



**Luigi Del Bianco**

**Chief Carver on Mt Rushmore**

Luigi Del Bianco, an Italian Immigrant, played an important part in bringing to life a great American monument. Yet, many authors on the subject of Rushmore have chosen not to mention Luigi and his many contributions to the work.

Luigi Del Bianco was born aboard a ship near La Havre, France on May 8, 1892. His parents, Vincenzo and Osvalda, were returning from the United States to Italy. When he was a small boy hanging around the wood carving shop of his father in Meduno, Pordenone province, men of the village used to say, "How curious the little one is!" Vincenzo Del Bianco became convinced that his son was interested in carving and had more than ordinary ability. He took the 11 year old boy to Austria to study under a skilled stone carver. After 2 years in Vienna, Luigi studied in Venice. When cousins in Barre, Vt. wrote that skilled carvers were needed, 17 year old Luigi boarded the La Touraine out of Naples and headed for America.

In 1913, World War I broke out and Luigi returned to Italy to fight for his country. After the war, He emigrated back to Barre, Vt. in 1920 and after a year of work as a stone cutter, he settled in Port Chester, NY where he met his wife, Nicoletta Cardarelli.

It was his brother-in-law, Alfonso Scafa, who

introduced Luigi to Mount Rushmore designer Gutzon Borglum. "Bianco", as Borglum affectionately called him, began working at Borglum's Stamford, Ct. studio and the association of the two men continued until Borglum's death in 1941.

Throughout the 1920's Luigi assisted Borglum with the Governor Hancock Memorial in South Carolina, Stone Mountain in Georgia, and the Wars of America Memorial in Newark, NJ. Because of Luigi's strong stature and classic Roman features, Borglum used him as a model on 20 of the figures on the Newark sculpture.

In 1933 Borglum hired Bianco to be chief stone carver on the Mount Rushmore National Memorial. Luigi's job was to carve the "refinement of expression" or detail in the faces. He was paid 1.50 an hour; a considerable sum for the Depression.

It was "Bianco" who carved the life-like eyes of Abraham Lincoln. In a 1966 Interview with the Herald Statesman in Yonkers, NY, he said about carving the eyes, "I could only see from this far what I was doing, but the eye of Lincoln had to look just right from many miles distant. I know every line and ridge, each small bump and all the details of that head (Lincoln's) so well. I would do it again, even knowing all the hardships involved. I would work at Mount Rushmore even without pay, if necessary. It was a great privilege granted me."

It was "Bianco" who also singlehandedly saved the face of Jefferson; a task Gutzon Borglum would have entrusted to no one else. In Judith St. George's book, *The Mount Rushmore Story*, she writes: "Luigi Del Bianco, one of the best stone carvers Rushmore ever had, patched the crack in Jefferson's lip with a foot deep piece of granite held in place by pins- the only patch on the whole sculpture, and one that is hard to detect even close up."

St. George goes on to reinforce the value of "Bianco":

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Luigi working  
on Mt. Rushmore

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“At least he (Borglum) now had the funds to hire skilled carvers, a lack he had been bemoaning for years. But to his surprise, with the exception of Luigi Del Bianco, few of the carvers worked out.”

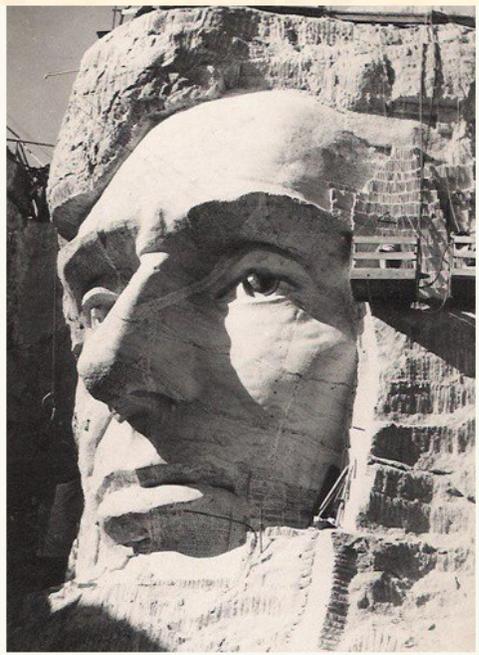
In 1935 Luigi brought his wife and 3 sons, Silvio, Vincent and Caesar to live in Keystone.

The boys went to school, rode horses, became blood brothers to the Sioux and swam naked in the nearby streams. A daughter, Gloria, was born in 1946. She fondly remembers her father as “Charming, funny and very handsome.”

By 1941, funding for the memorial had run out. The breakout of WWII also slammed the lid on any further carving. Luigi returned to Port Chester and his stone cutting shop where he carved approximately 500 tombstones out of rough Vermont marble.

Luigi never forgot his roots. He made many a pilgrimage back to Meduno to visit relatives and old friends. Meduno takes great pride in its native son and has included in its local museum many photos and memorabilia of Luigi Del Bianco and his time at Mount Rushmore.

The citizens of Port Chester, NY also remember Luigi well, as the dapper gentlemen with the fedora on his head and the gleam in his eye, who loved to walk the Italian section of Washington Park and share stories of his adventures on the mountain.



“I know every line and ridge, every small bump and all the details of that head so well!” Luigi Del Bianco



Gutzon Borglum with FDR at the unveiling of the Jefferson head. Luigi met FDR who asked him, “Mr. Del Bianco, are you Italian?” Luigi threw out his chest and proudly replied, “100 percent!”

Editor's Note: In searching for information on the Italian influence in America, I discovered <http://www.luigimountrushmore.com>. The web page was designed by Lou Del Bianco, Luigi's grandson who granted permission to reprint this article. The web page is very interesting and if you like to read more about Luigi Del Bianco and view other photos I recommend it.

Joe Di Leo

The Per Niente Club is honored to have as a member, Dr. Robert (Bob) Genco, a Distinguished Professor at the school of Dental Medicine, Oral Biology and Microbiology at the State University of NY at Buffalo.

Periodontology at the University of Pennsylvania in 1967. He was one of the first dentists to receive intensive training in the emerging field of molecular immunology.

The Genco American legacy in America began in the 1890s when the Genco brothers: Giuseppe, Salvatore, Michelangelo, Filippo, and Michele, left Valledolmo, Sicily for Western NY. Eventually each returned to Sicily and brought their sweethearts here to marry them.



**Dr. Robert J. Genco**

A significant contribution he made to Buffalo Dentistry was his training of graduate students who later impacted dental schools and institutions world wide.

He has collected many honors: The American Dental Association's Gold Medal for Research (Norton Ross award), the Research in Peri-odontal Disease Award from IADR, and an Honorary Doctorate from Georgetown University in 1990.

Giuseppe (Bob's grandfather) and his brother Michele, married two sisters, Marietta and Rosita Canarozzo. Giuseppe and Marietta had 11 children, Bob's father, Joseph, was one of them.

Like many "Valledolmesi" Bob's grandparents, Joseph and Marietta, settled in the Fredonia/Silver Creek area. Bob's grandfather was a furniture maker and Bob's Dad, Joseph, was the superintendent of a large machine shop in Fredonia.

He received the Henry M. Goldman Award as the outstanding graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania in periodontics during the first 25 years of the program in 1980.

Bob, who grew up in Silver Creek, has a brother, Gordon, who still lives there. A sister, Marlene, lives in Florida. In 1959 Bob married Sandra Clarke, his high school sweetheart, with whom he had three children and who died in 2001. In 2005 Bob married Francis Doherty.

He is one of 25 dentists honored by their election to the prestigious Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science.

Bob Genco attended Canisius College and graduated from the University of Buffalo School of Dentistry, cum laude, in 1963. He also received a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, in Microbiology and Immunology in 1967, and completed residency training in

Despite efforts to pry him from Buffalo, Bob stays rooted and active as a periodontal researcher.



