



## **dicembre 2023 Newsletter**



Joanne Locke, Editor

Anthony Tampone, President

***"Prometto di celebrare e promuovere la mia cultura Italiana"***

### **COMMITTEES**

Committees and volunteers are the backbones of our foundation.

If you are interested in being a part of any committee, contact the chairperson

Dinner- Marjorie Fucilo  
Community Care- Mary Tuma  
Festival- Anthony Tampone  
Calendar-Suzanne Sottile  
Cultural- Linda Saccoman & Gina Sottile  
Membership- Tony Marmo  
Social Media - Kevin Reginato & Nick Alba  
Awards/Donations - Anna Brett  
Sponsors - Tony Marmo  
Fundraising - Nina Postupack

### **CURRENT EVENTS**

12/12 - UCIAF Christmas Dinner @ Little Italy



### **COMING IN JANUARY**

1/6 - Little Christmas Dinner/Dance @ Diamond Mills

1/24 - Information Members Meeting (no dinner)

Visit our website [UCIAF.org](http://UCIAF.org) for more information.



### **HOLIDAY EXPRESSIONS**

**Buon Natale** (Merry Christmas)

**Felice Anno Nuovo** (Happy New Year)

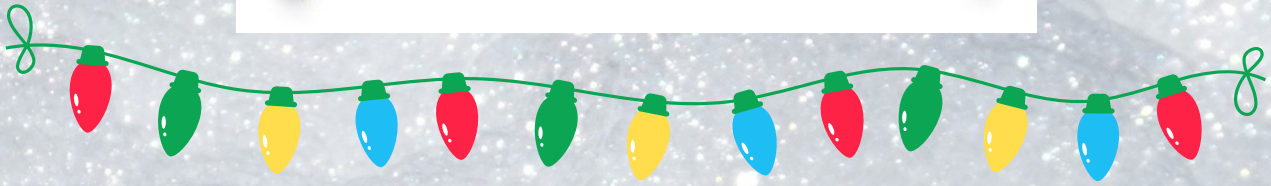
**Buone Feste** (Happy Holidays)

Submitted by Ceila Ecker





# Ulster County ITALIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION



## COMMUNITY CARE



On Nov. 1st,  
Community Care  
donated \$500 to  
Ulster County  
Community Action.  
The money was used  
to purchase  
Thanksgiving turkeys  
for those in need  
living in senior  
housing.

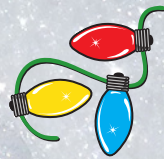


Community Care adopted a  
local family and purchased  
Christmas gifts, toys and clothes  
for five children which was part  
of the Salvation Army's Adopt-  
A-Family Program.



### PLEASE DONATE

We will be collecting stocking stuffers  
for People's Place Project Santa at  
our December Holiday Dinner. Items  
needed are hats, mittens, soft fleece  
blankets, stuffed animals and crafts.



Captain Erik at Salvation  
Army thanking UCIAF. Our  
Community Care was given  
5 Angel Tags. We were able  
to fill the Christmas wish  
lists of 5 children through  
the Salvation Army's adopt  
a family Christmas  
Program.



## VETSGIVING

Thank you, thank you to all of  
you who helped today and/or  
donated desserts, you are all  
amazing!! It was a beautiful day!  
How about Jerry, our 96 year old  
WWII Veteran. It was such an  
honor to serve and talk with him  
today. God Bless our Veterans  
and all of you. Happy  
Thanksgiving to you and your  
loved ones.  
Mary



Submitted by Mary Tuma  
Community Care Chairperson



# Ulster County ITALIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION



## BEST PIZZA AND PASTA DAY EVER!



**Special thanks to Debra Tampone for organizing this fun event for both young and old! Deb puts her heart and soul into making sure everyone has an enjoyable experience and it shows!! Thank you to all of our UCIAF volunteers, we appreciate your help!**







## **NOVEMBER DINNER MEETING AT THE VENUE**

A great time was had by all! Thank you to all Board members who served these past two years and congratulations to the new Board members! Also, thanks to Angela Bruno for entertaining us despite being under the weather a bit.

