazed from their family room up and down the river. The mist was rising and curling like thick white smoke, and although part of the river was open and the water running, the ice had formed on either bank, adding to the majestic beauty that is the Giammaria’s back yard.

Chatting over steaming hot espresso with freshly baked biscotti, Bruno shared his family history.

Bruno was born on January 12th, 1940, the third of seven children. He grew up on his family’s farm at Contrata Valiana, at the base of Patrica, Frosinone, Italy.

On May 11, 1957, Bruno’s parents Luigi and Amelina, and six of their seven children set sail for Halifax from Naples on the vessel Saturnia. Their eldest child Ester, married and expecting her first child, stayed in Italy, later joining the rest of the family in Ottawa.

New to Ottawa and not speaking English, Bruno, aged 17, went to work at La Torren Hotel on Elgin Street. His job included peeling potatoes and carrots, and washing dishes. He attended the High School of Commerce at Carling and Bronson in the evening. Bruno worked at the hotel for two months with very little pay, but was told he would receive a \$2.00 raise within the week. The week came and went, and when Bruno questioned his supervisor, he was told his raise would come “next week”. He was so upset; he left this position and never returned.

Father Jerome Ferraro of St. Anthony’s Parish found Bruno a job as a labourer with Cummings Construction. Using only a shovel and a wheelbarrow, Bruno and Carmello Gruppi were responsible for spreading gravel for the ground floor of Brookfield High School. Bruno worked for Cummings for two years, until Father Jerome found him a better position as a plumber’s apprentice with Edge Ltd.

When Edge Ltd. declared bankruptcy in 1961, Bruno went to work with Baker and Jules Plumbing Contractor at Central Park Lodge located at 2374 Carling Avenue. When this project was finished he began working for Crump Mechanical.

In 1963, Bruno went to work in the Bahamas. The money was good, but Bruno was lonely. He returned to Ottawa after three months, and went back

to work for Crump Mechanical at the Ottawa Civic Centre.

In 1964, Bruno received his plumbing and heating license, and supervised a laboratory at Tunney’s Pasture. Later, he was responsible for the Kempville School.

Bruno obtained his Master License before his third project at Deloro Stelite Foundry in Belleville, and worked at Crump Mechanical for a total of eight years.

Bruno’s life changed when he returned to Ottawa in 1968. Romeo Toscano, a supervisor at J. Lewan Mechanical offered him the position of director of plumbing and heating for the building on Kent Street.

Giuseppe (Joe) Fagnano, who worked with ceramic tiles, asked Bruno if he would like to meet Norma Cellini, a lady from his wife Maria’s home town of Sulmona. Norma lived on Rochester Street with her aunt and uncle, and they began to date.

Bruno and Norma were married August 2nd, 1969. Their first home on Clifton Road was a wedding present from Bruno’s parents. Bruno and Norma have three children, Luigi, Paolo, and Patrizia.

On May 1st, 1971, Bruno’s Plumbing and Heating opened, operating from their home on Clifton Road. Among Bruno’s accomplishments, he became the “first Italian plumber’s apprentice”; the “first Italian plumber”, and the “first Italian Plumbing Contractor in Ottawa”.

Bruno’s Plumbing and Heating’s new location officially opened in 1975 at 275 Richmond Road.

Bruno and Norma purchased their property on Prince of Wales where they live today in 1977. Ten years later the new house was built, and Bruno conceived the idea for his “invention”. For 15 years, they saved energy, as well as approximately \$1000.00 a year on their hydro bill.

In his basement, Bruno explained his hot water recirculating system. When a tap is turned on anywhere in the house, “almost” instant hot water runs from the tap. In a traditional water line, it can take approximately 40 seconds before cold turns to hot water. Hot water is continually recirculated through pipes, and the water then returns to a heater via a series of ball and check valves. In the past, Bruno’s invention attracted the interest of city officials to determine if this is practical to install in Ottawa Community Housing projects.

The initial installation costs vary, but to equip a 2,000 square-foot home, it would cost approximately \$2,000.00, and would take three to four years to receive any payback.

In 2006, Bruno obtained his U.S. patent; and in 2007, he received his Canadian patent for his hot water recirculating pipes.

When Pope John II visited Ottawa in 1984, Bruno installed ten drinking fountains as well as the plumbing for two emergency hospitals at Lebreton Flats.

With our espresso cups empty, and the biscotti finished, we once again headed into the reality of Ottawa’s freezing January days, trying to recapture that warm, cozy feeling within the welcoming walls on Prince of Wales Drive.



Bruno’s Family



The family celebrates before their departure on May.11.1957. Peppino is holding a sign written by Elvidio Costanza: “Tutti insieme alla conquista del Canada.” Luigi, Amelina, Alvaro, bruno, Franco, Nanda-Maria, Teresa, Giuseppe (Peppino)



# General Interest

## The conflicting lives of the hockey mom versus the good Italian daughter

By Dosi Cotroneo

A Sunday afternoon hockey game in Manotick – the perfect way to cap off a weekend of family hockey activity. A Sunday afternoon spent with my Italian parents in Nepean – the perfect way to put myself at risk for a heart attack. While an exciting hockey game was brewing at the Manotick Arena, a hearty tomato sauce was brewing somewhere in Nepean’s little Italy.

I could have sworn I said: “Your grandson has a hockey game. We’ll visit later. Do not hold lunch for me.” Their version: “Your grandson has a hockey stick. I’ll call you later. Hold a luncheon for me.”

I don’t remember ordering five pounds of linguini with a side order of guilt. Upon calling my parents from the Manotick Arena, a woman on the other end of the line was scolding me, something about over-cooked pasta and a case of low blood sugar. If my instincts are correct, I think I was being blamed for my parents’ sudden onset of diabetes, and how they were supposed to eat at noon sharp. No point in lengthy explanations. With a parent on each of their respective extension telephones, they couldn’t hear my pleading above their sighs.

Thankfully, I’ve read enough self-help books to get me through another starch/carbohydrate/guilt laden afternoon with my folks. At long last, I’ve developed some behavior modification techniques that have been working out wonderfully in my home. Some people call it deception. I call it a thought reversal process. By giving family members the answer they want to hear, I am practically floating through my days. For example: Number 2 son: Mom, did you see me score my goal? Answer: Yes.

Husband: Were those shoes really on sale? Answer: Yes.

Teenage daughter: Did you ever find the cordless telephone?

Answer: No.

Teenage son: Is the car still in the shop? Answer: Yes.

After a drawing of straws, young son was the only member of my family to accompany me on the trip out to Nepean. Pop greeted me at the door with a kiss on each cheek followed by a KGB style interrogation about a potato sale, the mailing of a pile of letters to Italy, and their new department store credit card. After 40 years in America, they decided to give plastic a go. The gods could be so cruel at times. Hours spent explaining the application/translation/activation process resulted in hours spent explaining the security aspects. Now my parents feared that a break in was in store and a thief would go on a shopping spree on their account. A scolding on the perils of plastic and suddenly I was assigned the job of destroying the card that had just been activated only moments before.

Keeping in mind my new mind power strategy, the conversation went something like this: Italian father with 2 hearing aids: Did you buy the 9 bags of potatoes? Answer: Yes. Italian father: Did you really buy 9 bags of potatoes? Answer: Yes.

