



Saint Lucy
283-304 AD

Tradition tells us that Saint Lucy was born of noble, wealthy, Christian parents in Syracuse, Italy. Lucy had few memories of her father, for he died when Lucy was an infant. As a young girl, Lucy took a secret vow to consecrate her virginity to Christ. Thus her mother was quite dismayed when Lucy, as a teen, refused marriage to a young pagan. When Lucy's mother developed a hemorrhage, Lucy persuaded her to visit the tomb of St. Agatha to pray for healing. When her mother was healed, Lucy revealed her vow of virginity and asked permission to bestow her fortune on the poor. Joyful at her cure, Lucy's mother agreed, but Lucy's pagan suitor was incensed. With the persecution of the emperor Diocletian at its height, the jilted young man accused Lucy, before a judge, of being a Christian. When Lucy refused to relinquish her faith, the judge ordered her to a brothel. However, guards who attempted to drag her to the

house of sin were unable to budge her. Similarly an attempt to burn Lucy to death failed so she was dispatched by thrusting a sword into her throat. The date of Lucy's martyrdom was December 13, 304.

As early as the sixth century, Lucy was honored in Rome as one of the most praiseworthy virgin martyrs, and her name was inserted into the canon of the Mass. Possibly because of her name, which means "light," Lucy was invoked by those who suffered from eye trouble or blindness. Due to this connection, various legends arose. One legend claimed that her eyes were put out by a tyrannical government official or by her jilted boyfriend. Another declared that Lucy tore them out herself to discourage her pagan suitor. In every story, however, the Lord restored her eyes to her, more beautiful than ever.

In Venice, people celebrate the Feast of St. Lucy by enjoying fried cheese. Elsewhere in Italy, Italians eat small cakes or biscotti shaped like eyes, light huge bonfires, and conduct evening candlelight processions, all in honor of Saint Lucy.

Sicilians pay tribute to a miracle performed by St Lucy during a famine in 1582. At that time, she brought a flotilla of grain-bearing ships to starving Sicily, whose citizens cooked and ate the wheat without taking time to grind it into flour. Thus, on St. Lucy's Day, Sicilians don't eat anything made with wheat flour. Instead they eat cooked wheat called *cuccia*.

In 1905 Vincenzo Muscarella, a teenager who trained as a tailor in Valledlunga, Sicily, arrived in New York City via Ellis Island as so many Italian immigrants had done. Vincenzo found work in a New York Italian pastry shop where he gathered recipes and techniques for making cannoli, cookies, cakes, marzipan, lemon ice and gelato. During this time, Vincenzo lived in

Lodi, New Jersey where he married Connie Lopanto and had four children before moving to Buffalo in 1918 where he and Connie opened their first pastry shop on Busti Avenue.

In 1920, Muscarella's Pastry Shop moved up the street to 103 Busti Avenue with the family living above the store. The shop served the Italian community for forty-two years. In 1962



1940 photo of Muscarella's Pastry Shop at 103 Busti Ave



Christmas 1947: Vincenzo, Anthony, Vincent, Ida and Philip Muscarella

the land was purchased for Urban Renewal and the shop was relocated to Niagara Street. At this time, Muscarella's was run by Philip Muscarella, youngest son of Vincenzo and Connie. He and his wife, the former Ida Costanzo would run the shop from this location for the next 10 years. Ida, daughter of Buffalo's most famous makers of Italian bread, introduced bread into Muscarella's shop in 1960. Ida always made bread for the family but when it was offered for sale during a slack period in the shop, it mushroomed like wildfire and they sold 1500 loaves a week.

Although my parents retired in 1973, my wife Mary Kay and I, both teachers with summers free, carry on the tradition by selling Muscarella's Cannoli at Italian Festivals. We introduced Cannoli at the Erie County Fair in 1978 and sold them there until 1990.

Now that my wife and I are retired, our son, Philip, fourth generation, has joined the summer business.

Most everyone of Italian heritage in Buffalo and its surrounding areas visited Muscarella's for real Italian treats. So many customers at festivals tell of their memories of visiting Muscarella's. They remember lemon ice at Muscarella's on hot summer evenings. They remember stopping in on Sunday mornings after church. They remember celebrating birthdays, graduations, first communions and baptisms with a visit to Muscarella's. They remember the shop, the neighborhood, the people but most importantly: the treats!

Hopefully, the Buffalo/Muscarella cannoli tradition will continue into the 5th generation of Muscarellas.



1932 photo: Behind counter left to right, Gandolph, Vincenzo Muscarella and unknown baker. At front table Philip Muscarella. Behind left to right, Connie and Laura Muscarella. Concetta Muscarella at side table.



A 1903 photo of Santa Licata flanked by her daughters Vincenza and Lucia in Montedoro, Sicily prior to leaving for America in 1906

When I was a young boy my mother often told me stories of her life in the old country (Sicily) and her eventual journey across the Atlantic to America. Her name was Lucia Licata and she was born October, 24th 1899 in Montedoro, Sicily. Her father's name was Giuseppe and her mother was Santa Alba. My mother had a sister, Vincenza, who was three year older than her. My grandfather, by occupation was a sulfur miner. In 1903, at age forty, he left his family in Sicily and departed for America in search of work. At the turn of the century many immigrants from Montedoro settled in Pittston, Pa. My grandfather being a sulfur miner traveled to Pittston and worked alongside his paisani in the coal mines.

After working a few years and saving his money, Giuseppe returned to Montedoro to be with his family, where he returned to work in the sulfur mines. Vincenza and Lucia would often take lunch

to him at the mine and at the end of the day wait with excitement for his return home from work. However it didn't take Giuseppe long to realize that life in America was much better and more opportunistic than remaining in Sicily.

Lucia, six at the time, remembered the day that Giuseppe told them that he would be returning to America and they were going with him. It was a bittersweet moment. Giuseppe 44 years old and Santa, 34 were excited but saddened they had to say goodbye to their respective families knowing they may never see them again.

