



September • October
2021



Italia

NEWSLETTER of the ITALIAN WORKMEN'S CLUB

914 Regent Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53715

IWC President David Rizzo, (608) 852 – 3665, Membership Secretary Dave Valenza (608) 217 – 6903,
Italia Editor Staff – IWC Phone: (608) 258 – 1880 – www.iwcmadison.com

• • • President's Message • • •



Keep It Simple

My wife Barbara and I will spend a portion of September on a "Drive Away In Wisconsin". No

plan. No reservations. We simply get in our truck and drive along the secondary highways and back roads of our beautiful state. When we see something interesting we stop to investigate. When we're hungry we stop at a small town café for something to eat. When we're tired we look for a B&B with a vacancy. The fast pace of life and the addiction to instantaneous news accessible through ubiquitous smart phones diverts our attention and prevents us from enjoying, or even noticing the simple pleasures that our Creator has provided for us. Technology isn't evil. I'm logistically challenged and rely on GPS to get me where I want to go. It keeps us connected, but far too often we find ourselves sending a text message or e-mail instead of making a phone call, or personal

visit. Strive for balance in your life. It will keep you grounded, happy and motivated.

Reset On Social Activities

In the last newsletter, I provided a brief summary of the many social activities we have planned for the balance of 2021. Unfortunately, due to the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus, the current guidance on indoor gatherings from Public Health Madison & Dane County and our continued concern for the health and safety of our members and their families, the Council voted unanimously to cancel most of our events. As of the printing date for this issue of our newsletter, we plan to go ahead with the Golf Outing, since it's primarily an outdoor activity and we'll take no immediate action on the Christmas parties.

Picnic

Fred Underhill and Frank Alfano, with help from John Caliva, Butch Pullara and Jack Par-

rino organized a picnic at McKee Farms Park in Fitchburg on August 1st. Eighty-five people gathered to enjoy sandwiches, chips and pasta salad from Fraboni's Deli and cupcakes from Lane's Bakery along with a special birthday cake for Katie LeTourneau, who turned 104 years young recently. The event was sponsored by the IWC,

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SUPPORT

Italia

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but donations were accepted. Past president, Anthony Bonanno generously donated \$100 as a tribute to the perseverance of the club through these trying times.

Wine Making

Several of our members are taking the necessary steps in preparation for making wine in the manner of our ancestors. Ordering the grapes, breaking the skins and regularly stirring the juice during the natural fermentation process will lead to the pressing, with a classic wooden press, carefully filling carboys and eventual bottling. Details on the timing and location are pending, but watch your inbox for e-mails.

Council Elections

We have three openings for At

Large Council positions. Per our By-Laws, elections to fill these positions are to be held in October.

These individuals shall be elected by the membership for two, two-year terms. Candidates must be members of the Club for at least six months. A fully staffed council is vital to providing the stewardship required to manage the club's immediate resource needs, plan and staff events in the short term and to set a strategic direction for the long term, while maintaining communication with membership.

Although we typically convene a committee to consider nominees, due to the unique circumstances that surround us all, I've opted for a more direct process. Simply e-mail me at davidrizzo@me.com and indicate your desire to run. Nominations close on October 1st. Ballots will be distributed via e-mail and regular mail, similar to how we conducted last year's election.

• Honor The Past

Take time to reflect on family members who are no longer with us, and the pride they had in coming to this country to make a better life for their families. The lessons they taught us about the value of honest, hard work and the im-

portance of supporting each other in difficult times. Our Strategic Master Plan incorporates the preservation of the priceless pictures that tell the stories of the Greenbush Neighborhood, and the members who literally built our historic clubhouse and founded our club.

• Celebrate The Present

Despite the challenges of having to remain physically apart, we've welcomed several new members recently. We were able to gather in person for a couple of months, and even though conditions forced us to take a pause in August, we remain committed to continue to meet virtually until such time as we can once again raise a glass of red wine and enjoy a homemade Italian meal.

• Envision The Future

The unique circumstances facing all of us forces all of us to focus on short term needs, but rest assured the IWC Council is engaged in discussions about planning Festa Italia 2022 and issues that will impact our club in the coming years.

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Italia

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
David Rizzo

CONTRIBUTING REPORTER
Tom Smith

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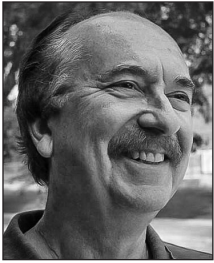
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Il Dolce



By Tom Smith

When I was a young boy visiting my Mother's Family in New

York, I was introduced to what is considered by many the most famous Italian dessert...the **Cannoli**.