Italian father: Did you mail the letters with the air mail stamps? Answer: Yes. Italian father: Did you really mail the letters with the air mail stamps? Answer: Yes. Italian father: Did you cut up the credit card? Answer: Yes. Italian father: Did you really cut up the credit card? Answer: Yes.

By 4:00 p.m., I photographed myself and emailed the photo to the New England Journal of Medicine. Suffice it to say, I think I was fairly accurate in diagnosing myself as a textbook case of malaise, irritability and mental fatigue.

I wonder what this week has in store.

## The perils of Italian parents and Italian plumbers

By Dosi Cotroneo

What do a second-hand dishwasher, a leaky faucet, a problem with water pressure, and an Italian plumber named Mario all have in common? In two words – this reporter.

They know that Monday is my busiest day of the week. They have vowed to not disturb their youngest daughter on her most high pressure deadline day. In fact, I’ve often heard them boasting (even in the aisles of the Italian church), that they are not the type of parents that would ever even consider, for one second, to interrupt, impose, or interfere with their daughters’ lives. I’d love to know what the repercussions are when one blatantly lies while standing smacked dab in the centre aisle of the Italian Church?

Surely there are those that believe in past lives. On that note, perhaps in another life, I was a controlling, medaling, guilt-inducing Italian mother, and this time around, the universe is laughing as I get my “just desserts.”

So onto this plumber situation - his name is Mario, and although my parents have run into him and his wife in the Italian grocer from time to time, they assume that I have their telephone number somewhere in my personal telephone directory. Telling me that this plumber’s wife always orders 300 grams of hot salami does not help my investigation. A last name would come in handy, as would an up-to-date passport and a one-way ticket to Botswana at a time like this.

When I try to explain that I would really love to help, but this is such a high-pressure day for me, and perhaps one of my many uncle’s could be of more assistance, I fall into the “we came to this country for a better life”



story. I listened until she got to the part about Halifax Harbor and that was enough. I interrupted and agreed to locate this Italian plumber named Mario, if it was the last thing I did on this, my busiest day of the week. Afterall, how many Italian plumbers named Mario could there be in Ottawa?

Two hours later, I am still on the telephone and have spoken to some 13 Italian plumbers named Mario – none of whom are married to a short, brunette woman who orders 300 grams of hot Calabrese salami from the Italian grocer.

As a last resort, I call in one of my two lifelines – the sibling in pecking order above me. Apparently, she has heard of an Italian plumber named Mario, and believes he may have once been the landlord of the sister in the pecking order above her. Down to my last life line, I ring sister number one up at her place of employment, and blatantly lie to the receptionist that, “this is indeed, a family emergency.”

Fortunately, this unknown couple and their salami habit match the description of a landlord couple the sister rented from sometime during the late 1970’s. Now that I have a last name, I ring directory assistance and within seconds, I am on the line speaking Italian with a complete stranger. All I know about this woman is that her husband has a penchant for hot Italian salami, and perhaps a cholesterol problem. What are the odds of this reporter finding a needle in a haystack? Turns out, I located the illusive plumber, and left a message with his kind wife, who has invited my entire family over for lunch this Sunday.

I wish my parents could have been as excited as I was when I called them to deliver the great news. Apparently, my father does not believe in leaving messages, answering machines, or going to lunch at the home of complete strangers. He now refuses to leave the house until he hears back from the plumber, and it is all “my fault”.

Patience, humility, compassion - the quest for a simpler life continues.

See Dosi’s New Book Preview on Page 15

- visit [www.ItalianGirlPress.com](http://www.ItalianGirlPress.com) -



# International

## ABRUZZO GRAN RISERVA, UN NUOVO LIBRO DI GOFFREDO PALMERINI

### Un viaggio in punta di penna con personaggi, eventi civili e culturali, tra l’Abruzzo e il mondo

di Fabrizio Caporale

L’AQUILA – Squadra che vince non si cambia. Lo dicono tutti gli allenatori delle squadre che primeggiano. Ma è anche un’espressione che costituisce il filo conduttore del pensiero delle persone che, con intelligenza e con spirito lodevole, hanno una sapiente capacità di seguire una linea che porta a risultati profondi e significativi. Come quello di unire persone che vivono in diversi continenti, ma che hanno un collegamento importante quale quello delle origini comuni.

E’ proprio con questo spirito che, a fine d’anno, per le Edizioni Libreria Colacchi dell’Aquila, è uscito **ABRUZZO GRAN RISERVA**, un nuovo libro di **Goffredo Palmerini**. Verrà presentato ufficialmente il 30 gennaio nella Sala delle Assemblee della Cassa di Risparmio, che custodisce preziose tele di artisti italiani, dal Cinquecento al Settecento; uno degli ambienti culturali più apprezzati, al centro della città e dunque un luogo appropriato per l’illustrazione della seconda fatica di Palmerini, nella ricerca di un rapporto sempre più stretto tra gli Abruzzesi che vivono nella loro terra e quelli che abitano oltre Oceano o nell’emisfero australe. La prosecuzione naturale di “Oltre Confine”, il lavoro che l’autore aquilano (di Paganica) dette alle stampe qualche tempo fa, che ha riscosso un successo eccellente. “Oltre confine” ha avuto proprio il grande pregio di testimoniare quanto interesse esiste nei vari Paesi del mondo su ciò che accade in Abruzzo, come siano altamente considerati gli abruzzesi all’estero e come potrebbe essere estremamente piacevole, per gli emigrati e le loro famiglie, poter visitare la terra di origine, pronta ad accoglierli come meritano. “Abruzzo Gran Riserva” ha la stessa filosofia del libro “padre”, ma scende ancora più a fondo di tematiche attuali e di rilevante interesse.

Molto fine la veste grafica, belle le immagini, un completo apparato riporta le testate giornalistiche, indici di nomi e luoghi corredano il volume, una silloge in 210 pagine di articoli pubblicati da marzo 2007 ad aprile 2008 sulla stampa italiana nel mondo, questa volta davvero nei cinque continenti. La prefazione è firmata da una personalità d’indubbio prestigio nel campo del giornalismo italiano, **Angelo Paoluzi**, origini abruzzesi, già direttore di **Avvenire**, succeduto alla guida del quotidiano cattolico all’aquilano **Angelo Narducci** quando questi, nel 1979, fu eletto al Parlamento europeo. Una vita trascorsa nel giornalismo, dapprima come corrispondente in **Germania** e **Francia**, quindi come inviato speciale in diversi Paesi del mondo prima d’approdare alla direzione del quotidiano della CEI, Paoluzi è un profondo conoscitore dell’emigrazione italiana, della sua storia e della sua cronaca, proprio in virtù della cospicua esperienza maturata a contatto con le comunità italiane in Europa e nel mondo. Scrittore e poeta, Angelo Paoluzi è ora docente universitario ed insegna Giornalismo alla **LUMSA**. La sua prefazione ad **ABRUZZO GRAN RISERVA**, sin dalle prime righe, parte infatti dal profondo delle esperienze vissute accanto agli emigrati in Germania, risalenti alla metà degli anni Sessanta.