So, in January, 1906, they departed Montedoro by donkey cart heading for Palermo their port of embarkation. On January 27, they boarded the SS *Sicilian Prince* to begin their epic journey to America. Sixteen days later, on February 11, they docked in New York and began the endurance of Ellis Island. (The following is from "*La Storia*" by Jerre Mangione & Ben Morreale) *"Except for misery of seasickness, the physical discomfort suffered en route was not nearly as disturbing as the foreboding emigrants shared about their impending debarkation at Ellis Island. Foremost was the worry that the American authorities might find a reason to bar their entrance."* Lucia was not happy. It was February and she had never experienced the harsh cold of February in New York. She told me how she cried and begged to go back to Sicily to live with her grandmother. The family settled in a basement flat in a tenement in Little Italy. Though the neighborhood was crowded with immigrants, Lucia eventually became accustomed to her surroundings. Her stories, told to me as a young boy, are now resurrecting as I age. I recall her description of the Bowery, beer being lugged out of taverns in pails. How she and her sister would plant themselves in front

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of a neighborhood theatre hoping to catch a flicker or two of the silent films as patrons entered and exited. This was all new and exciting to them. But life in the tenement was difficult and my grandfather was unable to secure meaningful employment. Eventually he relocated with his family to Pittston to again work in the coal mines. Ultimately Giuseppe moved his family to their final destination: Buffalo, New York.

A few years ago, through the Ellis Island Foundation, I ordered the manifest of the *SS Sicilian Prince* that brought my mother to America. The manifest stated that the Licata family would be joining my grandfather's brother-in-law, Carmelo Scian-dra at 233 Elizabeth Street, New York City. One weekend this past September, my family and I went to New York for a Yankee game. I woke up early on Saturday and told my wife, my son, my daughter and my grandchildren that I was going to find 233 Elizabeth Street. They agreed to come along. We

rode the subway to Little Italy. I opened my little map, located Elizabeth Street and began my search. Canal St. to Mott St. and finally Elizabeth St. But we were quite a distance from the 200 block. We began walking and my pace quickened, soon I was almost a block ahead of my family. I approached the 200 block and there it was: 233 Elizabeth Street, my mother's residence when reaching America in 1906. I stood still for a few moments, overcome with emotion, the stories my mother told me so long ago were now dancing in my mind. Within a few minutes my family caught up to me, we took a few pictures and began a slow walk back to the subway station.

Now in my 70s I wish that I would have documented the immigration experience of both my parents. I could have been a better listener. I should have asked more questions. I should have written a journal. But I didn't. Nor did I realize the importance of that event and how important it would be to me.



233-235 Elizabeth Street circa 1900 and 2010

This story is fiction, but the places named are real. The personal names are typical of the region, and the situations described reflect actual conditions in the Sicily of the late 1800s.

The sulfur mine was known as Rumpaspaddi: the Backbreaker.

Hundreds of men and boys worked at the mine. Most were from Racalmuto, as was Antonino “Nino” Alessi. But there were many from nearby towns: Montedoro, Serradifalco, and other smaller places. The men were hauled to and from the mine in rickety, mule-drawn carrozzi. For many the trip took as long as an hour each way. They arrived at the mine before sunrise, and left long after it had set.

One late evening in June of 1869, at the end of a shift, Nino Alessi prepared to clamber into the carrozza that would carry him home. But before he could climb in, one of the mine’s owners took him aside.

“Don” Morreale began, “Your son Saverio –” Nino corrected him, “Salvatore, we call him Toto”.

“Yes, uh, right, Salvatore. He’s seven-years old now, right? Well, we need carusi: boys to carry the

sulfur out of the mine after you pickmen chop it out of the rock. Two died last week. We can pay you a succursu di morte for Salvatore – twenty scuti.”

“Twenty scuti! For my son’s life?”

“If you don’t like it, you can speak to some of the piconieri who contract for their own carusi.”

Nino had already done this, and knew that none of the pickmen would pay more than eighteen scuti. Further, their carusi had to scabble to find a place to sleep at night, while the owner’s carusi had a separate space, even if it was only a wide spot at the end of a played-out tunnel. And the scraps of stale food that the owners supplied their carusi were at least provided regularly. The individual pickmen were less likely to give their helpers enough food, and their personal tenure over the boys led to treatment that was often no better than a slave might receive. Though

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Nino had never been able to afford his own carusi, he was subconsciously grateful that he had never been in the position of virtually owning another person. "This practice can only scorch the souls of the piconieri as well as the carusi," he thought.

But it was a vicious circle. Because he could not afford to contract for carusi, he was paid a lower wage than those who could. So he needed the succursu payment. Reluctantly, Nino agreed. Morreale presented him with a note that could be exchanged in town for twenty scuti, and had him make his mark on two copies of a contract stipulating the terms of the agreement. "Your wife can take the note to your municipiu tomorrow, to exchange it for money, and she can have the clerk confirm the contract."

"What does it say?"

"That the boy Salvatore Alessi will work as a carusu at this mine, that he will be fed, clothed and boarded here, and take orders from the piconiere to which he is assigned. For his services, you will receive a one-time payment of twenty scuti."

Nino knew that the "fed, clothed and boarded" part would constitute poor provisions indeed, while the orders his son must obey would be almost overwhelming. The boy would spend the rest of his life in the mine, shouldering backbreaking loads of sulfur, unless Nino could someday pay back the 'death benefit'. Nevertheless, Nino had to provide for his wife, Maria, and their other two children and he felt he had no choice, if he was to



keep the rest of his family alive. So he accepted the voucher and the contract, and morosely climbed aboard the carrozza.

Next morning, Maria rose when Nino and Toto did, long before dawn. They broke fast on her fresh bread and some cheese she had managed to make from their goat's dwindling supply of milk. She had made an ingenious garment for Toto, a sort of tunic that covered his shoulders and reached to his knees. It was doubled at the waist so that it could be let down to cover his legs. "See, do this if you need to stay warm," she said.