The cannoli, that fried tubular pastry shell made from flour, sugar and butter and filled with sweet creamy ricotta cheese, immortalized by Sicilians in the movie "The Godfather" with the famous line "Leave the gun, take the cannoli." The origin of this tasty treat reaches back to 1000AD, during Arab rule of the city of Caltanissetta in Sicily. Legend is that a harem of women created the cannoli to exalt their emir's masculinity, with the shape intended to honor the sultan's *gifts*. Though some may dismiss the idea, the idea of erotic pastries can be traced back for centuries. The story continues with Sicilian Nuns inheriting the production of the cannoli, along with many other pastries.



In the 17th century, there were hundreds of churches in Naples, where the nuns created their sweet treats. These special pastries were created from ancient recipes and sold in the community to support themselves and the church. One such pastry was **Sfogliatelle**, a delicacy that was supposedly invented by accident. According to one account, a nun was experimenting with some leftover semolina flour soaked in milk. To this she added some candied fruit, wrapped between two layers of flaky pastry that had been softened with lard, and formed it into the shape of a monk's hood.



Struffoli was another traditional dessert made by the nuns. Fried balls of dough flavored with citrus zest and bathed in hot honey, they were given to the aristocracy at Christmas as a reward for their generosity to the convents and the poor they served. Struffoli is a dessert still enjoyed in many Italian communities.



One cannot leave the creations of the convents without mentioning the **Minni di Virgini** (Minne di Sant'Agata), an arousing Italian pastry made by the nuns. Agatha of Sicily was born in Catania. Born to a noble family, at 15 years of age she made a vow of virginity. When she rejected the repeated advances of a Roman prefect, she was imprisoned, tortured, and died in prison. Her torture included the excision of her breasts. The sugar-glazed breast-shaped cakes, topped with cherry nipples, were made to honor Saint Agatha's torture and martyrdom. An annual festival to commemorate her life takes place in February in Catania, Sicily. She is not only the patron saint of Catania, but also patron saint of breast cancer patients.



Moving on from the distant history of these creations by Italian nuns, there are any number of special treats to tantalize your taste buds... some rare and others more familiar. Historical records suggest **Tiramisu** originated in the city of Treviso around 1800. It comes from the Treviso dialect "Tireme su" and literally means "pick me up." This

dessert familiar to many, which despite its Italian origins gained wide popularity in the United States, is made with coffee-soaked ladyfingers, and layered with a whipped mixture of eggs, sugar, and mascarpone cheese. It may be infused with liquor, and some varieties can include strawberries as well. Always best enjoyed with a spoon!



For some frozen treats on a sizzling summer day two delicious thoughts come to mind...spumoni and gelato. **Gelato**, in Italian, translates as “frozen.” Originally created in the 16th century, one popular story attributes its invention to Bernardo Buontalenti, a native of Florence. It is said he impressed the court of Caterina de' Medici so much that it spread through shops across Italy and Europe. It was introduced to the United States by Italian native Giovanni Biasiolo in 1770. But it was also around that time the hand crank freezer was invented, with ice cream overshadowing gelato until the 1900s. Gelato has much less butterfat than ice cream, but is churned slowly rather than whipped and more dense, creating a more flavorful product. Today gelato has gained popularity here and around the world.



Spumoni is said to have originated in Naples and was introduced in the United States in the late 1800s. Spumoni is the plural form of the word spumone which means spuma or foam. It is a molded Italian ice, actually a milk sherbet, containing different flavors and topped with nuts and candied fruits. Traditional spumoni in Italy was made in a terrine with three layers (chocolate, pistachio, and almond), hardened in the freezer, and then cut into slices about an inch thick. August 21st is National Spumoni Day!



Christmas dinner wouldn't be complete without **Panettone** at the end of the dinner. The most famous legend puts the origin of panettone to 1494 and the court of Ludovico il Moro. The dessert prepared for the Christmas lunch had burned, but a young kitchen boy (Toni) who had been assisting the cook prepared a replacement with the remaining ingredients he had available... flour, butter, eggs, lime zest and some raisins. The cook served the replacement dish, the guests loved it, and the Duke asked the name of this delicacy. The cook replied it was “the Pan de Toni” (the bread of Toni) and that phrase became the name panettone. In Italy, the true traditional panettone must include on the packaging “Pasticceri Committee of the Milanese Tradition” logo. The traditional panettone ingredients noted under specifications include: water, flour from producers recognized by the Committee, sugar, fresh eggs and or pasteurized yolks, milk, cocoa butter, butter, sultanate, raisins, candied orange peel, candied cedar, natural yeast, and salt. Permitted ingredients are honey, malt/extract of malt, vanilla, and natural aromas.