“ I reclutatori - scrive Paoluzi nella prefazione - si contendevano gli abruzzesi. Fritz era incaricato da un’azienda mineraria tedesca di “missioni” in Italia per trovare, specialmente in Abruzzo, mano d’opera fidata da impiegare nei vari settori, dall’estrazione al trasporto dei materiali. Lo conobbi a metà degli anni ’60, in occasione di una delle tre inchieste giornalistiche che condussi in Germania e in Olanda (ero allora corrispondente da Bonn de “Il Popolo”) sui “lavoratori ospiti” – “ospiti” perché i sindacati locali garantivano per loro e li proteggevano – che, nel quadro di un accordo sulla mobilità dei prestatori d’opera comunitari, dal nostro Paese emigravano verso uno di quelli del MEC (gli altri allora erano soltanto cinque). In un italiano abbastanza comprensibile, e condito da qualche espressione delle nostre parti, mi parlò con rispetto degli abruzzesi che aveva conosciuto nel corso degli anni e con affetto dell’Abruzzo intero, dove – mi rivelò – trascorreva ogni anno qualche settimana di vacanza con la famiglia. Deplorava soltanto la circostanza di riuscire ad assoldare quote sempre minori dei miei connazionali, da una parte perché c’era concorrenza fra le industrie interessate, dall’altra in quanto il tasso di immigrazione stava diminuendo. Anche da noi cominciava il miracolo economico, favorito – sarà bene ricordarlo – dai sacrifici e dalle rimesse dei “Gastarbeiter”. (...)”

La premessa è forse lunga - annota ancora Paoluzi - ma serve a chi scrive per motivare un apprezzamento professionale per il lavoro di Goffredo Palmerini, **ABRUZZO GRAN RISERVA**. Per la ricchezza di un contributo che permette di dare notizia all’altro Abruzzo sparso nel mondo di ciò che fa l’Abruzzo rimasto in Italia, e viceversa. In un fecondo scambio di informazioni, talvolta all’apparenza minori, ma che sono quanto meno lo sfondo familiare di una ricerca di identità e di appartenenza, mai degenerata in chiusura di tipo etnico. Negli articoli, nei resoconti e nelle cronache di Palmerini passa un universo che rischierebbe altrimenti di restare sconosciuto o relegato in precarie testimonianze. **ABRUZZO GRAN RISERVA** segue e completa **OLTRE CONFINE**, la felice iniziale intuizione di Palmerini di raccogliere in volume i suoi contributi disseminati nei “cartacei” e nei media radiofonici e televisivi di lingua italiana sparsi per il mondo, e di cui in pochi conoscevamo l’esistenza. Indirettamente, quindi, l’autore fa opera di informazione anche su una realtà che non è indifferente agli interessi nazionali, quando si pensi che quegli strumenti di informazione possono aver influenza sull’elezione dei nostri rappresentanti nelle circoscrizioni estere: deputati e senatori - in qualche caso accorti amministratori di testate o audiovisivi - che contribuiscono alla dinamica della politica italiana. (...)”

Il contributo fornito da Palmerini – conclude Paoluzi - si inserisce nella tenace opera di diffusione dei valori di una cultura propria, senza isterismi localistici (se ne hanno sufficienti e negativi esempi, purtroppo, oggi in Italia). Una cultura cui sul versante letterario appartengono, per l’epoca nostra, Ignazio Silone, Mario Pomilio, Ennio Flaiano, Gennaro Manna, Angelo Narducci, Vittoriano Esposito e gli ingiustamente dimenticati Pasquale Scarpitti ed Eraldo Miscia. Il merito di **ABRUZZO**

*GRAN RISERVA*, come del resto del precedente *OLTRE CONFINE*, è di fare memoria, e di farla con un lessico di eccellente natura. E’ lecito auspicare che esso trovi imitatori e, come periodico regesto, di seguire l’autore in altre, future fatiche”.

Il volume raccoglie trentasette articoli su vari argomenti d’interesse generale (il riscaldamento del pianeta, la visita del Presidente Napolitano alla Scuola della Guardia di Finanza, la spedizione alpinistica sul Karakorum, il turismo religioso in Abruzzo), su abruzzesi illustri (Maria Federici, Angelo Di Ianni, Mario Fratti, Nicola Perone, Rinaldo Rotellini, Marcello Mariani, Silvia Giampaola e i “naturalizzati” Ondina Valla e Vittorio Antonellini), sui meeting degli abruzzesi all’estero (in Tasmania e Sud Africa), su eventi culturali in Italia (Notte Noir, Ennio Morricone e Gianni Berengo Gardin, la Cineteca dell’Istituto Cinematografico dell’Aquila, sulle mostre di pittura di Michelangelo Antonioni e Umberto Ferrelli, l’esposizione delle Macchine di Leonardo da Vinci) ed all’estero (le icone del jazz a Rochester con la pittrice Angela Rossi, la tournée in Argentina e Brasile dell’Associazione **MUSICA PER LA PACE** ed il tour negli States del gruppo di musica etnica **DISCANTO**), su premi letterari ed altri riconoscimenti ai vincitori (Premio Internazionale Emigrazione, Premio giornalistico “Guido Polidoro”, Premio Zirè d’oro “Angelo Narducci”).



Insomma, un caleidoscopio di argomenti, ciascuno fecondo di stimoli, interessi e curiosità, descritti con dovizia di richiami, con una prosa fluida ed avvincente, alta stilisticamente. In appendice, infine, il volume riporta la cronaca d’un **Evento speciale** promosso dalla Municipalità, tenutosi nell’aula consiliare del **Comune dell’Aquila** che per quasi trent’anni ha visto protagonista **Goffredo Palmerini** come amministratore civico. Moltissime le testate - on line, giornali, magazine e periodici, tutti annotati in appendice - che nel mondo hanno ospitato i contributi dell’autore. Dalle Americhe all’Australia, dall’Africa all’Asia, fino alla vecchia Europa, questi i Paesi dove le nostre comunità hanno potuto seguire sulla stampa in lingua italiana locale le “annotazioni e spigolature” di Palmerini: Canada, Stati Uniti, Messico, Repubblica Dominicana, Venezuela, Brasile, Perù, Cile, Argentina, Uruguay, Australia, Sud Africa, Indonesia, Belgio, Germania, Lussemburgo, Svizzera, Spagna, Danimarca e Irlanda.

E’ proprio l’autore, nella premessa al volume datata 25 aprile 2008, a motivarne l’origine. “Se la pubblicazione di **OLTRE CONFINE** fu determinata (...) da un desiderio di documentazione (...) - scrive Palmerini - questo volume vede invece la luce per l’interesse, del tutto inatteso e persino inimmaginabile, che quel libro ha suscitato in Abruzzo e soprattutto tra le comunità italiane nel mondo. Tante le testimonianze, non di semplice cortesia. Come le lusinghiere recensioni su giornali e riviste. Sono state di certo un forte incoraggiamento a continuare questo particolare dialogo a distanza tra l’Abruzzo dentro e fuori dei confini del nostro Paese. Una comunità di quasi un milione e trecentomila abruzzesi, quanti ne sono nella nostra regione, che all’estero esprime il meglio di sé in ogni campo - civile, sociale, culturale, professionale ed imprenditoriale - con un’inusitata capacità di coesione associativa e d’un ruolo nelle società d’ogni Paese d’emigrazione ammirato e rispettato.