In 1933, though tattered by the Great Depression, Buffalo, New York, was one of the most vibrant of America's ten biggest cities. It was a mecca for solo pianists, guitarists, and other musicians playing in combos and big bands. Many of these creative artists were Italian immigrants and or young Italian-Americans, who, with a singular purpose, entertained Buffalo's varied citizenry in a myriad of venues.

At the time, Paul Whiteman was the leader of the most famous orchestra in America. His guitarist, Eddie Lang (Salvatore Massaro) "the father of jazz guitar" had just died tragically after a simple tonsillectomy at age 30. As such, Buffalo's Tony Militello, a young Sicilian immigrant, a gifted guitarist with magic hands was asked to take Lang's place in New York. Militello declined and stayed in his adopted city to be with family, to nurture his students and to perform. He became a mainstay at the Dutch Mill, The Grille Room in the Hotel Buffalo and was a favorite of the elite who gathered at Victor Hugo's on fashionable Delaware Avenue. He also performed in concert with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra; performances that evolved into critically acclaimed musical events.

In the stage play, Bread and Onions: The Last Neighborhood, I wrote about a hot Sunday morning on Seventh Street on Buffalo's lower West Side during World War II. "From open windows amidst the aroma of sauce in kettles and the sizzle of meatballs in cast iron, we heard Militello, Tony, an immigrant would-be barber, a guitar playing genius from a Sicilian harbor. With the soul of Eddie Lang, the pain of the gypsy, Django, and the Spain of Se-

govia, Militello, who studied with Maestro Rosario Millonzi, gilded our sensitivities such as we couldn't explain. The exotic, syncopated etudes lingered in our young minds as we worked in and out of the lower West Side, an integral part of our daily activity." [1]

Gone are the old Italian neighborhoods whose streets were filled with the well-practiced sounds of musicians: artistic prowess pouring from modest homes. Backyards were adorned with fig trees and grape arbors nestled in small, colorful vegetable gardens. There, on warm sunlit days amid the airy smell of tomatoes budding from good earth, wet clothes were gracefully hanged to dry on sturdy rope supported by a long bamboo stick.

The great musicians and the music have vanished. What remains are ghostly, decrepit dwellings whose busted glass resemble shattered teeth. Their broken windows are akin to bruised, blackened eyes etched on metaphorical wooden faces and filled with blank expressions that one can only pity. The colorful gardens are gone. The arbors, old and bare, now silently stare.

Recently, Joe DiLeo and I were at Keller Brothers and Miller Printers on Franklin Street to see proprietor, John Salerno. A young employee approached to ask, "Are you the guys who write the Italian stuff?"

"Yes," I said.

"My name is Tony Militello," he said. "My grandfather was a great guitarist. You should write about him."

Joe DiLeo asked, "What's his name?"

Tony quickly responded, "It's Tony Militello. Like mine. Did you know him?"

"I think I heard of him," Joe DiLeo said.

I chimed in, excitedly, "I knew him and his son, Serafino Militello."

"That's my father," said young Tony.

I told him that I knew a few anecdotal things about his grandfather, and that I've scoured the

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phone book for Serafino's number hoping I could speak with him so as to write about his legendary father, but there isn't a Serafino Militello in the phone book.

"You couldn't find him," young Tony said, "because in the phone book he's listed as Sam, not Sarafino." Though he wasn't present at the time, he related how his "grandma Militello" cooked a huge Italian dinner on Seventh Street many years ago for his grandfather's friend: the great guitarist, Les Paul, who, with Mary Ford, were appearing at the Town Casino.

That evening I called Serafino to renew a friendship and to learn more about his father, and of his relationship with Les Paul, the genius-musician who, with his solid-body electric guitar, revolutionized the recording industry and popular music.

Serafino said that in the late 1940s after school he often went to his father's small music studio on Chippewa Street. "Once," he said, "his father went downstairs to the White Tower for coffee. A guy, a cowboy walked in, ten-gallon hat, Gene Autry shirt, the works. With him was a young girl, a beautiful redhead. They said they came to see Tony Militello. I told them who I was and said my father would be right back. They didn't introduce themselves. They sat and said they'd wait for him. And without a sound they did. I was so excited! I knew who they were! I said to myself 'what are Les Paul and Mary Ford doing here?'"

When Tony entered, the now jubilant Les Paul leaped from his small wooden chair. He gave Tony a loving embrace and introduced him to his new wife, Mary Ford, who, as Colleen Summers sang with Gene Autry. (Les Paul later renamed her Mary Ford) Mary asked Tony to play for her. Tony played "Dark Eyes," and she applauded vigorously. Paul then asked Tony to show him the fingering he used on a virtuoso arpeggio. And so it went. Later, Les Paul and Mary Ford were on Seventh Street feasting on grandma Militello's food that young Militello spoke of. Before leaving for the Town Casino, Les Paul asked Tony to again play Dark Eyes

– complete with the virtuoso arpeggio.

Tony Militello, who was instrumental in developing the guitar as a solo instrument died on July 27, 1962 at age 64. Sadly, he never recorded professionally but several homemade recordings of his, including Dark Eyes, are on an LP that may still be available.

Mary Ford died in 1977 at age 53. Les Paul died on August 13, 2009 at age 94. Prior to his death he was performing at the Iridium Jazz Club in New York City.

I know how Tony Militello met Mary Ford but I don't know how he met Les Paul. I do know that Les Paul never forgot grandma Militello's food on Seventh Street and Tony Militello's arpeggio on Dark Eyes.

Gone are the old Italian neighborhoods whose streets were filled with the well-practiced sounds of musicians: artistic prowess pouring from modest homes. Backyards were adorned with fig trees and grape arbors nestled in small, colorful vegetable gardens. There, on warm sunlit days amid the smell of tomatoes budding from good earth, wet clothes were gracefully hanged to dry on sturdy rope supported by a long bamboo stick. The colorful gardens have vanished. The arbors, old and bare, now silently stare from their dark eyes.



[1] Bread and Onions: The Last Neighborhood © copyright 1997 Joey Giambra

*This is part 5 of an article based on Jerry Grasso's memoirs as told to, and written by, Dick Verso. Parts 1-4 appeared in the past four issues of the Per Niente.*

On the West Side if you fought someone and won, quite often you had to fight his older brother or a cousin.

Some families were so big that it was better losing the first fight. Some of the more memorable street fights: Paul Stolfo sucker punching Tony Morgante and John Antonucci and disappearing for a while. Tony Pinto vs. Richie Battaglia (Tony won). Tony Cuppone vs. Frank Monteleone. DuDu Parisi, Frankie (Spungie) Domino and Chops Alberti working as corners at fights at the Aud.

Finding out later that other parts of the city didn't have clam stands or 10-cent crab shells littering their neighborhood. We never rang doorbells when we called our friends - we just stood under their kitchen window and yelled "Hey Toneeeeeee". Standing on a corner and a car pulls up. From an open window someone says "hey kid, you wanna buy a pair of shoes cheap?" Where did "Fonzi" with leather and motorcycles come from? Nobody wore leather. We had Spade Shoes one Button Roll suits, pegged pants with dropped loops and big combs in our back pockets. The really cool wore double-breasted overcoats

and wide-brimmed hats trying to look like George Raft. Most of the suits were bought at Charlie-Baker's from manager, Jimmy Immerese and Mel Palano or from Carm Billonio at Joey's Custom Shop.

Tony Gerace and his orchestra. Jimmy Vullo, a great artist. Accordionists Dick Contino, Sammy Fanara and Pete Argiro. George Lorenz, the Hound Dog on KB. Harold Austin's Orchestra playing on the Canadiana's Saturday night ride to Crystal Beach.