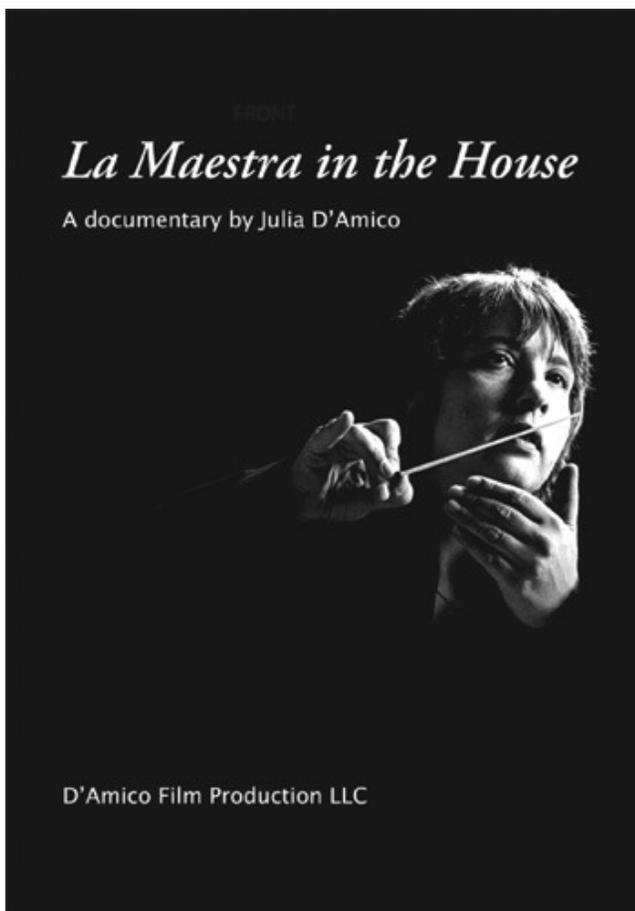
"Warmth won't be a problem in the depths of the mine," interjected Nino. "Most of the time we go almost naked because of the heat."

"Well," Maria said to Nino, "he must go outdoors to the privy, even in winter. This will help. And see this?" The garment had a pouch sewn inside, against Toto's body, which could be reached through a slit concealed by a fold of cloth. "Here, Toto," Maria said, "is a cheese and a hard sausage. Put them in the sacchu, and tell no one."

She embraced the boy and went down to the cart with them. Nino lifted the tearful Toto into the cart and then climbed in. Nino reached out to the violently sobbing Maria. Never one to show much emotion, he put his arm around her shoulder and

pressed his cheek to hers, whispering "Mariùzza, I'm sorry. I'll do my best to protect him at the mine. I'm so sorry. Our beautiful son . . ."

The cart lurched away, tearing them from her. And she wept.



The maestra in the film, “La Maestra in the House” is Mary Louise Nanna, first violinist for the Buffalo Philharmonic and musical director/ conductor of Ars Nova—a community orchestra established by Mary Louise in 1978 and still going strong 32 years later—or stronger.

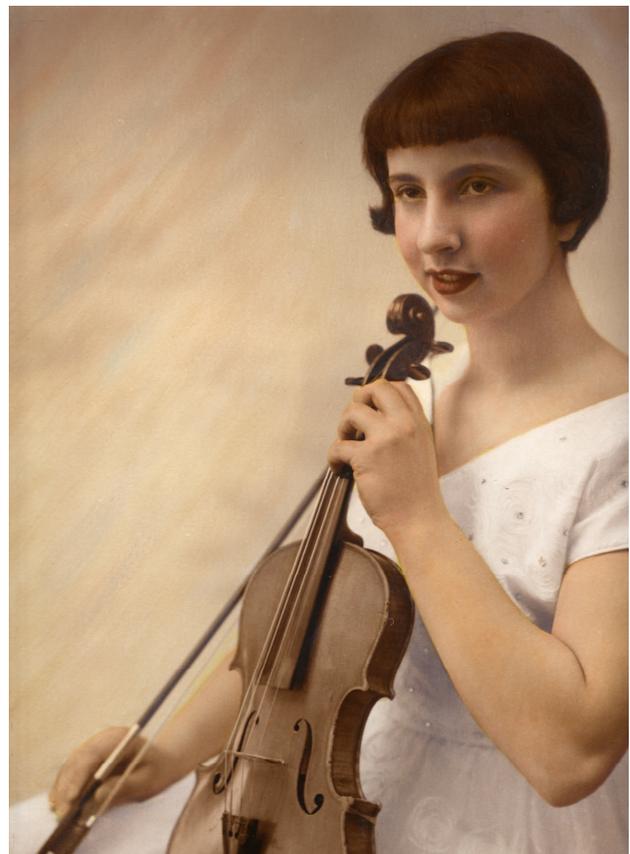
Buffalo is a city well known for the music and musicians who have always thrived there. It’s a musical town and it’s the Ars Nova group and the involvement with it by Mary Louise Nanna that energizes the film and provides a close-up of the effect such a project has on the people and cultural vibes of a city.

I should mention that I know Mary Louise Nanna, also Julia D’Amico who produced and directed the film, indeed they are friends so

anything I say in this review could never be considered objective but I will do my best.

Buffalo is a city of neighborhoods, in Mary-Louise’s case it was East Lovejoy—a mix of blue collar immigrant types—German, Polish, Italian. Hers was a family of musicians beginning with her grandfather—Papa Louie—a violinist. Mary Louise’s father—Pete the Barber—played clarinet with the mother on piano. There were 4 uncles—two clarinet players, a saxophonist and a drummer.

Sunday was the day for a family gathering and following the food, off came the apron of Mary Louise's mother and down she sat at the piano to hammer out some rousing blues or honky-tonk with the rest of the family joining in. But even among these highly accomplished



performers Mary Louise stood out as an extraordinary talent—a prodigy.

Musicians have a problem—a problem they share with actors which is: the requirement of an audience. Writers can write and painters paint and even if the work is never published or on display in a gallery its too bad but it isn't fatal. The work remains valid.

Music is different. A musician alone in his or her room practicing away does so in a vacuum and the notes, no matter how inspired or exquisitely played, fall on non-existent ears and it is only in the presence of an audience that musicians can take real satisfaction in the practice of their art—or profession. It's like a surgeon without a body to cut upon. That's the musician's problem and for the conductor it's the same. The musician needs an audience and the conductor needs an orchestra.

Back to Mary Louise. Mary Louise wanted to conduct. Why? Because there is a conductor type and she is the type-- something about being up there on the conductors podium hacking furiously with the baton to whip the musicians into an inspired state. Also the conductor is a total musician who must assimilate knowledge of all the instruments and how they integrate within the score to provide the desired effect—the Mary Louise Nanna effect.

That was the beginning of Ars Nova—the church concerts.

Buffalo is a city of churches and a natural venue for these concerts

that feature a core repertoire of the great 17th and 18th century baroque composers: Bach, Vivaldi, Scarlatti, etc. I won't describe any of these events but leave it for you to enjoy them as you watch the film.

What is less apparent is the other hat she wears—the administrative hat—the paperwork, the phone calls, the running of errands, the shopping for this, that, and the other, and all the rest of it—the grunt work—that is indispensable to the smooth running of any community project.

It is a tribute both to the enterprising spirit and sheer physical stamina of this woman and the terrific enthusiasm of the city in its response to her achievement—Ars Nova.