Nasce così **ABRUZZO GRAN RISERVA**. Dero quindi questa seconda pubblicazione al gradimento della precedente da parte di tante persone, dentro e fuori l’Italia. Voglio qui citare, per brevità e rispetto, solo quelle di Personalità che rivestono pro tempore responsabilità istituzionali, chiedendo venia a tutti gli altri. Non vi indulgo per orgoglio, quanto per aver ricavato dal loro parere la convinzione d’una utilità, finanche più estesa d’ogni supposizione, d’un tal modo d’entrare in relazione con le nostre comunità all’estero, attraverso la locale stampa italiana. Peraltro, mai avrei immaginato quanta attenzione l’Abruzzo, attraverso alcuni eventi e personaggi, avrebbe guadagnato sulle pagine di tanti giornali e periodici all’estero, spesso di grande diffusione e di consolidato prestigio. Dunque, gli apprezzamenti sono stati davvero uno stimolo a migliorare l’impegno, ad ampliarlo, a strutturarlo. Ringrazio il Ministro degli Esteri, on. Massimo D’Alema, ed il suo Vice Ministro con delega agli Italiani nel Mondo, sen. Franco Danielli, per aver notato e condiviso l’impegno, quindi i Parlamentari eletti nelle Circoscrizioni estere, in primis l’on. Marisa Bafile, che mi ha reso il privilegio di scrivere la nota introduttiva di **OLTRE CONFINE** e d’essere intervenuta, nel luglio dello scorso anno, alla presentazione del volume all’Aquila. (...)”.

Alla presentazione di **ABRUZZO GRAN RISERVA** interverranno il Sindaco dell’Aquila, **Massimo Cialente**, e l’assessore alla Cultura **Anna Maria Ximenes**, **Liliana Biondi**, docente alla Facoltà di Lettere dell’Università dell’Aquila, e **Angelo Paoluzi**. Coordinerà **Mario Narducci**, direttore di TvUno (network che trasmette in streaming anche all’estero). Sarà presente l’autore, il primo ad aver trovato nella comunicazione quel collegamento Abruzzo-Resto del mondo, che è mancato per tanto, troppo tempo.

**Goffredo Palmerini** è nato all’Aquila nel 1948. Per tre decenni è stato Consigliere, Assessore e Vice Sindaco della città Capoluogo d’Abruzzo. Sempre impegnato nel settore culturale, attualmente è vice Presidente dell’Istituto Cinematografico dell’Aquila, Consigliere d’Amministrazione di Abruzzo Film Commission e membro dell’Istituto abruzzese di Storia della Resistenza e dell’Italia contemporanea. Nel 2008 è stato insignito del Premio “Zirè d’oro”, quale Personaggio dell’Anno per la sua attività sulla stampa italiana all’estero, e del Premio Internazionale “Guerriero di Capistrano” per l’opera di diffusione della cultura abruzzese nel mondo. Vincitore nel 2007 del XXXI Premio Internazionale Emigrazione, sezione Giornalismo, in via occasionale collabora con alcune Radio all’estero che trasmettono programmi in lingua italiana. Da diversi anni svolge un’intensa attività di relazione con le comunità italiane e dal 2006 è componente del Consiglio Regionale Abruzzesi nel Mondo (CRAM).

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# General Interest

## Aging Gracefully - Prosciutto The Great Novel

By Christine Muhkle

If salami is the blog of cured meats, then prosciutto is the great novel. A salami requires anywhere from 20 to 120 days to cure, making it popular with chefs who want to put their house-made stamp on a rustic appetizer. But the best prosciutto requires 8 to 24 months to transform the salt-covered hind leg of a pig into a \$35-per-pound luxury, a rosy meat that, when thinly sliced, is a complex, faintly salty delicacy that dissolves into richness on the tongue. It is nothing short of a miracle.

“It’s a leap of faith,” Paul Bertolli, the expert behind Fra’ Mani salumi, acknowledged with a laugh. Known for his artisanal cured meats, he has yet to make the leap to prosciutto. Space, time and, as he put it, “all that money hanging up in the air” are daunting barriers.

Prosciutto has been made on the Italian peninsula since the time of Caesar. Traditionally the legs are hung after the November slaughter and left to mature throughout the seasons. Careful attention is paid not only to the breed and weight of the pig but also to the way the leg is boned and trimmed, the type and amount of salt applied and the aging, cleaning and sealing processes, all of which must be undertaken at just the right time, under favorable temperatures and humidity. It takes skill to ensure the meat doesn’t rot; texture and flavor require artistry. Today in Parma, Italy, there are schools and trade groups dedicated to the science of the ham. Knowledge aside, you still have to wait an awfully long time before you can taste if what you’ve made is any good.

Nine years ago, Herb Eckhouse, then a 50-year-old Des Moines seed-company executive who’d been based in Parma, got a glimmer of what he’d like to do with his early retirement. He was eating prosciutto in Parma with a friend who said, “You know, if you make something this good, you’re going to make a lot of people happy.” A ham-shaped light bulb went off, Eckhouse recalled.

For years, he imagined making good food in Iowa. “It was clear that we had this incredible bounty around us, but we weren’t known for creating great stuff to eat,” he told me, stretching his rangy frame at his dining room table. (Clearly things have changed: his wife, Kathy, was serving us apple pie whose heartbreaking crust was made with lard rendered from acorn-fed organic Berkshire pigs, their latest project.) “At the beginning of the 20th century, Iowa fed people. And here we are in the 21st century, and we’re feeding machines. It’s just a priori wrong.” He continued: “People were saying, ‘Iowa’s dying, and there’s no value added here.’ At that point I was thinking, Gosh, I wonder if we can make prosciutto in Iowa.”

In 2001, La Quercia (“oak” in Italian) was born. Eckhouse, a Harvard social-studies major in the ‘60s, spent four years studying

prosciutto-making. The couple would move their Volvo wagon out of the garage to weigh and salt legs, then age them in their guest bedroom. The first official prosciutto was shipped from their state-of-the-art plant near Des Moines in September 2005. Early on, the food writer [Jeffrey Steingarten](#) declared it the best prosciutto — domestic or foreign — he had tasted.

The Eckhouses are determined to not make an Italian facsimile. They might be advised by a consultant in Parma, but they call their product prosciutto Americano. (Technically it is closest to a prosciutto addobbo: “It’s the culaccia plus the fiocco without the stinco,” Eckhouse clarified in his warm, intelligent manner, explaining that the smaller size requires less aging time.) Their pork is sourced and slaughtered within 200 miles of their plant, and their cutting and curing techniques have been developed through much trial and error.

“One of the things in the U.S. is we don’t have the thousands of years of tradition of making prosciutto — or of making anything,” Eckhouse said. “But we have a much broader perspective. I feel like for the guys in Parma, they’re somewhat limited in what they can do to make the product better.”

Without those restrictions, the cured meats sold by La Quercia can represent the Eckhouses’ sense of Midwestern terroir. “We have more pigs than people in Iowa,” said Kathy, who handles the company’s bookkeeping and some sales, helps salt the 730 hams that arrive weekly and draws upon her food-savvy upbringing in Berkeley, Calif., and Europe in her role as chief culinary officer. Herb pointed out that corn and soybeans, the state’s biggest crops, are the best feed for pigs, according to Parma scientists. La Quercia also reflects the couple’s political values: they require that the pigs be humanely raised and free of subtherapeutic antibiotics. “You see that the quality of the meat comes from the quality of life of the animal and the quality of the feed.” Herb said. One result is that perhaps only 2 percent of the pigs killed in Iowa are candidates for La Quercia: “We’re this little fringe.”