Sending Canadians who stopped for directions to the Peace Bridge off in the wrong direction. Cutting discount coupons from the Buffalo Evening News for amusement tickets and boat rides. Dances and Big Bands like Stan Kenton at the Crystal Beach Ballroom. Sugar cones and Loganberry. It all changed after "The Riot".

Trying to get invited to someone's house who had a TV. Since most of us didn't have television sets we spent lots of time playing games like Nip, Buck-Buck, Kick the Can, Lame the Goose (the goose hopped around on one leg and hit kids with his belt - no buckles allowed), 1-2-3 Relievo, Baby in the Hole (where you'd dig holes and then try to roll a ball into different holes to knock someone out of the game), king-

ers (with horse chestnuts), hop-scotch, marbles and softball, pitching pennies, war cards and baseball cards.

When there weren't enough guys for a baseball game we'd play Running Bases or 1-2-3 where you'd get a point for catching a ball on the fly or if you got a grounder, you'd get one for rolling the ball in and hitting the bat that the hitter laid down. Whoever got 3 points would be the new batter and we'd all move up 1 position. We rarely played "hardball" because nobody had a catchers mask but when we did it was usually with a ball covered with friction tape. We got a lot of our bats by begging for them at MUNY games and then nailing and taping them. Losing a baseball in the weeds of the outfields in LaSalle Park slowed games down.

Raiding yards with fruit trees or grape vines and running from an old man throwing rocks and yelling "You come back you summana beech and I killa you" was a common "sport" in late summer and early fall evenings. Watching Babe Paternostro, Joe Ciresi, Babe LaMancusa, Whitey LaMendola and Casey Palisano playing at the Buffalo Softball Park.

Tall and impeccably dressed, Mr. Santa Lucia striding

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down Hudson in his suit and hat. Pete Notaro walking down Hudson Street in late afternoons to his red brick house on Trenton after another long day of practice. Summers at the farm in North Collins with the DeMarie, Muscarella, Lauria, LoSecco and Caruso families. Mike Malucci eating up the pizza profits at Tarts as soon as they came out of the oven.

Playing handball between the "Old Building" and "New Building" of school #1. Playing basketball in Gary Doane's house. Adeline Sacchera saving old comic books for me. Joe Cicatello "Yoo-hoo, egg man?" Shooting hoops with Betty and Joe DiCarlo at a bushel basket stuck on a telephone pole. Playing pinochle with Pete Giglia, Tony Dispenza and Richie Guttuso on Ritchie's porch and on Saturday mornings with Dick Verso and Ben Tibollo.

Trying to form an ice rink by watering the little lot where Guarino's Dairy used to be with Sam Zarcone and Nick George and then playing basketball in the garage while waiting for it to freeze. Watching Charley Cordovano work the pinball machine. Joining the Harry James Fan Club and getting an autographed picture.

After finally scraping up enough money and chipping in to buy a new football we excitedly ran to try it out at the #1 playground. While waiting to get in I threw a pass into the playground to someone who had already jumped the fence but it was just a little short and landed on the sharp points of the fence. Everybody heard the hissing and just stopped and watched the ball slowly getting flatter. Didn't make many friends that day. Sitting in the playground when Tony Palumbo threw a ball at the fence over our heads and breaking the Cicatello's window.

If you had a good fence-jumper in left field you could hold my compare, Whiskey Sam Todaro to a double when he hit it over the fence. If he didn't hit it over the fence left fielder Dominic LoGalbo could sometimes throw him out at first base.

Charlie Figs throwing a bushel top but missing his target and cracking Loblaw's plate glass window. Everybody ran but Charlie who was there when the cops came. His only excuse was "Those fishing guys made me do it!" Charlie never swore. The nonsense ushers at Shea's Niagara, Angelo Tona, Frank Angelo, Tony Maritato, Ben Palumbo, Frank and Tom Barone, Dick Thomas, Phil Tiranno, Jimmy Zac-

cagnino, Sam Militello, Chuck Runfola and Sam D'Amico. Once, whiskey Sam Todaro and I were able to sneak in by convincing the new ticket-taker that we were friends of the Manager, Frank Barone. In a matter of seconds there were so many flashlights on us that we thought we were in daylight. We were escorted out and were told that "it was a nice try."

Talking Bill Coppola into letting me ride his new bike to chase Sam Whiskey who threw a piece of coal at me. Whiskey turned into an alley near his house, but I was going so fast I couldn't make the turn and crashed into the brick wall. As soon as Bill sees what happened he starts crying. He's crying for his bike and I'm lying there bleeding from a head cut that took 6 stitches to close.



*Sam (Whiskey Nose) Todaro*

To be continued in next issue

The members of the Per Niente club descend from immigrants from many countries and towns, with most from Italy and Sicily. A summary of the origins of some of the 'Wednesday night regulars' reveals the variety and appeal of their 'paisi'.

**Lou Terragnoli** can trace his ancestry to several towns: Abruzzi's L'Aquila, the site of recent earthquake destruction; Bari, another mainland Italian town; and also Sicily's Taormina, the birthplace of his grandmother Liboria Caito. 'Tauromenium' was the name of the settlement by one of Sicily's indigenous tribes, the Sicels (from whom the island got its name). It became one of the first Greek settlements in Sicily in 400 BC. Today, it still nestles on a steep hillside, perched above one of the world's most beautiful coastlines.

**Lenny Pepe** cites Petralia Soprana (Pitralia Suprana, Upper Petra) as his family's origin. It shares a mountainside with Petralia Sottana (Pitralia Suttana, Lower Petra). Petralia Soprana, at an elevation of 3,500 feet above sea level in the Madonie Mountains, is the highest town in the Province of Palermo. It's a typical medieval mountain town with stone streets and buildings, with a beautiful duomo or cathedral.

Montemaggiore Belsito (Greater Mountain, Beautiful Site), or more simply Montemaggiore, like other hometowns, had large numbers of expatriates in Buffalo. They were represented by Società, or mutual aid societies. The meeting hall of the Società Mutuo Soccorso Montemaggiore, at West Ferry and Herkimer, was known to most as 'Mount Major Hall'. The town's progeny include **Mike Mendola, Bob Mangano, the Tascas, and Jack Gullo.**

Patti (from the Greek 'Ep' Aktin', 'On the Shore'), in Messina Province, was the birthplace of **Frank D'Arrigo's** father. It is near the site of the ancient Greek city Tyndaris, which has renowned ruins of the Grecian temple of Mercury, an ancient Greek theatre, and a Roman villa from 400 AD. Ancient Tyndaris was destroyed by an earthquake, and the survivors moved to a nearby site, which they named Ep' Aktin, which was pronounced 'Patti'. Patti is famous for its large sandy beaches.

**Joe Di Leo's** fore-bears came from Montedoro (Muntedoru, Mountain of Gold), an ancient sulfur mining center. The church in the photo once lost a spire because it was undermined by tunnels exca-

vated to access the valuable mineral. Other Di Leo ancestors were from Burgio.



**Sam Arnone, Vinny Scime, Joey Giambra and I** share a common heritage: some of our ancestors are from Serradifalco, (Joey's sister, Dolores Agro was born in Serradifalco, Mountain of the Hawk) in the center of Sicily, a stone's throw from Montedoro. A little town amid rolling hills, farming and sulfur mining made up Serradifalco's economy in the late 1800s and early 1900s, during the time when our parents and grandparents left for Pennsylvania. Serradifalco societies sprang up wherever its émigrés settled: Pittston, PA, Robertsdale, PA, and in Buffalo.

The **Scime** side of Vinny's family was from Racalmuto (Racalmutu, from the Arabic 'rahal-maut', 'village in ruins'). It was the birthplace of Leonardo Sciascia (1921-1989), one of the best-known Sicilian novelists of the last century. Like other towns, Racalmuto inspired its faithful expatriates to organize a Società in Buffalo.