Zeppole, originally created for Father's Day, often shows up as a carnival pastry. Deep-fried dough balls typical of Southern Italy,

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sometimes thought of as Italian doughnuts or fritters. Put in a paper bag with powdered sugar and shake. May have originated in Ancient Rome, often decorated with cinnamon.



Tartufo (from the Italian word meaning truffle) is an Italian ice cream dessert that originated in Pizzo, Calabria. It is a sphere that is usually composed of two or more flavors of ice cream along with fruit – typically raspberry, strawberry or cherry – in the center. It is then covered with a shell made of chocolate or cocoa, though cinnamon or nuts can also be added. This dessert came about at an elaborate wedding reception when the hosts ran out of cups to serve ice cream and didn't want to serve the dish on plates. A clever pastry chef named Don Pippo de Maria came up with the idea of the ice cream and fruit in spherical balls, coated with chocolate and refrozen, then served in squares of wrapped paper on a plate. Despite its resemblance to a truffle, it tastes more like heaven than the earthy truffle.



Biscotti was originally created to be a food with a long shelf life, to be carried by Roman Legions during lengthy battles. Rock-hard in texture, there was little risk of it becoming inedible or stale, and it provided needed nutrients to the soldiers. After the fall of Rome, Italians endured what is often referred to as “the Dark Ages,” simply trying to survive. But when the Renaissance came, it was Tuscan bakers who took the age-old biscotti and transformed it into something far more enjoyable, something akin to today's modern biscotti.

A brief history and small sample of some of the wonderful desserts that would bring any meal to perfection. I could go on, but like so many things in Italian culture, the history of Italian desserts is as rich as the variety and taste of all the sweet treats described here, some you would kill to get your hands on. If you do, just remember...leave the gun, take the cannoli. ■■

President's Mail Box

Send me an e-mail (davidrizzo@me.com) if there's something you like or don't like about our club. I really want to hear from you. I can't promise that I'll address every need, or implement every idea, but I can promise you the courtesy of a response.

Alla prossima volta, statevi bene e Dio vi benedica. ■■

David Rizzo



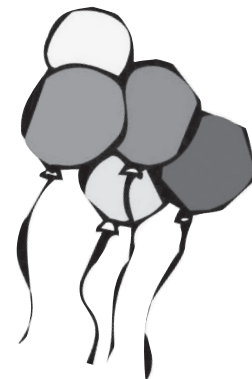
IWC Birthdays

September

James Phillips	9/1
Michael Lumina	9/6
Jim Cerro	9/8
Jack Parrino	9/8
Tom Smith	9/14
Joseph Scalissi	9/16
John Benjamin	9/19
Rosario N. DePaola	9/21
Joseph P. Tripalin	9/21
Frank Ranallo	9/26