But they’re gaining an influential following. The silken-textured, nutty-sweet prosciutto is named on menus from A16 in San Francisco to Blackbird in Chicago, from Otto in Manhattan to Central Michel Richard in Washington, D.C. The La Quercia range, sold in Whole Foods, has expanded to include organic and heirloom prosciuttos, as well as lardo, pancetta, speck, coppa, guanciale and an annual Acorn Edition, in which subscribers pay \$3,000 to receive all the parts of the prized acorn-fed organic Berkshire meat during the year, from fresh to cured. (Paul Bertolli raved about the Acorn Edition meat, saying, “I’ve never had anything that good in Italy.”) The plant recently expanded, too, to allow for longer aging.

Someday, Eckhouse would love to sell prosciutto in Italy: “Not because I think we’re better, but because we have ours, too.” Iowa, it seems, now has something to bring to the global table.



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# Community SnapShots

## Il Postino Goes to Florida Pompano - 2009



Antonio, Denise, Rina and Friends



Lorenzo Micucci with School Mates from Rapino



Sandro, Gianni, Giovanni, Franco, The Baresi Group host Friends



Lorenzo Micucci with Friends in Pompano Florida



Imperia Mariani and Concetta Loreti with Friends



Lorenzo Micucci, Theresa DellaValle with Rapinese



# Community SnapShots



St. Anthony's Church raises over \$30,000 at the annual Fund Raising Dinner



Father Paul, Michael O'Byrne, Perangela Pica and Tony Mariani



Angelo Fiore, Francesco Dicandia, Jennifer Filoso and Father Domenico Fiore



Marisa Iacono and Patrick McGarry



Elenor Romani with Volunteers



Domenic, Jean, and Tony bar Volunteers



Pina and Giovanni Giorgio



# General Interests

## Giacomo and the Zucchini Stalk

By Renato Rizzuti

Once upon a time, not too long ago, in Spezzano, Sila which is in Calabria, there lived a widow with her son Giacomo. They were dirt poor. Their only asset was a milking cow who had grown old and was not producing any more milk.

The mother said to Giacomo, “Vide si po vendere sa vacca, vide si po piliare nu pare pezze.” This translates as, “See if you can sell this cow, see if you can get a couple of bucks for it.” And so Giacomo sadly lead the cow out for their trip to the market. Giacomo was sad because he had grown attached to the cow and had named it Caterina and considered it a family pet.

On his way to the market Giacomo met a stranger who offered to give him five magic zucchini seeds for the cow. Giacomo thought it would be a good deal but did not want to cheat the stranger by selling him a cow who did not produce milk any more. Giacomo explained to the stranger, “Sa vacca e propiu asciutta un no po fare piu latte.” This translates as, “This cow is absolutely dry, and it does not produce any more milk.” The stranger responded by saying, “Non ti preoccupare, Io vuoiu fare nu barbaque per tutti i mie parenti quano faccimo na festa!” This translates as, “Don’t worry, I want to have a barbeque for all my relatives when we have a feast!” As so they made the exchange with Giacomo not realizing that the stranger meant that Caterina would be barbequed!

When Giacomo returned home he proudly told his mother that he had sold the cow for five magic zucchini seeds. His mother became furious and said, “Ma tu si patsu! A venuta a vacca per cinque simente e cucutse, tu tene na capu e cucutse!” This translates as, “Are you crazy, you sold the cow for five magic zucchini seeds, you are a zucchini head!” Giacomo felt bad that his mother was angry. Giacomo’s mother said, “Stasira no mangiare and vate curche!” This translates as, “Tonight no supper and go to bed!” Giacomo tossed and turned in bed that night and thought about the magic the stranger had talked about. Could those zucchini seeds really have some magic in them?

The night before Giacomo’s mother had thrown the magic zucchini seeds out the window into the back yard. That morning, Giacomo went out to the back yard to use the outhouse. When he got outside, he saw an amazing sight! There was a gigantic zucchini stalk that had grown up into the clouds! There were also giant zucchinis that could feed an army! Giacomo was very pleased and thought of all the zucchini omlettes his mother could make. Plus she could make his favourite dish of “pasta, patate and cucutseli” which means “pasta, potatoes and zucchini.”

Giacomo was very curious about where the giant zucchini stalk would lead him. As he climbed higher and higher up the stalk, lights started to flash and Giacomo got very dizzy. Giacomo was actually going throught the “space/time continuum!” He ended up outside an old English castle which was located in old time England, of course. Giacomo went into the castle and down into the kitchen where he saw an enormous giant sized woman. The woman exclaimed in a big voice, “What are you doing here?” Luckily, Giacomo had studied English at school and was able to respond to the woman. Giacomo said, “I am lost and hungry, can I have something to eat.” The woman was very kind and told Giacomo that he could have some milk and a bowl of porridge. The woman then explained, “But do not let my husband see you because he eats foreigners and is also quite psychic so he will know you are here.”

Giacomo had finished eating and drinking when he heard a loud roar. The Giant was home! The Giant who was a bit drunk after coming home from the pub started to sing. He sang, “Hey now/Hey now/Iko iko un day/ Giacomo feeno ah na nay/Giacomo feena nay/Maybe I’m going a little crazy/ But I smell the blood of a Calabrese!” The Giant’s wife told Giacomo to hide in the oven. The oven had a lead door which the Giant’s psychic powers could not penetrate through and so Giacomo would be safe.

The Giant then roared out, “Do I smell the blood of a Calabrese?” The Giant’s wife responded by saying, “I know you go crazy thinking of eating a Calabrese, but never you mind, just eat your dinner!” The Giant ate his dinner and drank a gallon of wine with it.

The Giant was even more drunk and getting sleepy. The Giant decided to count all the gold coins of his treasure before going to bed. After about the tenth coin, the Giant fell asleep and started snoring with a thunderous sound. The Giant’s wife left to prepare the Giant’s bed. Giacomo rushed out of the oven and took all of the Giant’s treasure. Then it was down the zucchini stalk and back to his home in Calabria.

When he got home, Giacomo found his mother waiting for him. His

mother tearfully said, “Figliu mio, a duve si statu?” This translates as, “My son, where have you been?” She went on to explain, “Avivu u pensiru, non sappia dove se statu!” This translates as, “I was worried about you, and I did not know where you had gone to!” Giacomo told his mother the story about the English castle and the Giant and then he showed his mother the gold coins. His mother then excitedly said, “Alura non si fisa figliu mio, a fattu na cosa bona!” This translates as, “So you are not a fool my son, you did a very good thing!”