**Sam Leone** (and I) had ancestors from the little town of Marianopoli (City of Maria), just north of Serradifalco. It was 'colonized' by a local baron in the 1500s by bringing in settlers from the Asia Minor city of Epirus. The settlers were Greek Orthodox refugees from the Muslim Ottomans, and many Greek-influenced names are to be found in the town, like Calogero (kalos geron, kindly old man) and Alessi (derivative of Alexandros).

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Europe was in turmoil. Nations rose and fell within decades; national boundaries moved from one place to another. Added to the political unrest were economic

and natural disasters like famine, cholera, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. There were millions suffering poverty, not the least from the 'Mezzogiorno': southern Italy and Sicily. This misery brought about early labor associations, like the Società di Mutuo Soccorso dei Solfatai in Serradifalco, or the 'Society of Mutual Aid of Sulfur Miners in Serradifalco'. My grandfather **Gaetano Coniglio** was a founding member of this quasi-'union', formed to provide benefits for members who were ill or out of work.

These societies, which incidentally, were often strongly anti-Mafia, were viewed by the Italian government as attempts at socialism, and frequently banned. When conditions became impossible to bear, many southern Italians and Sicilians decided to look elsewhere for work. Many thought to come to America to earn enough to return to their homeland with a nest egg, while others looked to leave forever. In the final analysis, most who came to America stayed here.

In Robertsale, PA and later in Buffalo, my father belonged to the Società Mutuo Soccorso Serradifalco, an extension of the miner's 'union' that his father had formed in Sicily. While it was in many ways a social club that allowed immigrants to associate with those of common heritage, it was also a workers' association. To join, prospective members had to be healthy and capable of work. They paid monthly dues (a quarter or half-dollar) and received sick-pay if injured or ill. The society had a doctor who verified whether members were healthy, and malingerers or loafers were thrown out of the club. When a member died, his widow received a small death benefit, paying for a priest, a crucifix and a casket.

The large shipping companies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were strong enablers of the rush to emigrate. Many posted bulletins throughout Europe, urging people to go to America, where work was plentiful and the streets were 'paved with gold'. Of course, the shipping companies made enormous profits on the millions of refugees from hunger, whose fares were sometimes even paid by international relief agencies.

The story of how this influx multiplied is the same over and over again. A young man traveled to America, wrote to his friends and relatives back home, another man came, told his friends, and then another came, and another, eventually earning

enough to pay fares for other family members.

My own family's Odyssey began with an unrelated sulfur miner named Leonardo Insalaco, who left Serradifalco for the coal mines of central Pennsylvania in 1900. It's possible that he was attracted there by a 'head-hunter', a padrone who was hired by American companies to recruit cheap labor. These padroni were paid a few cents a head, and often were also paid by the immigrants themselves. They sometimes entered into agreements (all illegal) with immigrants, to pay their fare in exchange for months or years of indebtedness: that is, indentured labor.

Whatever the means of his coming, Insalaco wrote to his friends and relatives about America, and in 1902, he was joined by a friend, another Serradifalco sulfur miner, Calogero D'Agro, who settled in Soldier, PA. By 1911, D'Agro had moved to Robertsdale, PA. He contacted Pasquale Calabrese, who had married D'Agro's sister Anna. Pasquale joined him in Robertsdale and saved enough to pay the fare for Anna. He also wrote to his friend, my uncle Giuseppe Coniglio, about Robertsdale. In 1912, my uncle emigrated there. In Serradifalco, he left his wife Angela Alessi, as well as his younger brother, my father Gaetano Coniglio.

In 1913, zi'Pepe (uncle Giuseppe) convinced my father to chaperone my aunt Angela to America, paying both their fares. My father left behind my mother Rosa Alessi (Angela's sister), who was pregnant with their first child. It took my father two years to raise enough to pay for passage for my mother and my oldest brother Gaetano (Guy), born in Serradifalco. My uncle and aunt eventually returned to Sicily, leaving my parents as the only members of either of their immediate families to stay in America. In time, they moved to Buffalo (with many other Serradifalchese) and to date have had over 110 descendants.

Whoever you were, Leonardo Insalaco, thank you for starting the chain reaction that made me an American!





## Maggiore's Corner

Email Sal Maggiore: [Smaggiore@roadrunner.com](mailto:Smaggiore@roadrunner.com)

SAL MAGGIORE

### The Coffee Hole

The "coffee hole" is a golfing term. When playing in a foursome, after the ninth hole, the highest scorer buys the coffee or coke. Plain and simple. The average cost to the loser is six to eight dollars. At Bridgewater we understand this and respect the loser for golf is a gentlemen's game. Once, Len Pepe scored highest and had to buy. Fred George ordered an egg salad sandwich (about five dollars). We had to restrain Len from attacking Freddy or fainting himself. When Pat Palmeri had to buy, Joe Dileo ordered a bottle of water. Pat went crazy shouting "there's water all over the course." Poor Joe apologized.

Now, my story. Pete Spallino, Sam Arnone, Pat Palmeri and I, recently were playing a round in sunny, cold (coldest winter in years) Florida. I hadn't bought lately, but I never have more than a coke or coffee when others buy. Palmeri is the only one who occasionally orders a sandwich. It must be an extra two or three dollars and since Arnone and Spallino don't mind, so be it. Now you guessed it, I got stuck with buying. When Palmeri ordered a large tuna sandwich, I thought the others did too. The bill was sixteen dollars - without the tip. I asked them if they enjoyed their sandwiches. They said they only ordered coke, which meant the cost of Palmeri's tuna sandwich was about ten dollars. Palmeri asked the waitress to add cheese, lettuce and tomato. He

couldn't understand why I was complaining.

"What's your problem?" he asks. "We always do this." Pete and Sam smiled with raised eye brows.

"Well, excuse me," I said. "I don't mind you taking advantage of me by all the strokes I give you, or when you hit in the water and take a drop several yards in the middle of the fairway. And you don't know how to count strokes. Maybe we should rename the 'Coffee Hole' Palmeri's Lunch Hole."

I told Palmeri that I would write about this. A week later, before we were about to play, I met privately with Arnone and Spallino. I begged them to try harder to beat Palmeri on the ninth hole in which case he had to buy. We did it! Palmeri had to buy! He looked as if he was about to faint. We laughed and ordered coca cola.



One of Maggiore's fearless foursomes:  
La Duca, Maggiore, Di Leo and Tasca



Sam Arena

## Linguini and Clam Sauce

HERE IS A WONDERFULLY SIMPLE RECIPE TO DELIGHT FAMILY AND FRIENDS ALL YEAR LONG.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 CUP EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
- 2 CLOVES GARLIC, CHOPPED FINE
- 1 LB. LINGUINI OR SPAGHETTI
- 2 DOZEN LITTLE NECK CLAMS
- 2 CANS CHOPPED CLAMS
- A LARGE BUNCH OF ITALIAN PARSLEY (chopped)
- GRATED ROMANO CHEESE



### DIRECTIONS

Combine the chopped clams and garlic with the olive oil and puree in a blender. ( include all the liquid)

Pour the pureed clams in a large sauté pan. Add the parsley and cheese. Mix thoroughly on low heat.

Add the clams and cover. When the clams open, the sauce is ready. Cook pasta al dente. Add more cheese at serving if desired.

Serve with caesar salad and crisp dry white wine. Try it, it's a winner.

Buon Appetito !!!!