October

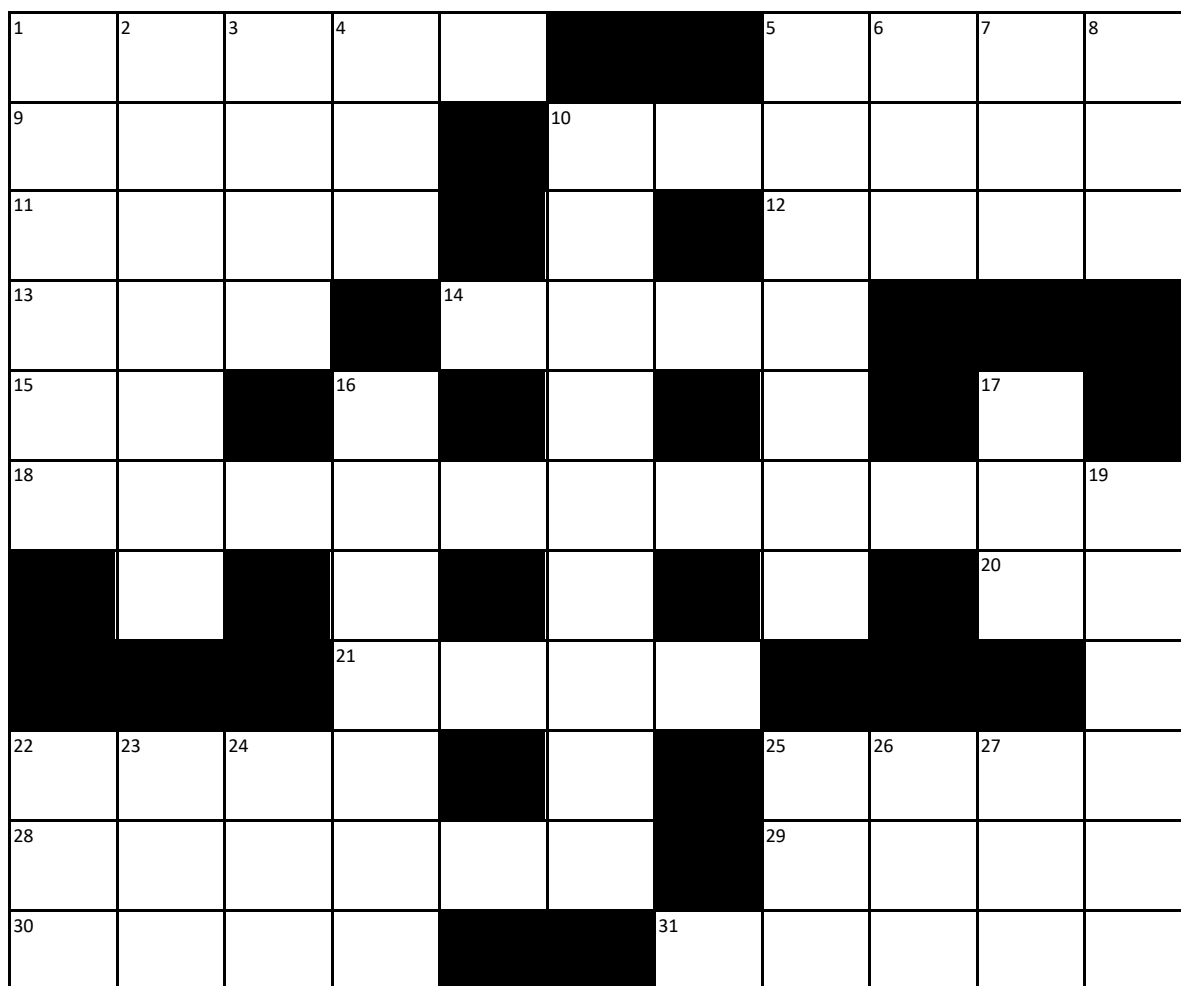
John H. Hunter	10/4
Travis J. Hunter	10/7
Claudio Gratton	10/8
Luigi Vitoritti	10/10
Donald J. Mash	10/12
Michael Schmidt	10/15
Steve Carrola	10/16
Andrew Lager	10/16
Joseph T. Parisi	10/24
Domenic Scudera	10/28
Steve Tortorici	10/30
Mike Cammilleri	10/31



Crossword

IWC Crossword #4

by Tony Reitano



Across:

Down:

- 1 With 31 across, Mary
- 5 Sennet's Keystone ____
- 9 Colleges, for short
- 10 Patron Saint of fire
- 11 Computer pointers
- 12 Nose, in Italian
- 13 Madison Symphony Orch, for short
- 14 Religious painting on wood
- 15 id est, e.g.
- 18 IWC road trip destination
- 20 Lillian has three
- 21 Judas hung out there
- 22 Taxi alternative
- 25 It's attracted to light
- 28 Religious College on the Hudson
- 29 City in Puglia
- 30 Kind of school
- 31 See 1 across

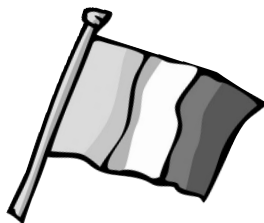
- 1 Madison Credit Union
- 2 Used to flavor Sambucca
- 3 Short for Nicolas
- 4 Said twice it's a fly
- 5 First Catholic US President
- 6 Spanish hello
- 7 Afternoon hours
- 8 Actor Jack from Barney Miller
- 10 Baptism, for one
- 16 How we get to 18 across
- 17 ____ for one and...
- 19 Resort island of Naples
- 22 He calls the balls
- 23 Greenbush ____
- 24 Before, poetically
- 25 College business degree
- 26 Paddle
- 27 ____athalon

Solutions

IWC Crossword #4

by Tony Reitano

S	A	N	T	A			K	O	P	S
U	N	I	S		S	T	E	L	M	O
M	I	C	E		A		N	A	S	O
M	S	O		I	C	O	N			
I	E		B		R		E		A	
T	E	N	U	T	A	S	D	E	L	I
	D		S		M		Y		L	S
			T	R	E	E				C
U	B	E	R		N		M	O	T	H
M	A	R	I	S	T		B	A	R	I
P	R	E	P			M	A	R	I	A



Meeting Dates

- IWC Council Meetings – 2nd Tuesday of Each Month 7:00 pm
- IWC Membership Meetings – 3rd Tuesday of Each Month 6:30 pm

Please clip and post this calendar.



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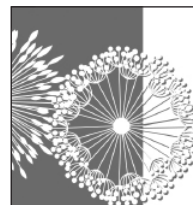
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