Giacomo decided to go back up to the English castle through the “space/time contiium” once again. When he got there, he went in through the kitchen and quickly hid in the oven. Soon afterward, the Giant came in and began to pick up Giacomo’s scent since Giacomo had just come into the kitchen. The Giant roared, “Maybe I am going crazy, but I smell the blood of a Calabrese!” The Giant’s wife responded by saying, “Oh stop fantasying and eat your dinner!” The Giant ate his dinner and consumed another gallon of wine. The Giant then placed a hen on the table. The hen started to lay golden eggs! Giacomo saw the hen of great value laying the golden eggs through a crack in the oven door. The Giant was snoring again with castle shaking sounds. Giacomo quickly ran out of the oven and snatched the hen and went on his way out. The hen started squawking and woke up the Giant. The Giant yelled out, “Be quiet woman, I am trying to sleep!”

Once again Giacomo’s mother was waiting for him at the base of the zucchini stalk. His mother said, “Sulamente sta galina a piliatu?” This translates as, “You only got this hen?” She went on to elaborate, “Ma nue gia avianno na galina, non pottia piliare nattru cosa?” This translates as, “But we already have a hen, couldn’t you get something else?” Giacomo happily replied, “Asspeta Ma, te voliu fare videre na cosa.” This translates as, “Just wait Mother; I want to show you something.” Giacomo then set up the hen in the chicken coup. Soon, the hen laid a golden egg. Giacomo’s mother excitedly said, “Stu ovu non e bonu per mangiare ma, e bonu per mintere sordi in tra sachetta!” This translates as, ‘This egg is no good for eating, but it is good for putting money in our pockets!’ The hen continued to lay a golden egg each day much to the delight of Giacomo and his mother!

Giacomo decided to go up to the castle once again. He nervously climbed up the zucchini stalk. As Giacomo went higher, his courage grew stronger. He made it to the castle and went in through an open window and into the kitchen. This time, there was bread baking in the oven so Giacomo hid in a large lead pot. Soon the Giant came in. He was drunk again and merrily playing a golden accordion. Giacomo was amazed at the sweet, soothing sounds that came out of the accordion. The Giant was “sawing logs” once again. Giacomo rushed out of the pot and grabbed the golden accordion. The accordion started to shout, “Mr. Giant, wake up and help, somebody is stealing me!” The Giant woke up and proceeded to chase Giacomo.

When Giacomo arrived at the bottom of the zucchini stalk he showed his waiting mother the golden accordion. Giacomo played an Italian song and his mother became so happy that she started to dance the tarantella!” Alas, the Giant was still coming down the zucchini stalk! Giacomo asked his mother to put away the golden accordion and bring him an axe. Giacomo cut the base of the zucchini stalk so that the stalk and the Giant both came tumbling down. There was a loud crash as the Giant hit the ground! It did not look like the Giant would ever wake up from this slumber!

Giacomo played the golden accordion every day for his mother. She was cheerful and happy and in a dancing mood every day. The hen continued to lay a golden egg every day and so they had continuous wealth. Giacomo had put the gold coins into a high interest saving account at the local bank. Giacomo turned out to be a brave and smart young boy after all. The cow for the magic zucchini seeds was a great deal after all. Giacomo’s mother proudly told the neighbours every day, “U figliu miu non e fisa!” This translates as, “My son is no fool!” And so they lived happily ever after! The End.

Don't Forget Your Clocks!  
(We loose 1 hour of sleep this month :))

A reminder to all Il Postino Readers to set  
your clocks AHEAD on Sunday morning,  
MARCH 8th for Daylight Savings Time.



# International

## Green Beans and Potato Stew alla Rizzuti

By Maria Rizzuti

Comfort food is called comfort food because it is “comforting.” One comfort food I like to cook is my one pot favourite which is my green beans and potato stew. Today’s stove top stew is vegetarian with no meat and will include green beans as the key ingredient. This stew also has a mixture of potatoes, tomatoes and seasonings which are all simmered in one pot to allow all of these flavours to amalgamate into an appetizing meal. You could say this dish is an “amalgamation!”

Haricots verts, French for “green beans” haricots meaning beans and vert meaning green are a longer and thinner bean than most varieties. But of course being Italian, I grew up eating the Italian flat beans or fagioli Italiani. They strongly bear a resemblance to the common green bean except that they tend to be a larger and flatter bean. These Italian flat beans were grown by my father Giuseppe Gallo in his garden every summer. He would start with the seedlings in his makeshift glass greenhouse mid-spring to ensure that they would mature and grow bountiful during the summer. He also made sure that he assembled his do- it -yourself trellis at the back end of the garden in order for the bean vines to climb as they grew to a plentiful harvest every year. As they say, “You shall reap what you sow.” My father gets a “heaping” when he is a “reaping” the green beans!

My mother’s original recipe of green beans and potato stew incorporated the home grown Italian flat beans and of course, I do use them when in season in my version of her recipe and or when I raid their garden in the summertime. Their garden provided me with most of the ingredients I needed like the Italian green beans, their huge vine ripened tomatoes, the Italian flat leaf parsley, fresh oregano, the onions and the basil and even the red hot chili peppers. For all my Calabrese cousins out there you can relate, you know we like our food hot, hot, hot!. My dad’s garden was not big enough to grow the the potatoes for this recipe but I couldn’t expect the Gallo garden to have every ingredient I needed, but it sure came close. The “Gallo Produce Department” is a great place for me to shop, free of charge!

Vegetables are a fundamental part of a healthy diet. Green beans are rich in Vitamin A and C and also contain iron and calcium. Green beans are marketed worldwide in the canned, frozen and fresh form. Fresh is always best, but I always keep a bag of frozen beans in the freezer for when I get a craving for some comfort food so I can make my Green Beans and Potato Stew alla Rizzuti for a Sunday stew. There is nothing like a comforting meal on a family Sunday to soothe the soul.

I primarily use this stew as a main dish for dinner and serve it with a crusty baguette and mixed green salad, but it can be used as a side dish or first course. Which ever way you choose, don’t stew about what’s for dinner, give my Green Beans and Potato Stew alla Rizzuti a try. Buon appetito!

### Green Beans and Potato Stew alla Rizzuti

Serves 4 to 5

#### Ingredients

- 1 kg bag of frozen cut green beans or fresh beans (cut)
- 6 medium to large Yukon Gold potatoes – large diced chunks
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 large onions – small dice
- 16 oz of diced tomatoes (fresh or canned)
- 1/3 cup Italian flat leaf parsely-chopped
- 2 to 3 basil leaves-chopped
- ¼ tsp oregano
- salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- ¼ tsp hot chili flakes (optional)
- water- enough to cover stew and then add 3 more cups of water
- 2 chicken bouillon cubes

#### Cooking Directions

Heat the olive oil and diced onions in a large non- stick deep pot on medium high heat. Saute the onions until translucent and slightly brown. Add the diced tomatoes and their liquid, along with the oregano, salt, pepper and the chili flakes(optional) and cook for about 5 to 8 minutes stirring constantly. Cooking the tomatoes first sweetens them up. Add the potatoes, green beans(fresh or frozen), parsley, basil, bouillon cubes and enough water to cover all of the ingredients then add an the extra 3 cups of water on top of that. Turn up the heat to high for 20 to 30 minutes stirring occassionaly. Then turn down the heat to medium high and let simmer for another 20 to 30 minutes stirring occasionaly until done. Most of the liquid should dissappear as this stew is thickened by reduction leaving a nice chunky stew. Enjoy!

Enjoy!