**Article submitted by Larry LaDuca. Source: 2008 Risk Management Solutions, Inc.**

On December 28, 1908 at 5:20 a.m. local time, a devastating earthquake occurred along the Straits of Messina between the island of Sicily and mainland Italy. Measuring between M6.7 and M7.2 on the moment magnitude scale, the Messina Earthquake, also known as the Messina-Reggio Earthquake, caused severe ground shaking throughout the region and triggered a local tsunami, which struck within minutes of the earthquake. By all accounts, the cities of Messina along Sicily's coast and Reggio di Calabria on Italy's mainland were completely destroyed, as many unreinforced masonry buildings collapsed. One hundred years following the 1908 earthquake, it remains the deadliest event in Europe with an estimated 60,000 to 120,000 fatalities.

Italy has a lengthy history of catastrophic earthquakes and is one of the most earthquake-prone areas in Europe. During that last 2,000 years, more than 400 destructive earthquakes have been documented in Italy and seismic activity varies considerably across the country due to the complex tectonics of the region.

The worst hit areas were Messina, on the northeast Sicilian coast, and Reggio di Calabria, in the province of Calabria on the Italian mainland. From all accounts, both cities were completely destroyed and reduced to rubble. Ground shaking was so intense in the port area of Messina that the stone paving was permanently displaced in a wave-like pattern (Mulargia and Boschi, 1983). Describing the damage in the city of Messina, Omori (1909) wrote: —The enormity of the destruction of

Messina is really beyond one's imagination. All the buildings in the city were, with a very few exceptions, considerably cracked or absolutely reduced to masses of ruin.

Around ninety percent of buildings in Messina were destroyed (Barbano et al., 2005), with the worst damage in the central and northern parts of the city, which were built on soft soils. The main streets of Via Cavour and Via Garibaldi were inaccessible (Figure 4), as they were covered by rubble and debris up to 16 ft (5 m) thick (Omori, 1909), while streets near the Matagrifone Castle in the center of the city sustained less intense damage. Damage was also reported as less severe in the western part of the city, particularly for structures built on more compact terrain. For example, damage was described as only minor or slight in the areas around the Gonzago Castle.



**Messina after 1908 earthquake**

The devastation caused by the earthquake was amplified by a tsunami that shortly followed. Less than ten minutes after the initial shock, a tsunami impacted the coastlines on either side of the Straits of Messina, striking with waves exceeding 20 ft (6 m) in some loca-

tions. The tsunami was a local tsunami, originating in the Straits of Messina and consisting of at least three major waves. From historical records, it was observed that in most locations, the second and third waves were higher than the first.

Damage from the tsunami waves was most

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severe on the Calabrian coast near the villages of Lazzaro and Pellaro, where three powerful waves caused extensive destruction. Between Lazzaro and Pellaro, the force of the water washed away houses and destroyed a railway bridge, removing a 138-ft girder (Omori, 1909). The waves also destroyed houses on Sicily's coastline, in Messina near the mouth of the Torrente Portalegni, a small river located south of the harbor, as well as farther south in the village of Schiso and town of Riposto (Omori, 1909). In Messina, the tsunami run-up heights were observed to be approximately 10 ft along Vittorio Emanuele Street and near the St. Salvatore fortress in the harbor area. Farther south, near the mouth of the Torrente Portalegni, the run-up heights were observed at over 20 ft .



Although the precise number of casualties resulting from the Messina Earthquake remains uncertain, historical accounts place the number of fatalities between 60,000 (Baratta, 1910) and over 120,000 (Mercalli, 1909). These estimates indicate that nearly half of Messina's population was killed. From the written and pictorial record, it is clear that the majority of the casualties resulted from the collapse of unreinforced masonry buildings. The tsunami has been estimated to have caused only 2,000 deaths in coastal areas along the eastern shores of Sicily and the Calabria coast (Comerci et al., 2008).

With thousands of bodies trapped in the ruins, Messina became known as —Cittá di Mortell or

—City of the Dead. The large number of damaged buildings highlighted the vulnerable nature of the building stock in Messina at the time. The use of poor quality construction materials, often rubble stones, and the widely adopted construction technique known as —a sacco, which used bare stones, poor quality mortar, and delicate stone facades, was blamed for the widespread collapse of many buildings. Buildings constructed with better quality materials or practices were less prone to collapse during the earthquake.

For example, two buildings built just before the 1908

earthquake of good quality materials with reinforcing ties were relatively undamaged (Barbano et al., 2005, citing Luiggi, 1909).

With Italy's long record of damaging earthquakes stretching back over 2,000 years, earthquakes represent the most hazardous natural

peril to which the country is exposed. Despite large levels of property and casualty loss due to earthquakes in recent history, such as in Friuli in 1976 and Irpinia in 1980, losses to the insurance market have been relatively small due to a lack of market penetration for earthquake coverage and property insurance in general. Insurance against natural catastrophe perils is not compulsory in Italy. With no obligation for insurers to cover earthquake risk in conjunction with little demand from the general population, earthquake insurance is not widely sold. Where it is available, the overwhelming majority of insured properties are commercial or industrial risks. As a consequence, very few homes in Italy would have adequate insurance to cover losses in the event of a major earthquake.



Bernie D'Andrea was born in 1923 on the West Side of Buffalo, on Prospect Avenue. He attended Stinson Primary School and Number One Elementary School, on Seventh Street between Maryland and Hudson, a community that flourished in solid family customs.

In his freshman year at Buffalo Technical High School, Bernie enrolled in the advertising art course and met the department head, Bernard J. Rooney, who became Bernie's mentor. Before graduating, Bernie attended art classes at the newly built Neighborhood House # 2 on Seventh St. He was drawing and painting with Joe Sulgio, the instructor, and two older students, Danny Gualgiardi and Victor Millonzi whose father was concert master of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Once, a Holy Cross priest informed Bernie's parents that Bernie was drawing pictures of nude women while in class. Scandalous behavior for a sixteen year old whom the priest envisioned as a candidate for the priesthood. Bernie's father reminded the priest of the works in the Sistine Chapel

Bernie's family attended Holy Cross R.C. Church, where Bernie's mother was an active participant in church societies and where Bernie learned catechism from Sister Teresa, a loving, no nonsense teacher.

At an early age, Bernie D'Andrea displayed an interest in drawing. He drew everything, especially his grandfather, Giacomo. When bored and in class at PS # 1, he sketched caricatures of his English teacher and classmate Clara Sorgi (Giolli). Both subjects were unappreciably annoyed. Mr. Jacobson, Bernie's art teacher, took a different view and felt he discovered a real talent.



Luncheon at Giovanni's

and showed him Bernie's life drawings: work that was being considered for an exhibition that the revered Tony Sisti was assembling at the then Albright Art Gallery.

Bernie excelled at Buffalo Tech. B. J. Rooney met Bernie's parents months before his graduation to discuss Bernie's future. He spoke of a scholarship to the prestigious Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. Because Bernie's father had recently lost his long-time job with the Pennsylvania Railroad and life was difficult,

On a summer night in the school playground, Bernie was part of an amateur show being presented to a large audience. In fluent Italian he sang a passionate rendition of "Vesti la Giubba" from Pagliacci by Ruggiero Leoncavallo to a grand ovation. Emilino Rico, host of an Italian radio show on WEBR was present and offered Bernie a place on his show along with Leonard Pennario, a young, dynamic concert pianist who would achieve international acclaim. Both received a gallon of virgin olive oil for their efforts.

Rooney anticipated a negative answer. However, the family agreed to have Bernie enter a national competition sponsored by the *Scholastic Magazine*. The winner would receive a full scholarship to Pratt Institute.

Bernie had a goose neck lamp in the small bedroom that he shared with his grandfather. In order to prepare for the competition he needed a drawing table. He went to a Niagara St. butcher shop across

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"La Fontana"  
Bernard D'Andrea, 2007

from Birge Wallpaper where Charles Burchfield worked as a designer. He found a large face top that was to be his drawing board upon which he would plan his portfolio.