She is amazing and a perfect fit for an extraordinary city.



I want to tell you how happy my sister Carolyn and I were with the beautiful article and pictures of our parents Jeanette and Joseph Curto. We will treasure this article always as part of our ongoing genealogy record for our family members. We have made copies for our children to enjoy also.

The dinner and dance at Di-Tondo's was so enjoyable. The food was delicious and Joey Giambra's band is a gem. You and Joey are doing a marvelous job promoting the city and its glorious Italian-American heritage.

Fond regards

Terri Curto Gerard
Mechanicsburg PA

I just came across a copy of the "Per Niente", I had been unaware of its existence. I just happened to get a copy from a friend who saw it in a barber shop .

Please put me on your mailing list. I am enclosing a check in the amount of \$35.00. Thank you and God bless you and your work.

C.A.
Buffalo

May I extend to you my appreciation for the wonderful autumn issue of Per Niente. The Eleonora Duse featured story was wonderful, as was that of "Memories" by Robert Vi-haro. Joey Giambra's narrative of his friend Tom Signorelli was riveting to me, and I could continue to the last pages of the issue.

UN BEL LAVORE,

Thank You! It makes me very proud to be one who left the West side long ago but treasures every morsel I can read about it.

Saluti!

Bernie D'Andrea
Hilton Head S.C.

I greatly enjoyed Jack D'Amico's story about his uncle Hank—the clarinet player. I remember Jack from the old days when we lifeguarded together at the Massachusetts pool. Sometimes at the end of the day when all the kids had gone home a pile of clothes was left behind in the locker room. Whose were they? Maybe they were the clothes of someone laying dead at the bottom of the pool. You couldn't see the bottom of the pool because by the end of the day the water was like soup. So the lifeguards had to dive in and swim along the bottom feeling around with their hands for bodies. Hilarious!

Phil Re
San Francisco CA



Sam Arena

LINGUINI

with Sun Dried Tomatoes, olives and capers, fresh spinach

INGREDIENTS

- 12 Green Olives with pimentos
- 12 Greek Kalamata olives
- 1 small jar of sun dried tomatoes in olive oil
- 8 to 10 ounces of fresh baby spinach
- 2 cans of chicken broth or about 1 quart of chicken stock
- 1 tbs. capers
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 tsp. dried fennel seed (optional)
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Start by wilting the spinach in a saute pan with a little olive oil. Slice the green olives, crush the kalamata olives and remove the pits. Add 1/2 of the chicken stock, the sun dried tomatoes with most of the oil, the olives and capers and finely chopped garlic. Simmer for about 20 minutes until all the flavors blend. Add more chicken stock if needed.

Cook the pasta al dente and add it to the sauce to which it will add body and flavor. Serve immediately . Add Pecorino Romano or Parmigiano-Reggiano to taste.

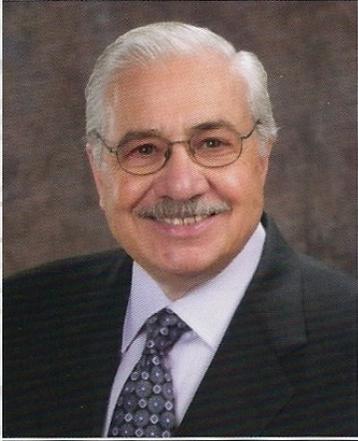
This pasta dish is simple to make and goes well with a lite bodied red wine or ice cold pinot grigio or any other dry white wine.

A simple Caesar salad and plenty of Italian-garlic bread makes this a truly gourmet delight.

Remember K.I.S.S KEEP IT SIMPLE WITH SAM

Buon Appetito !!!!





Joseph M. Quagliana M.D.

On 10/2/10 Dr. Joseph Quagliana was honored at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, by "The Volunteers in Medicine" for his lifetime achievements in medicine. Originally from Buffalo, Dr. Quagliana received his doctorate of medicine with honors including Alpha Omega Alpha from the University of Buffalo School of Medicine, trained at Tufts University in Boston and Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, and was Chief Fellow in Hematology at the University of Utah.

In 1966, while practicing oncology at the San Jose California Medical Foundation, he was drafted to serve his country in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War. He served as Captain and Deputy Hospital Commander for two years and received an Air Force Commendation

Medal for his efforts.

In 1968, he was selected by the University of Utah to be Cancer Coordinator, Assistant Professor of Medicine, and Chief of the first division of medical oncology in the department of medicine. While at the University of Utah he started the Intermountain Regional Cancer Network Program providing cancer education, protocols for patient care, research training and tumor boards in Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Utah and Nevada.

Dr. Quagliana moved to Las Vegas in 1974 as Chief of Hematology/Oncology and Director of Medical Education at Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital, Clinical Professor of Medicine of the University of Nevada Las Vegas and started the first cancer clinic at the hospital which provided cancer care to all patients including the uninsured. He brought the first national cancer research program, the Southwest Oncology Group to Las Vegas and started the first Medical Oncology Fellowship Training Program. In 1978 he established his own freestanding clinic, The Cancer and Hematology Center of Nevada, the first in Southern Nevada. This was the beginning of treating patients in an outpatient setting rather than in the hospital. One of his greatest contributions to the community was the development of a Pediatric Oncology program which was affiliated with U.C.L.A.

Dr. Quagliana is credited with bringing oncology diagnosis, research, and the first cancer center to Southern Nevada.

He was recognized for his contributions to the University of Utah School of Medicine for establishing the Medical Oncology Division, building a Clinical Oncology Fellowship Training Program, establishing the University Hospital as a Cancer Patient Referral Center and integrating the Program into several National Clinical Cancer Research Groups. His work served as a major building block to the establishment of the Huntsman Cancer Institute.



In his youth Dr. Joseph Quagliana lived at Michigan and East Tupper above his father's grocery store and attended Hutchinson Central High School where he excelled scholastically and musically.



Joe Quagliana performing at high school dance



Top: Charlie Sciandra, Joey Giambra, Joe Quagliana

Bottom: Art Wayne, Jimmy Cirrito

Joey Giambra's speech commemorating Lake Erie Italian Club on its 100th anniversary

I am pleased to be here tonight in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the distinguished Lake Erie Italian Club.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge two wonderful people who, by invoking my name made it possible for me to speak to you on this auspicious occasion. I'm referring to Don Angelo of the Buffalo Broadcasters Association and Lea DiCenzo, a TV producer at Channel 7 and a native of Lackawanna who grew up a few doors from here and whose family owned and operated something once called, "a chicken market."