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# Local Historical SnapShots

## FILO DINNER - Feb. 28, 2008 - See historic Ottawa pictures on next page

By Irene Donofrio Martin

Bona Sera,

I am very honoured to have been asked to address you tonight on the occasion of the 6th annual FILO dinner which honours the contributions of Italian women in our community. It is with humility that I share my story with you; a story of a second generation Canadian with deep and proud Italian roots. Believe me I know all about roots, well, the vegetable kind anyway!

My grandfather, Luigi Castelli, who lived with us, quickly gained the reputation of a master gardener in the small French Canadian town where we lived. Our house, proudly remodelled by him, in stucco, with a cement veranda no less, stood on a 3/4 acre lot where every inch was covered with vegetables right up to the sidewalk, in full view of the locals who would stop to gawk at the bounty of vegetables, some of them they had never even seen before . Yes, everything in our garden was edible: not one blade of grass was to be found, even at my repeated promptings to have a small patch of grass at the side of the house in my attempt to blend in. Year after year, I would hear the same reply “But you can’t eat grass!”

And so, it was not easy growing up feeling different from my friends and trying at every turn to conceal the Italian characteristics and traditions that were so blatantly obvious. Looking back now, I laugh at the things that caused me so much angst as a teenager just trying to blend in. To start, I dreamed of someday marrying someone with a real Canadian name who would deliver me from having to spell Donofrio every time I met someone. I remember at some point in my latter teens getting very testy with people and responding “It’s spelled just the way it sounds”... phonics was still in; what was wrong with these people? My prayers were finally answered when I met and married my husband, John Martin, in my early twenties. I couldn’t believe my good fortune, not only had I found the love of my life but I could now be French or English and blend in anywhere I wanted. I remember my husband calling me one day at the Cancer Centre where I nursed and asking for Irene Martin, only to be told that there was no one there by that name. “Of course there is” he snapped “she’s worked there for years! “Oh” came the reply, “you must mean Irene Martin” (French pronunciation).

I was always conscious of sights and smells in our house. Before inviting my friends over, I would always make sure that grandpa wasn’t busy making and hanging his smelly sausages, eating his stinky baccala, or fermenting his grapes to make wine. I was especially careful to keep them away at mealtime, as grandpa would inevitably say something to me like ”Mangea, mangea, you’re too skinny, no man’s gonna want you!”

As if that wasn’t enough, the “old man in the fedora”, who was the oldest of 8 siblings back in Italy, and who had always taken his patriarchal role very seriously, now fully embraced it once again for the protection of his Canadian granddaughters. He seemed to be omnipresent. Wherever my sisters and I would go in town, we would catch a glimpse of the man who looked like he belonged in a godfather movie. Try as we may to give him the slip, he would always show up and observe from afar, all the while ensuring our safety. To this day, we are convinced that many potential boyfriends were kept at bay by his unnerving presence.

Yes, growing up in an Italian family was the extent of this teenager’s description of hardship.

The next part of my story however, paints a very different picture of hardship! As I research my heritage in greater depth, the extent of my ancestors’ quest for survival is just beginning to unfold and their undaunting courage becomes more evident.

My Grandparents immigrated to Canada in the early 1900’s.

My paternal grandmother, Stella Maio, was summoned to Canada, to marry Giuseppe Donofrio, a recent immigrant from Pescara in Abruzzo. Her family had agreed that my grandfather would make a suitable husband and so she made the voyage from Calabria to Ottawa with her mother in tow, to marry a man she did not know or had ever seen. He built a house in Ottawa East on Hawthorne Ave, where the house would stand until the City of Ottawa expropriated my grandmother, kicking and screaming, in order to build what we now know as the Nicholas/Lees Queensway ramp. My grandfather died of pneumonia in 1930 leaving a widow, her mother and 9 children. My father, George, the eldest boy now in his early teens, became by default, the man of the house and the main provider. He worked where he could, doing odd jobs, collecting junk from the nearby dump to sell to a second-hand shop owner, cutting blocks of ice out of the Ottawa river and selling them to stock iceboxes, and later, working as a coal heaver for the Grand Trunk Railway just as his father had done. It was the depression! Things were tough! He did what he had to do to feed his family and survive!

My maternal grandparents, Luigi Castelli and Angela Girardi, emigrated from Ascoli Piceno in Le Marche, arriving in Montreal after an arduous ocean voyage which claimed the life of their 6 month old daughter. Their second child, a son, born in Canada, also died at the age of two.

By the time my mother was born in 1914, my grandmother, paralysed by the fear of losing yet another child, was unable to look after her. An aunt was summoned to Canada to help raise my mother who would be treated like a little princess, loved and coveted by her overprotective family. She would be given the best of education but was forbidden to go out to work. It was decided that her time would be spent volunteering in the local

hospitals as an interpreter for Italian immigrants who were ill and did not understand the ways of their new country. In the meantime, my grandmother, Angela, was indeed an angel to many hobos whom she collected from the nearby railroad track, bringing them home to feed them and sending them on their way with clean clothes. As you can well imagine, this was a source of great tension as my grandfather would often come home to find a hobo sitting in his kitchen, eating his food. He would scold her – this was the depression! What was she doing sharing their food?

My parents married in 1940, and as my father was still the main provider for his family, he brought his new wife to live with them in Ottawa. There they all lived in extremely cramped quarters, during the war years, raising 3 children. My mother, ostracised by her elderly in-laws who referred to her disdainfully as “La Marchegiana”, was relegated to menial household tasks and banned from the kitchen for fear she would steal their recipes. She later recalled these years as some of the most challenging of her life.

However, unbeknown to her, things would get much worse!

Following the death of their fourth child, a son, my parents felt the need to get out on their own and disengage from their extended family. They had heard about an incredible Government initiative to colonize the North in return for ownership of a parcel of land, and so, armed with faith and a promise of a better life for their young family, they ventured into the unknown, as their parents had done. They remained in Abitibi, literally in the middle of nowhere, for five gruelling years, clearing and working the land, building a roof over their heads all the while barely surviving the harsh winters. They never did qualify for that parcel of land but this is where I was born along with 2 other siblings.

Realizing that they needed to return to a kinder environment in which to raise their growing family, they returned to the Ottawa area and bought a small farm. However, the many demands on their limited resources literally resulted in yet another struggle for survival.

Odd that these years on the farm are remembered by my 5 siblings and me with great fondness. We worked and played together; were each others best friends. There was always laughter and songs; we felt loved, we felt safe & protected, we felt cherished, and true to form with the Italian love of food, we never went hungry! These were the bonding years that cemented the strong relationship that I still cherish today with my brothers and sisters.

My mother, Ersilia, was the heart of our family!

We instinctively knew that she was on our side. She ruled with a velvet covered iron hand and was our lioness at the gate, our protector. No one messed with her!

I was inspired by her strength of character, her positive attitude in the face of adversity, her unquestionable faith in God, and her unconditional love of her family. She believed in me, but more importantly, she taught me to believe in myself. For instance, it was her love of laughter that prompted me to pursue my research into the benefits of laughter and embrace the mission of spreading the word about its positive effect on quality of life. She was proof of that!

As I connect the pieces of my history I become more insightful about myself and I begin to understand that my heritage is the cornerstone of who I am. I never imagined that I could be a successful businesswoman but I realize now that I am a builder just as my ancestors were. Although I started Retire-At-Home Services out of compassion for seniors such as my parents, who struggled with the prospect of moving out of their homes in their twilight years, I saw an opportunity to use my nursing skills to build a business and make a difference to seniors in my community.