The portfolio consisted of sketches, life drawings, paintings and photography accomplished with a pin hole camera: a body of work completed in ten weeks and which B.J. Rooney submitted. A month later, Bernie was notified that his single black and white photo of two very large sewer pipes shot in the late afternoon sunlight near the pumping station at the foot of Porter Avenue enabled him to win the National scholarship.

In 1943 Bernie was drafted into the U.S. Army and assigned to the Technical Training School of Special Service and War Information in the Quartermaster Corps of Camp Lee, Virginia. The School consisted of artists, film writers, photographers and directors of information and education. There, Bernie designed and executed posters and illustrations for Army publications and information.

In 1946 Bernie was discharged from the Army. In 1948 he was hired by the Saturday Evening Post, a magazine of six million subscribers, to produce a

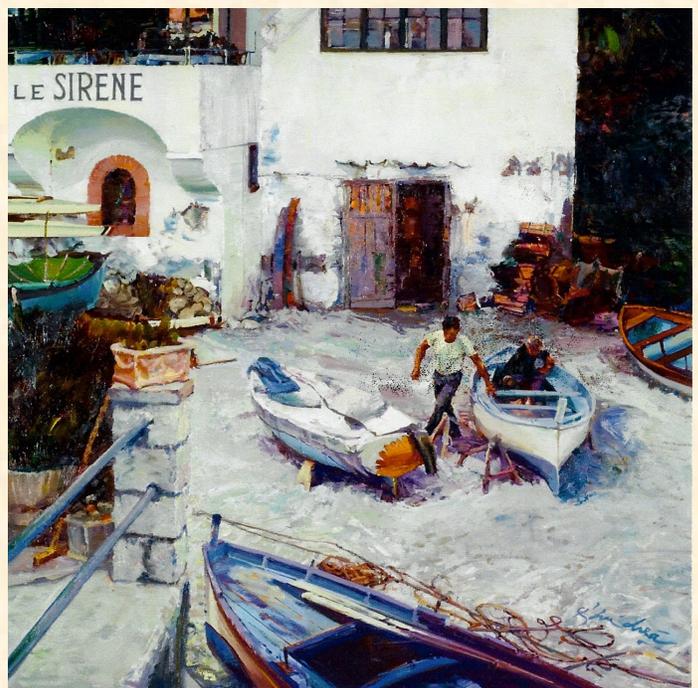
major illustration. Bernie was in the Majors.

His contributions to the Post ended in 1968 with the closure of the Curtis Publishing Company, the Post parent. It was an American publishing tragedy. Bernie's last illustration for that publication appeared in its pages the week they closed.

In later years Bernie's illustrations appeared in Good House Keeping, Cosmopolitan, Ladies Home Journal, Red Book, Boys Life, Seventeen, and National Geographic.

In 2004 - 2005 the Telfair Museum of Art in Savannah, Georgia presented Bernie's first major retrospective: "Five Decades of Evolution." Twenty of his major works were placed in the museums collection .

Bernie's philosophy: "It is a tough job with no delusions; it's the heart, the mind, the soul, the hands ability and the mentality of how much you know, and then you hope you get to be eighty years old and still love it as much as I do." He is currently represented by the Morris & Whiteside Galleries of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.



"Le Sirrene" Capri, Italy  
Bernard D'Andrea, 2006

by Charles and Noreen Mendola

Our father, Sam, Sal, Salvatore, Tutto, Old Pal, Old Buddy, or even “Slick” as his sons and Russell Battaglia, and others called him. No matter what he was called he responded to everyone with unconditional love and fairness. He truly loved his family and friends and was overjoyed by their life’s accomplishments. While “gruff” on the outside, Dad’s heart was warm and inviting and a more loyal a confidant couldn’t be found.

Dad, born Salvatore Cologero Mendola, in Pittston, Pa., and whose ancestry reaches back to the hills of Montedoro, Sicily, was part of The Greatest Generation. He came to Buffalo as a young man and lived on Trenton Avenue.

While limited in his education, he was perhaps one of the brightest and hardest workers of his day.

Dad could not cook. But he loved to eat. His favorite holiday was Saint Joseph’s Day. While the women cooked, Dad put the tables together, ran to Caruso’s or Guercio’s, and to Luigi’s for bread and then back home to wait for Msgr. Griffin to share some vino and spfinge.

Dad was the original “Jack of all trades.” He was a “grease monkey” who loved cars. In November 1940, he married the love of his life,

Rose Gruttadauria. They had 4 children. (we, the writers, and siblings, Salvatore, and Richard)

Dad honed his mechanical and construction skills as a “Seabee” in Jackson Hole, Wyoming and in Nevada, and later in the army. After his discharge he fulfilled his dreams and opened Sal’s Ashland Service Station on Seventh and Pennsylvania. (the 1st of his 3 stations)

While the West Side boys were hanging around “Scotty’s bar” at night, during the day they were at Sal’s station. There, you found Richard Viola, Joe DiLeo, John Freda, Johnny Sacco, and Dad’s beloved Zendano boys.



1956 photo of Charlie and Sal Mendola at their service station at Seventh St. and Pennsylvania

And there were those with strange monikers: Cheech, Joe Nerves, Tony Cap, Bongie, and Rainbow Vic—whose name derived from his famous yellow, white and pink custom painted ’54 Buick Roadmaster. If Dad didn’t know your name you became “George.”

While much gas was pumped, tires changed, and brakes fixed, a lot of “Shenanigans” occurred as well. Dad, always one to react, was the butt of many jokes. Once, Pat Sole, the biggest “Ball Buster” on the West

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Side, put grease on the phone receiver so when Dad finished talking he had a “ring” around his ear. Another time, Cheech, a dedicated employee, had Dad believing he needed a new transmission on his car. You see, Cheech, jacked up the rear of Dad’s car so the tires were barely off the ground.

When Dad attempted to move the car it wouldn’t move. Shifting gears, revving the engine and swearing was to no avail. Due to the uproarious laughter Dad knew it was a prank and shouted, “You labor fakers—stop monkeying around!”

Dad had many prominent clients: Mr. Kulick, a record distributor (Faysan), Doctors Borzilleri and Scibetta who called Dad the “doctor of cars.” However, everyone was treated the same. It didn’t matter who you were. Dad didn’t care about getting rich. He cared about his good name and his integrity; a lesson he taught his children and employees.



Sal and Charlie Mendola, 1944 photo

Many of Dad’s clients told us how he did a “ton” of work on their cars but only charged them what he knew they could afford.

There was always something going on at the station. I recall the time our home phone rang. Mom was told to hurry and get me (Noreen) to the station to see Paul Anka. (Charlie reminded me, “that was before Anka’s nose job!”)

Another time, a Cadillac with Bobby Rydell as a passenger stopped for gas. Fabian, promoted through Fayson often visited. As such, Charlie owns many first releases, autographed albums, and has many stories to tell.

One could go on and on about Dad and those “good ol’ days” on the West Side. And 20 years after his passing on March 23, 1990, we, his children, beloved wife, Rose, and his friends enjoy “the roses” he left us.



Everyone loved my mother. She was a sweet woman. She had a good heart. She was kind and honest. She didn't have a mean bone in her body. Is there a heaven? We don't know. But the concept exists and it exists for people like my mother.

She was also tough, hardworking and independent. She was a sports fan. She loved baseball and basketball. I was fond of saying to her: "If I had money I would buy you a baseball team. That would take the pressure off me and you could bake cookies for all the players".

My mother had a few do's and don'ts she lived her life by:

- Patience is a virtue.
- A house can never be too clean.
- Insomnia means you aren't working hard enough.
- Bacon is good for you.
- Eat a piece of candy before retiring.
- Don't be friends with a cheap person.
- When depressed attend a basketball game.
- The world doesn't owe you a living.