But I would be remiss if I didn't thank Dean Zicarelli, Nick Constantino, Lou Mustillo, and Lou Petrucci for ultimately bestowing this honor upon me.

More to the point, what we're here to do this evening is to honor those charter members, Italian immigrants, who, a century ago, as a protective measure started what was originally called the Lake Erie Cooperative Society, an organization that has since become the Lake Erie Italian Club.

As many here know, the original members had the foresight to do this because other ethnics who immigrated to the America of Western New York before them openly mistreated Italian immigrants. As such, because the Italians were from various parts of a far distant country and spoke a different language, ate different food, wore different clothing, and looked physically different to everyone, they

knew there was a tremendous need for camaraderie in this strange new land. Due to this adversity, the options for survival were few.

So, in 1910, what was created, was a support group, a "quasi-mutual aid society" that has since evolved into a successful social organization dedicated to taking care of its own and continues to do so as it enters its second century.

Owing to the tenacity of the group whose original members were from Italian enclaves in South Buffalo, Blasdell, and Lackawanna, this organization has thrived while other clubs, societies or federations of similar intent have

vanished or now wallow in obscurity. One wonders, why is that? Why is the L E I C successful? Can it be that many of its members are descendants and off springs of original members, and, who, through the years have worked quietly and fastidiously and who never wanted or needed applause. These individuals gave quietly of their diverse talents and labor in creating this wonderful space, a former Kinney shoe store in which we find ourselves this evening.

An example of this stoicism is mirrored throughout the generations of Western New York Italian-Americans and American-Italians. We have one generation building upon another.

When Italian immigrants arrived in America the only work available to them was farm labor, coal mining, shoveling snow, sweeping floors, or digging

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Lou Mustillo, Dean Zicarelli, Nick Constantino

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ditches. Ultimately, in WNY the non-Italians responsible for building, managing and hiring at the fledgling steel plants of Lackawanna and South Buffalo viewed the area's Italian immigrants as industrious and hired many of them to help build the steel plants as well as to labor in them.

Some Italian immigrants were recognized for their superior ability as stonemasons and their affinity for concrete and were utilized in building Buffalo's infrastructure.

These diligent men and their woman were those whose blood, sweat and tears made it easier for the next generation of WNY American-Italians to experience a modicum of success.

A subsequent generation experienced even more success by becoming educators, doctors, lawyers, sports stars, entertainers, PhDs, engineers, politicians, musicians, captains of industry, and authors, the most notable of whom is Lackawanna's own John Andreozzi, whose magnificent and scholarly book, "The Italians of Lackawanna, NY: Steel Workers, Merchants and Gardeners," is a sixteen-year labor of love.

Conversely, it has received high critical acclaim and rightly so.

We are now in the present generation where the children of these past generations want to establish themselves in the Fine Arts: poets, philosophers, conductors of Symphony orchestras, and boys and girls who aspire to the Ballet.

I'd like to share an anecdote with you on what is occurring in today's American-Italian society. Recently, while filming a forthcoming movie with my associates: Mike Giallombardo, Joe DiLeo and Ken Giangreco, we had the pleasure of interviewing a former buffalonian, mister Frank Collura, a conductor of world class symphony orchestras whose ma-

ternal grandfather was a little man, who, as a laborer on various construction sites had to lift heavy objects: bricks, cinder block, and also had to mix mortar.

During the interview, Mike Giallombardo, asked Frank Collura to talk about his maternal grandfather and to touch upon his own father who was a green grocer. We learned that Frank Collura's grandfather worked diligently performing the aforementioned tasks – and did so - until he was eighty-two years old!

Upon hearing that, Mike Gillombardo then asked Frank Collura, "Frank, what's the heaviest object that you had to lift today?" Frank gave the four of us a blank stare, as if to say, "What are you talking about?"

To which Mike replied, "Frank, as far as I can tell, the heaviest object you lift every day is a one-ounce baton that's used to conduct a symphony orchestra."

A silence filled the room. Mike Giallombardo's remark hit home with stunning clarity. Frank Collura got the point. His eyes started to well up and tears began flowing down his cheek. "I understand," he said, "and I owe my success to my nonnu and to my father, who did his heavy lifting early, every morning at the Bailey-Clinton Market."

Ladies and gentlemen, from the bottom of my heart I truly believe that each of us here understands the full meaning of my simple text that encapsulates a relentless Italian odyssey of one hundred years.

And I know that collectively we wish the next generation the fulfillment of their dreams with our help: that of the present generation. In conclusion, you, we, all of us, must never forget - America e' una parola prettamente Italiana: America is an Italian word.

Thank You.



When Americans of a certain age wax nostalgic about the good old days in Las Vegas, names often mentioned are Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., and Don Rickles. Which is not surpris-

ing, given the legendary status of the Rat Pack. But the lounge act that really defined Vegas in the nineteen-fifties was that of Louis Prima and Keely Smith with Sam Butera and the Witnesses. Prima, whose composition "Sing, Sing, Sing" was an anthem of the swing era that brought swing, Dixieland, shuffle rhythms, and the vocal improvisations and wild excitement of New Orleans to the Casbar Lounge at the Sahara Hotel and changed American pop music forever. According to Mark Rotella in his book *Amore, the Story of Italian American Song*, "They packed the Casbar, performing five shows a night. Soon movie stars, ballplayers, and other entertainers began dropping by. Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis Jr. would watch in awe."

Louis Leo Prima was born on December 7, 1910 to parents who emigrated from Sicily to New Orleans via Argentina. Early twentieth century New Orleans was a simmering gumbo of musical cultures and Prima grew up surrounded by jazz, ragtime, Italian opera, and the music of the marching bands and social clubs. His older brother Leon played the cornet and led his own band and Louis

played in that ensemble as well as the band he formed with clarinetist Irving Fazola. In 1934, at the urging of Guy Lombardo, Prima moved to New York and within months Louis Prima and His New Orleans Gang was packing in the after-midnight musician crowd at the Famous Door on 52nd Street.