Retire-At-Home now employs over 150 people, servicing hundreds of seniors in the Ottawa area. We offer them the dignity of choosing their health care options therefore improving their quality of life. I am very proud of this accomplishment, and as my parents and their parents before them, my ultimate goal has always been to make a better life for my children and my grandchildren, all the while improving the community in which I live.

Tonight as we celebrate the accomplishments of Italian women in the community, I am reminded that we are all builders and that we each have the capability of improving our community, one person at a time. We start by cherishing our children; a loving look, a kind word, a gentle smile, a hug or a pat on the back goes a long way to moulding them into successful community builders.

This is what Italians do best! Our love of family is our greatest asset. And, as much as my grandfather cherished his land, he made the sacrifice of giving me my patch of grass for my 16th birthday, because I, was far more important to him than his beloved garden.

As I grow older, I recognize that one of my greatest regrets is that I don’t speak Italian. However, the determination to blend into the French Canadian culture as a teenager is now directed at reclaiming my Italian heritage and language. As I walk around my living room practicing my rudimentary Italian I am amazed and amused that my life circle is now being completed.



# Local Historical SnapShots

FILO DINNER - Feb. 28, 2008



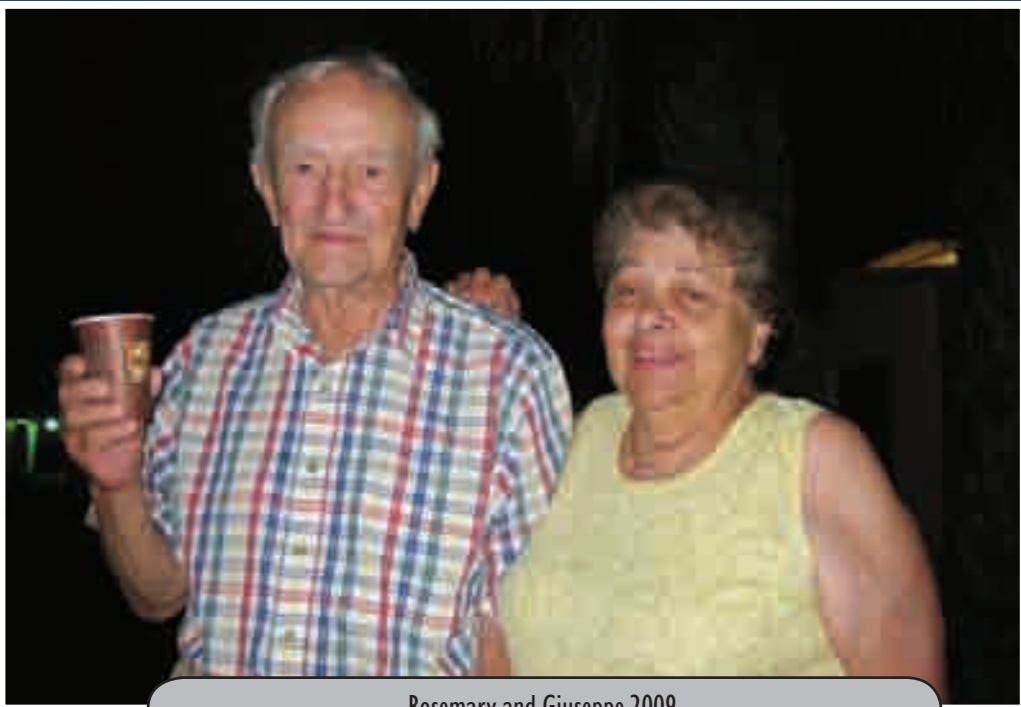


# Local SnapShots

Congradulations to Giuseppe and Rosemary Natri of Syracuse New York on there 60th Wedding Anniversary



Rosemary and Giuseppe 1949



Rosemary and Giuseppe 2009

## Poco Pazzo Restaurant Teaches Cooking



Chef Emanuele teaching



Students learning Italian cooking



Dave Smith, Brian and Lyndal Conway



Students learning how to cooking



# Community Calendar & Businesses



## Italian Canadian Community Historical Society of Canada

### Societa' Storica del Canada: Comunita' italo-canadese

"Come and support the reconstruction of Piazza Dante and join us at the Fund Raising Dinner with the Renowned Singer Tony Ieluzzi directly from Toronto"

Ottawa - February 10, 2009

Chin Radio, Il Postino, L'Ora di Ottawa and the Italian Canadian Associations present the "Reconstruction of Piazza Dante Fund Raising Dinner" on Saturday April 18, 2009. Beginning with cocktails at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 7:00 p.m., St. Anthony's Italia Soccer Club 523 Arlington Avenue Ottawa Ontario.

The purpose of this Celebration is to raise funds for the reconstruction of Piazza Dante at the corner of Booth Street and Gladstone Avenue. The Piazza was constructed in 1967 under the Leadership of the Canadian Italian Professional Business Association whose President was Mr. Italo Tiezzi in 1967. Since nineteen sixty seven no major work to the Piazza has been undertaken. It is the purpose of the Italian Canadian Community to reconstruct the Piazza with a new face and dedicate the Piazza to the Italian Canadian Community of Ottawa. A plaque for major donors shall be installed in the Piazza recognizing their commitment to the project.

Tickets are fifty dollars each including a five course sit down dinner at 7:00 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by the renowned Singer Mr. Tony Ieluzzi directly from Toronto.

For Information and tickets: Il Postino, 613-567-4532

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## Look for Dosi's New Book at

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*Dear Reader,*

If you have picked up this book accidentally, or just because the delicious bubble-gum-pink stiletto on the front cover captured your eye, then may I warn you, this book is not for the faint of heart.

If you are a fan of mystery, intrigue, and international espionage, please put this book down immediately and walk three aisles over to the Mystery, Intrigue and International Espionage section.

If you find yourself trapped in the roles of career woman and traditional wife and mother all at the same time, then please, do read on.

If you find yourself trapped in the conflicting role of mother to your mother, or if your daughter is acting like she is your mother, or if your husband is acting like a wife, or if your son is acting like your daughter, then by all means, do not hesitate a second longer. This book will help you regain your sanity.

If you have a penchant for fashion—the pencil skirt, the tapered blouse, the form-fitting T-shirt, the waist-cinching skinny belt, the classic stiletto pump, the essential clutch purse, and fine Italian leathers—I urge you to, please, read on.

Or if you are just a poor, lost soul, roaming forlornly through your day in search of a lift, a smile, a chuckle, or at the very least, a giggle, then please, do not waste one more second. This book is for you!

Yours in fashion,

*Dosalina Sophia Lucia Cotroneo (Dosi)*



## The Secret Diary of an Italian Girl



*Dosi Cotroneo*





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Soccer Club



VICENTINI



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Nel vero spirito di ALLEGRIA, AMICIZIA ed ITALIANITA'

LE ASSOCIAZIONI ITALO-CANADESE UNITE di OTTAWA

Presentano

## IL CARNEVALE DEI BAMBINI



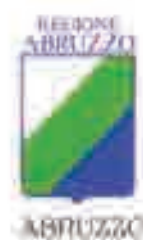
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