There are a few others but you get the idea. We have one mother. It's a particular kind of love, selfless and immense, without limit and, more than anything, endlessly forgiving. These are the things that convince us they will live forever. The death of this person is inconceivable. Then it happens and we can't believe it. Now we have a problem. We have this hole in our life and along with the hole a sobering thought: we are truly on our own.

It is impossible to speak of my mother without speaking of my father. They were married 64 years. My father also had a few do's and don'ts he operated according to—more than a few—and quite different in tone and purpose than my mother. I won't labor this one.

He was a sport. You've heard the expression—money burns a hole in my pocket. That was my father. He died a happy man—without a dime to his name. He liked clothes, cars and dining in classy restaurants — the classier the better.

There were a lot of cars, beginning with the splendid cruiser types of the 30's, the 40's, the 50's—the Cads, Chryslers, Buicks. The downsizing effect of cars that occurred in the sixties—the phasing out of

the super-boat types and ushering in the era of the 4 cylinder peanut model was a low moment for him. Later on when the money got tight he was driving something called a Geo—a car for midgets. It was sad.

We are the children of our parents. We can't escape that one. From my father I got my enthusiasm and sense of humor and from my mother my energy and a very hard head. Of all the words I could use to describe her, "energy" is the one that goes to the top of the list.

I will tell a story, that I have told before, many times before, but is always worth another repeat. Its Thanksgiving circa 1975. My mother was a waitress and the restaurant was Biffs in Oakland, the worlds busiest coffee shop. On this day she worked an early shift and came home to make dinner. We had guests, a visiting couple from England and their two kids, Students at UC Berkeley—football players. I mention the football because it means you are cooking for 2 extra people,

She comes home, she makes dinner, we eat, she cleans up—by herself, no help allowed, that was the rule and we sat around for a bit and the guests leave. I am starting to fade but not my mother who is just getting warmed up. She turns to me and says: "I'm bored. The Warriors are playing tonight. You wanna go?"

You are always reluctant to admit you have less energy than a 65 year old woman who has put in a full shift waitressing at the coffee shop, throws together a Thanksgiving dinner for 7 people including two football Players, and now plans to finish it off it off by attending a basketball game, and I rouse myself and say:"OK." That was my Sicilian Mom.

*Jack Spiegelman*

Ed. Note

*For more of Jack go to [Bflowriter.com](http://Bflowriter.com)*



Ann Rea Spiegelman

**Huffington Post Article February 3, 2010**

NEW YORK — A famed strongman who once lifted 3,200 pounds at Coney Island during its heyday and was still bending quarters with his fingers at age 104 died Monday after he was hit by a minivan.

Joe Rollino was struck as he crossed Bay Ridge Parkway in Brooklyn, and suffered a broken pelvis, head trauma and broken ribs. He died a few hours later at an area hospital. Police said the driver was going the speed limit and had not been drinking. No criminality is suspected, but the driver was issued a summons for a defective horn.

During his storied life, Rollino hobnobbed with Harry Houdini, watched Jack Dempsey knock out Jess Willard and was friendly with Mario Lanza. He even had a bit part in "On the Waterfront."

Rollino would've been 105 on March 19, and was the model of health, according to friends. A vegetarian for life, he didn't drink or smoke, his friends said, and he exercised every day. He was a lifetime boxer and was part of the Oldtime Barbell and Strongmen, an organization of men who can still rip book binders at the

seam.

Retired NYPD detective Arthur Perry, who boxed in the New York City Golden Gloves in the mid-1960s, met Rollino at his birthday party in 2008 and didn't believe Rollino was the celebrant — he looked too good for a centenarian. "It was astonishing, how he was smiled upon by nature," Perry said. "If you would've said to me he was 80, I'd have said he looked younger."

A decorated World War II veteran, Rollino got his start as a strongman in the 1920s during the high point of the Coney Island carnival, and he billed himself as the "Strongest Man in the World."

He later made a living as a traveling boxer under the name Kid Dundee and fought in armories in cities around the country where boxing was forbidden.

Read more of Joe Rollino at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/12/nyregion/12ironman.htm>



Joe Rollino, 1925 photo.



Joe Rollino, at age 103

Flashes of vivid memories of Buffalo, NY are indelibly accented with happy family times created by my Italian-born parents, Sam and Rose Insana. At the age of 93, I assure you that the Italian factor is just as strong in my life today as it was in the so-called "good old days" on the old West Side.

My birth certificate shows my name as Rosaria Victoria Insana, but I was always called Sara. My parents and my brothers, Nicholas and Arthur, and I shared our home with Grandmother Vittoria Santa Maria and Uncle Peter Santa Maria. We resided at 423 Seventh Street, between Hudson and Pennsylvania.

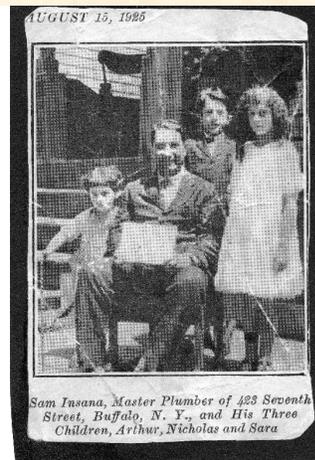
My grandmother emigrated from Palermo, Sicily, worked as a seamstress at a pants factory in Buffalo, and saved enough money to have her mother, husband, and their four children join her in Buffalo during the late 1800s.

I remember my mother telling us of the event that led to my parents' marriage. Mom's uncle wanted her to marry Sam, the local plumber, when she was 18. She wasn't interested and declined. Shortly after, she entered a crowded trolley car and the very same Sam arose from his seat, tipped his hat, and offered the seat to her. This polite gesture impressed her to such an extent that she told her uncle that she was interested in accepting the marriage offer. They were married in 1914. Whenever she told this story, Mom's eyes would light up, as if she were falling in love all over again.

My father received his Master Plumbing and Heating Contractor Certificate in 1925. He opened his own plumbing and heating shop in the front of our home.

A photo of him holding the certificate with my two brothers and me proudly gathered around him appeared in the daily newspaper.

Papa was an avid reader and self-



taught in music, art, science, astronomy, and history. I recall him humming arias of the operas that he remembered from performances he had attended in Palermo. He wrote poetry and one of his poems, "Santa Rosalia,"

was awarded a medal by the Italian government. When my parents attended social functions at the Italian clubs in the Buffalo area, he was frequently called upon to recite spontaneously created poems. He kept informed by reading Italian newspapers, and would ask me to read articles aloud to learn how to enunciate pure Italian, since we spoke the Sicilian dialect.

I remember the vendors who came down our street in their horse-drawn wagons. When my parents' friends visited our home – including the man who would one day become my father-in-law, Anthony Lepeirs – tarantellas and waltzes were played on mandolin and guitar and I'd accompany them on piano. I would marry Anthony's son, Richard Joseph Lepeirs, on April 22, 1939 at Holy Cross Church.



Sam Insana, Anthony Lepeirs, Charles Scialfo.

I attended No. 1 School and played piano with the school orchestra. I played

Sousa marches daily as pupils entered their classrooms after lunch. I graduated in 1930, and then went on to join the first class at Grover Cleveland High School. On Grover's opening day, the Buffalo Evening News took a photo of my friends and me entering at the front door.



Entering the new Grover Cleveland high school, formerly State Teachers College. Left to right: Agatha Cutrona, Theresa Giamo, Rose Barone, Laura Turchiarelli. Sara Insana and Lydia Atkinson. Fred Loeb and George Moffatt already have regis-

I remember the underground passageway that connected the Larkin Administration Building to the Larkin Department Store on Seneca Street, where I worked first as a file clerk and finally as secretary to the store manager.