Early on in his career, Prima introduced Italian phrases and lyrics into songs like "Angelina," which was inspired by his mother. He also introduced the southern Italian tarantella which, in his Vegas performances, slides from traditional 6/8 time into an uproarious 4/4 groove. "Zooma Zooma" is filled with shouts and hollers, relentless drumbeats and the exalted tenor madness of Sam Butera. He sang "Please No Squeeza da Banana," "Baciagaloop (Makes Love on the Stoop)," and "Felicia No Capicia." While the titles may sound condescending today, Italians in mid-twentieth century America were still stereotyped by the WASP establishment as swarthy ragpickers and organgrinders and Prima's no-holds-barred embrace of Italian culture in his rambunctious music was exciting and liberating. On a 1956 recording, "Buona Sera" begins as a tango and Prima recalling a romantic night in old Napoli. After the first chorus, the band cuts out, Prima improvises four bars of Armstrong scat, and then all hell breaks loose with backbeats driving, Butera honking, and Prima on top of it all, a mad scientist of musical mayhem.

In the nineteen-thirties, Prima worked in Los Angeles and appeared in several films including a cameo playing trumpet in a film with Bing Crosby called *Rhythm on the Range*. Prima's trumpet playing and singing both were both strongly influenced by Louis Armstrong, his boyhood idol in New Or-

(Continued on page 17)

leans, although Prima takes even more liberties with the lyrics, nearly to the point of parody. His improvised nonsense lyrics more closely resemble those of his pal Cab Calloway while his sense of the absurd is closer to that of Frank Zappa. But it's always clear the intent is hijinx, fun, and musical mischief and not the denigration of pop classics.

Prima fronted a big band that appeared in small venues up and down the East Coast in the forties. In 1946, he had a hand in writing a chestnut that later became a big hit for Etta James: "A Sunday Kind of Love." Then one day in 1948 (probably a Sunday) he spotted a beautiful seventeen-year-old girl on a beach in Virginia and later claimed he immediately knew she could sing. Her name was Dorothy Jacqueline Keely but by 1953 she was known as Keely Smith, aka Mrs. Louis Prima, and co-star of the most exciting show in Las Vegas. Keely's classically pure and sexy voice is the perfect counterpoint to Prima's rough and muscular vocals on tunes like "Old Black Magic," "Hey, Boy! Hey, Girl!," "Don't Worry 'Bout Me," and "I'm in the Mood for Love." On a YouTube video of their signature medley, "Just A Gigolo"/"I Ain't Got Nobody," Keely stands stock still, expressionless and demure while Prima and the Witnesses jump and jive around her. She looks bored, scratches her nose, and never smiles. Then in her inimitable, pure voice she sings "Autumn Leaves" completely straight, an antidote to the madness surrounding her. But on the last chorus, she swings it and scats it, takes it into a jazz groove, and sets up a big Witnesses ending.

After packing in crowds every night beginning at midnight in the Casbar Lounge, Prima's band was promoted to the main stage at the Sahara. Thanks to a series of Capitol recordings recorded live at the casino in the mid-fifties, the excitement

of the Prima band transcended geography and time. The skill and originality of Sam Butera's arrangements, the high level of the band's well-rehearsed musicianship, the irrepressible Prima, and the cool and gorgeous voice of Keely still shine through on these recordings. Irving Berlin's classic "You're Just In Love," for example, is a wild chase with a driving brass background in an incredibly tight performance. "That Old Black Magic" won a Grammy in 1959, the same year Prima left the Sahara for a five-year contract with the Desert Inn at \$3 million a year. Louis and Keely starred in movies and moved into a golf course home while Prima bought racehorses and continued to enhance his reputation for sexual prowess with some of the most beautiful women in show business.

Not surprisingly, Keely and Louis divorced in 1961 but Prima and the band continued to perform until 1975 with Gia Maione, the fifth Mrs. Prima. They recorded under their own label, Magna-groove, sold their records after performances, and appeared regularly on TV throughout the sixties and seventies. In 1967, Walt Disney tapped Louis to do the voiceover of King Louie of the Apes, the orangutan in the animated feature of Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. With the Witnesses backing him up, King Louie sang "I Wanna Be Like You," a song familiar to generations of kids. In 1973, Prima had a mild heart attack but kept performing. When he began suffering from intense headaches and learned they were caused by a benign tumor near his brain stem, he had an operation in 1975 to remove the tumor but, he was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage and lapsed into a coma from which he never recovered. He died in New Orleans in 1978 but his memory and his legacy, needless to say, live on.

Phillip Nyhuis is a contributor to Buffalo Spree Magazine and is a fine jazz trumpet player.



SAL MAGGIORE

Email Sal Maggiore: Smaggiore@roadrunner.com

The Wisdom of Yogi Berra

Yogi Berra and his close friend Joe Garagiola grew up in St. Louis. Both were major league base ball players. Their parents were Italian immigrants. Yogi's wisdom has nothing to do with being Italian but here's a few quotes attributed to him.

- "Baseball is 90% mental. The other half is physical"
- "It's déjà vu all over again"
- "A nickel ain't worth a dime anymore"
- "If you come to a fork in the road, take it"
- "I usually take a two hour nap, from one o'clock to four"
- "If the people don't want to come to the park, nobody's going to stop them"
- "Hey Yogi, what time is it?" "You mean now?"
- "Why buy good luggage? You only use it when you're traveling"
- On Yogi Berra Appreciation day in St. Louis in 1947: "I want to thank you for making this day necessary"
- "I really didn't say everything I said"
- On losing the 1960 World Series to Pittsburgh: "We made too many wrong mistakes"
- "You can observe a lot by watching"
- On the tight 1973 National League pennant race: "It ain't over till it's over"
- On Rickey Henderson: "He can run anytime he wants. I'm giving him the red light"
- "When the wife of New York Mayor, John Lindsay said to Yogi, "you look cool despite the heat" Yogi responded, "You don't look so hot, either"

The Italian Golfer

Hats off to Francisco Molinari for winning the WGG-HSBC World Championship in Shanghai. He defeated Lee Westwood the number-one ranking golfer of the world.

In the Ryder Cup (where the best American players play their European counterparts) Francisco and his brother, Eduardo, playing for Italy, help beat the Americans.

On November 16, 2010, President Barack Obama awarded the nation's highest honor to Specialist Salvatore A. Giunta who distinguished himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in action with an armed enemy in the Korengal Valley, Afghanistan, on October 25, 2007. While conducting a patrol as team leader with Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, Specialist Giunta and his team were navigating through harsh terrain when they were ambushed by a well-armed and well-coordinated insurgent force. While under heavy enemy fire, Specialist Giunta immediately sprinted towards cover and engaged the enemy. Seeing that his squad leader had fallen and believing that he had been injured, Specialist Giunta exposed himself to withering enemy fire and raced towards his squad leader, helped him to cover, and administered medical aid. While administering first aid, enemy fire struck Specialist Giunta's body armor and his secondary weapon. Without regard to the ongoing fire, Specialist Giunta engaged the enemy before prepping and throwing grenades, using the explosions for cover in order to conceal his position. Attempting to reach additional wounded fellow soldiers who were separated from the squad, Specialist Giunta and his team encountered a barrage of enemy fire that forced them to the ground. The team continued forward and upon reaching the wounded soldiers, Specialist Giunta realized that another soldier was still separated from the element. Specialist Giunta then advanced forward on his own initiative. As he crested the top of a hill, he observed two insurgents carrying away an American soldier. He immediately engaged the enemy, killing one and wounding the other. Upon reaching the wounded soldier, he began to provide medical aid, as his squad caught up and provided security. Specialist Giunta's unwavering courage, selflessness, and decisive leadership while under extreme enemy fire were integral to his platoon's ability to defeat an enemy ambush and recover a fellow American soldier from the enemy. Specialist Salvatore A. Giunta's extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, and the United States Army.



Sal Maggiore

Source: Washington Post.com

“Ieri, Oggi e Domani”
(Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow)

Still photos from a movie written, produced, directed and edited by Joey Giambra, Michael Giallombardo, Joe Di Leo and Ken Giangreco. It encompasses the WNY Italian community from 1939 to the present is a work in progress and scheduled for future release.



Above: Town Casino 1950s

Bottom: Pianist Richie Mecca playing movie theme music



Swan Street 1950s



Italian Grocer 1942



Each year our members pay \$35.00 to receive 4 issues of the Per Niente Magazine. That money is used to off-set the cost of producing the magazine. The remaining money is put into our Christmas Fund, which this year, bolstered by generous member donations, totaled \$5,000.00 This generosity allows us to support the needs of the less fortunate.

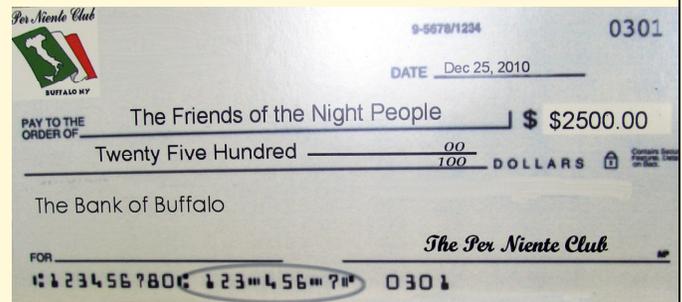
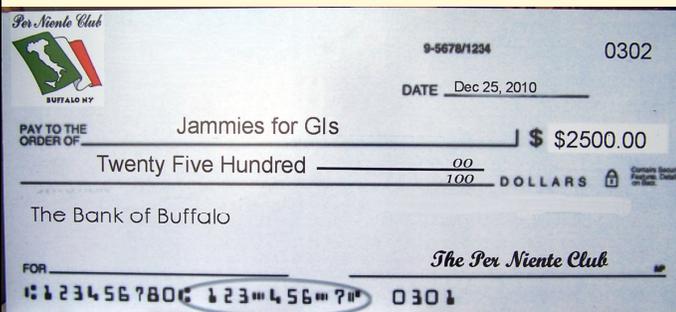
At Christmas, the Per Niente Club presented checks for \$2,500.00 to two local charitable organizations: "The Friends of the Night People" and "Jammie's for GI's." 'Jammie's,' sends backpacks of clothes and personal items to our wounded troops overseas. 'Friends' helps the local poor, homeless and destitute.



B Mangano, C Tasca, J Gullo, Cheryl Lepsch, V Scime
 Presentation of check for \$2500 to Cheryl Lepsch, Director, Jammie's for GI's.

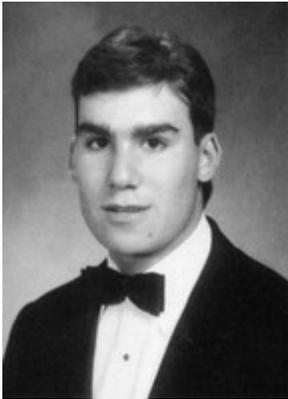


Joe Di Leo, Jim Naples, Sal Maggiore
 Presentation of check for \$2500 to Jim Naples, member of the board of directors, Friends of the Night People.



Christmas Donations - 2010**Total \$3,215.00*****Heartfelt thanks to the following for their generosity***

Accurso Lakeman Mary Ann	Fehringer Ken	Per Niente Golf Outing
Alessandra Angelo	Ganci Don	Pieri John
Arena Sam	Gangi Carmen	Pizzuto Toni/Ron
Arnone Sam	Garofaro Phillip	Rizzone Chuck
Augello Carmen	Gennuso Bob	Ruggiero Buddy
Battaglia Russell	Giambra Joseph	Salerno John
Bellia Anthony	Gioele Clare	Santa Lucia Thomas
Bottita Steve	Gioia Richard	Schiappa Ron
Cacamise Carl	Grandinetti Frank	Schiavone Sal
Cala Rachel	Gullo Jack	Sciandra Andrew
Calabrese Della	LaDuca Louis	Scibetta Frank
Canastraro Tony	Lauricella Mary Ann	Scime Vince
Carboni Tracy	Leone Sam	Sera Sotto Le Stelle
Carnevale Bob	Lo Tempio Frank	Siragusa Paul
Caruana Sonny	LoGalbo Dick	Smaldino Bob
Castronova Russell	Maggiore Sam	Smith Larry
Coniglio Angelo	Mancuso Tom	Stevens Thomas
Critelli Sonny	Mangano Robert	Tasca Charlie
Crosby Gary/Joan	Martoche Salvatore	Terragnoli Lou
Curtiss Angela	Mendola Charles	Tiftickjian Mark
D'Amico Jack	Mendola Mike	Tona Angelo
Di Leo Joe	Mendola Robert	Torrisi Fred
Di Re Phil	Mineo Joseph	Valone Carm
Di Re Vincent	Mirasola Charles	Vella Mary Ann
DiMarco Charles	Nostro Josephine	Viola Richard
Fatta Angelo	Palmeri Pat	Woodside Tom
Fedele Anthony	Paolini Ray	



Philip Gangi

Canisius H.S. 1990

Congratulations to Phil Gangi who was inducted into the Canisius High School Athletic Hall of Fame on Saturday, November 13th at the School where Phil was a standout athlete in football and baseball. In baseball he played center-field and pitched, and earned 1st team All-Catholic Honors and Honorable mention All WNY Honors. In football he was an accomplished running back and earned 2nd team All-Catholic Honors. He graduated in 1990 from Canisius and received a bachelors degree from Buffalo State College. He currently is a teacher at Burgard High School and coaches the school's baseball team. Phil and his wife Kelly live in Buffalo with their daughter Giavanna and their son Phillip Anthony.