Family outings were wonderful. Crystal Beach was as clear as the name implied. The food specialties were cotton candy, tootsie rolls, peppermint sticks, waffle-like pastries, and nickel ice cream cones. We crossed from the U.S. to Canada via boat that featured music by the Mangione Band. My Mom would pack large containers of baked macaroni and meatballs, eggplant parmesan, homemade bread, and Italian cookies for our picnic outings.

Open-house celebrations on Saint Joseph's Day were common in our community. Each table was decorated with a St. Joseph statue and fresh flowers. Pasta con sarde, fritatas, braided breads, and pastries were plentiful.

I brought my treasured Italian traditions with me when I, my husband, two daughters and son moved to St. Rose of Lima parish in North Buffalo in 1952. As president of the Altar and Rosary Society, I introduced some new fund-raising activities to that parish -- including a St. Joseph's Table, an annual spaghetti dinner, and a variety of Italian pastries for the baked goods sales.

When we relocated to Granada Hills, CA, in 1973, I brought treasured memories of Buffalo's Old West Side with me. And, I think of them often, especially when I cook pasta con sarde.



Sara Lepeirs, Public Relations and Development Coordinator for D'Youville College in the 1960s and early '70s, later continued her career at California State University, Northridge. She has written many articles

over the years and currently is writing about her life as a Catholic woman of Italian heritage.



1920s Italian-American children at Crystal Beach



5447 Elizabeth Ave, the Hill, St. Louis, Mo. Pietro, Lawrence (Yogi) and Paulina Berra, circa 1947.

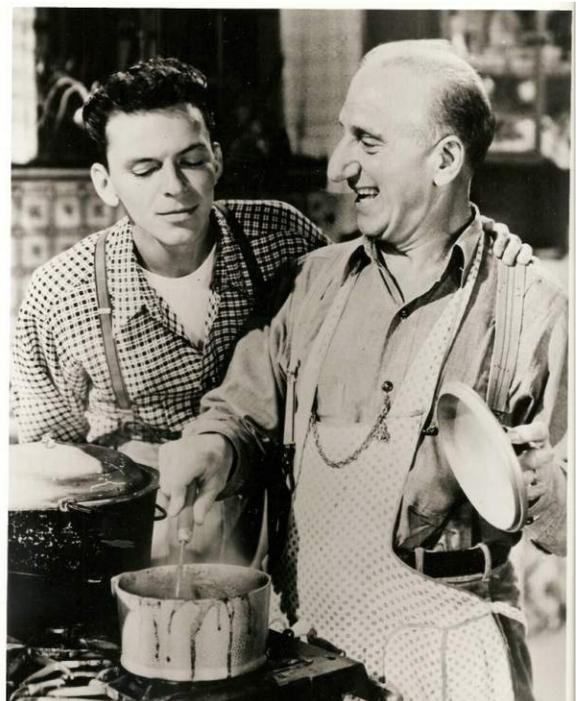


1956: Front row are the Salerno cousins, Caroline , Buddy, and John. As a youngster John often visited relatives in New York City. Cousin Buddy set up this picture with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. (Their last performance at the Copacabana before splitting on July 25, 1956)



Joe Del Popolo and grandfather.

Sinatra and Durante making sauce.



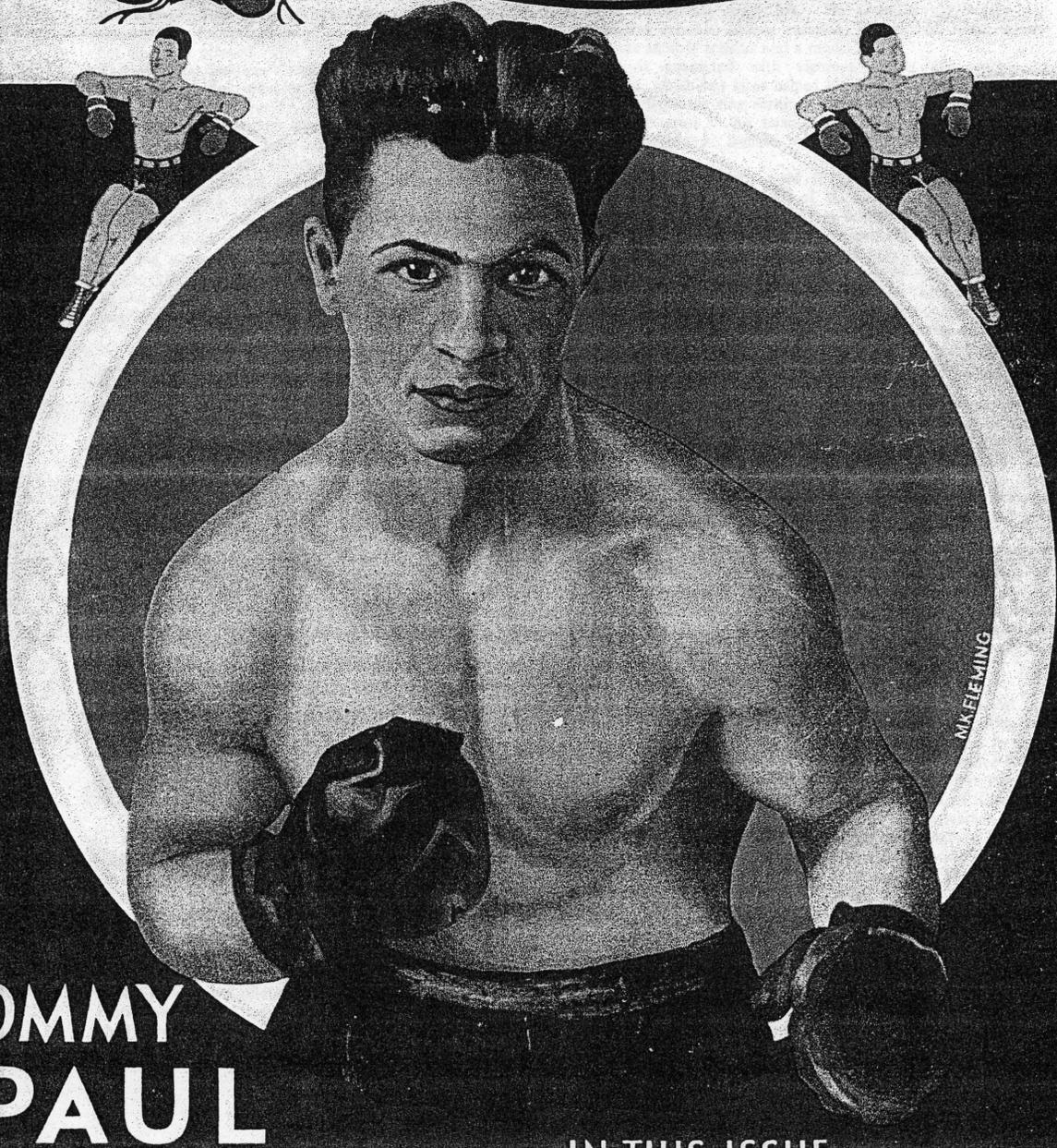
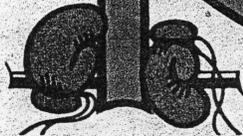
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# The RING



**TOMMY  
PAUL**

IN THIS ISSUE

Tommy Paul, from Buffalo's West Side and Hutchinson Central High, was a world featherweight boxing champion. Paul, christened Gaetano Papa, followed his father and brothers in the ring at an early age. His boyish looks hindered his efforts to land even the role of a trainer, but legendary handler Jack Singer saw something special and gave him a tryout. Tommy compiled an impressive record of 58-6, and earned a shot at the world featherweight crown. On May 26, 1932, in Detroit, Paul defeated Johnny Pena for the crown and brought it to Buffalo.