Phil was nominated for induction to the Hall by his older brother, Jeff, who also was a star athlete at Canisius excelling in hockey and baseball. Per Niente members, Carmen and Barbara Gangi, are proud of their son's and their achievements in sports, academics and community service.



Phil pick up yardage against Niagara Falls in 1989 contest



Phil and wife Kelly, 2010



Cast and crew of the 1958 movie, "Draw to an Inside Straight," at Red Grange's Globe Hotel and Restaurant, North Division and Elm Streets. Unfortunately the first movie ever to be filmed in Buffalo was never released.



Mariano Glieco's shoeshine stand at Main and Delavan



Joseph Amico is a retired Buffalo school teacher, who grew up on Busti Avenue and attended School #1.

School # 1 at Busti and Hudson Street sat in the heart of the Italian West Side. It turned out to be an incubator for me and a generation or two of Italian-American students who became doctors, educators, lawyers, developers, politicians, musicians, plumbers and engineers among many other skills and

trades. Their parents, the first Italian immigrants to settle in Buffalo, nurtured these students.

An integral part of this culture, this neighborhood, was the mutual respect the school, the parents and the community had for each other.

Nowhere is this better reflected in the very personal experience I had in 1967 with the then out-

going principal of School #1, mister Ambrose Grine.

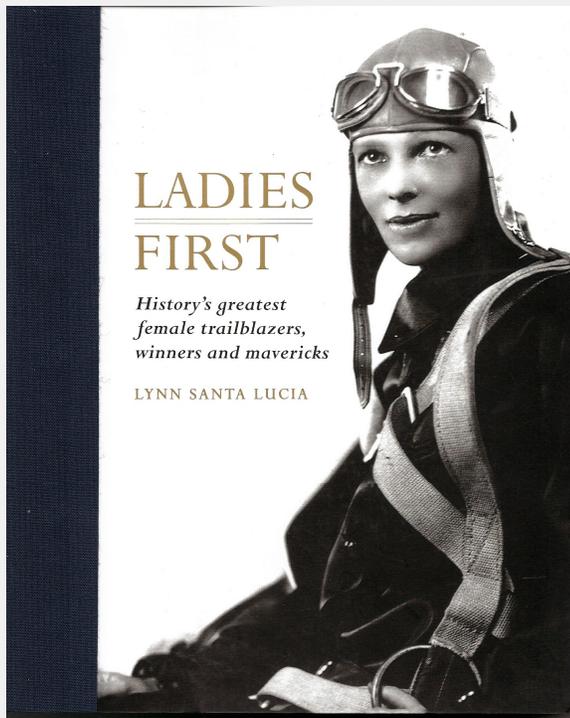
Ambrose Grine was principal of School #1 for over 35 years and had decided in 1967 to retire. I had returned to School # 1 to teach and in 1967, had been there for 2 years. One afternoon, that same year, Ambrose Grine asked me to drive him around the neighborhood for one last look. We drove up and down the streets germane to School #1: Busti, Hudson, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Trenton and Fourth, among others.

During the ride, I glanced over and noticed tears on Mister Grine's cheeks. I pulled over, thinking that he was not feeling well. He turned to me and said, "Joe, I'm feeling fine. I am just saddened to be leaving these children, parents, uncles, aunts, Godparents and friends."

These people, by their insistence that their children respect the teachers and the school made my job much easier. I loved and respected them. I'll never forget them."



School # 1 1940



Ladies First is a fascinating account of some of history's most inspiring women. In addition to the main stories, readers will find mini biographies of other incredible, trailblazing women across a number of fields.

Among the female firsts are Pharaoh Hatshepsut, a woman who ruled as king, not as queen; Christine de Pisan, Europe's first female writer; Bertha von Suttner, the first woman to win the Nobel peace prize, in 1905; and Valentina Tereshkova, Russian astronaut and in 1963 the first woman in space.

Adventurers and athletes, politicians and scientists, artists and educators, revolutionaries and criminals. *Ladies First* celebrates some extraordinary women who have singularly and collectively cleared a path for other females to follow.

Lynn Santa Lucia is an author, magazine writer and editor whose work has graced the pages of *Woman's Day*, *Gourmet*, *Travel + Leisure*, *ivillage.com*, a wonderfully diverse internet publication for women and *Salon.com*. Lynn also edits *BP*, a local journal that explores a myriad of issues germane to mental health.



A graduate of Northwestern University, Lynn was also an Executive Editor with American Express Publishing. An avid world traveler for over two decades with addresses in exotic venues like Taos, New Mexico, Milan, Italy and other fabled places, Lynn has happily returned to her roots to be close with her family and in particular her parents, Thomas and Dolores Santa Lucia.

Recently the editors of *Per Niente Magazine* arranged to meet with Lynn in Spot Coffee on Main Street in Williamsville, New York. The purpose of which was to discuss the creation of her book, *Ladies First*, for this article. We arrived, purchased coffee, sat at a table and began staring at every woman, young or old, who was seated alone or entering. We had never met Lynn so we were waiting, looking, and watching for someone we couldn't describe to the shop staff. Suddenly, it happened. In walked this wonderfully petite red head with a smile so full of cheerful excitement it could have covered an acre of prime Main Street property. Our eyes met. There was no mistake. This was it! We were about to speak to Lynn Santa Lucia and speak we did. Our conversation wasn't unusually lengthy but it certainly was engrossing. The word, "honest," can best describe this forty-three year old intellectual beauty and mother of two who addressed every question with sincerity and great aplomb. We need more Lynn Santa Lucias here. For her to leave again would be a disservice to the area. Her fascinating book can be purchased locally at Barnes and Noble or on line.

A note of irony: Nadia Comineci, one of Lynn's subjects who garnered seven perfect 10s in the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, Canada, and who has been called "the world's best gymnast" was brilliantly portrayed by Buffalo native, Johann Carlo in the 1984 biographical movie, *Nadia*,

West Side Politicians

PEACE BRIDGE MOTEL SEPT 1957