*-Tony Marmo*



**Recognizing our UCIAF veterans**



## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Anthony Tampone, President  
Joe Famiglietti, 1st Vice President  
Joe LoSchiavo, 2nd Vice President  
Gina Sottile, Secretary  
Bill Calderara, Treasurer  
Kevin Reginato, Director at Large  
John Ioia, Director at Large

Congratulations to our newly elected officers!

## **DELI NIGHT AT THE REHER CENTER**



After months of preparation, the Deli dinner arrived. It was a huge success, and we thank everyone at the Reher Center and our UCIAF volunteers for a perfect evening of coming together.

## **UCIAF MEMBERS LEND A HAND**



On Nov. 17th, several UCIAF members helped fill takeout orders in the kitchen (at the White Eagle Hall on Delaware Avenue) for stuffed cabbage, pierogi, sauerkraut and kielbasa dinners. Then we all sat and ate. It was really great!

*- Mary Tuma*







## A Message From Our President...

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you the Happiest of this Holy Season. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah or Bodhi Day may Peace, Love and Joy fill your days.

On December 1st UCIAF will be serving free hot chocolate, coffee and tea at Ulster Savings Bank on Wall Street in Kingston at the Snowflake Festival. Time is 6-8pm. Please stop by and say hello. Check the event calendar under the Info tab on our website [UCIAF.ORG](http://UCIAF.ORG). to see what else is going on this month.

### “MEETING ONLY” - MEMBER MEETING

For those of you interested in finding out more about your Foundation, you can attend our open meeting which will be strictly on the regular business of the Foundation. No dinner, food or entertainment. I would be very interested in hearing your thoughts and ideas as to what we can do to grow the Foundation and engage more of our members. Reports from varied committees will be presented. We will attempt to answer any questions you may have. A tentative date of Wednesday, January 24th @ 6:00pm will be on the calendar. We will choose the location based on the number of replies received. Please reply to [UCIAFinfo@gmail.com](mailto:UCIAFinfo@gmail.com) to let us know if you plan on attending. There will be a follow-up email sent out through Member Planet.

There are many committees looking for more insight and participation from our members and more committees to be formed as we look to increase our presence in the surrounding communities and in the nation with our partners the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) and the Italian Sons and Daughters of America (ISDA).

Let's work together to keep our Italian heritage and culture alive and thriving. It is too wonderful a gift to let it drift away.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Happy New Year to all

Pace e amore,

Anthony







## CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

My strongest memory of the Christmas holiday growing up in an Italian home in Brooklyn is, Christmas Eve. A lot of people know about the 7 different fish. From my family's village in Sicily the fish represented the 7 Sacraments. The other thing is that our home was always open to friends and neighbors to partake in the feast.

-Joe LoSchiavo

One Christmas memory is making handmade ravioli with a dear aunt. We would make the dough from scratch, roll it out and fill it with spinach, parmesan, and ricotta. Then we would use a skate key to seal the edges. They always came out fabulous!

- Adriana Fusco

Panettone was baked in old coffee cans. The smell wafted through the house. During the Christmas season, I ate toasted panettone with butter every morning.

-Anonymous

**Eels in the bathtub! In anticipation of Christmas Eve dinner, the eels from Arthur Avenue were kept alive in the bathtub. Some would later be fried but the gigantic and oily Capitone was cooked outside on the grill.** - Celia Ecker

Aunt Dee and Uncle Joe had a beautiful nativity display in their home. One year, while we were admiring their Christmas tree, Aunt Dee noticed that the Baby Jesus was not in his cradle. The immediate suspects...my three young children. We searched everywhere but could not find the missing Baby Jesus.

Later, when we were home, Aunt Dee telephoned again to inquire if perhaps one of our children had "accidentally" taken the Baby Jesus. Once again, I asked my little ones. My little Jillian responded, "Baby Jesus is not missing. I put Him in His mother's arms, right where He should be." -Jane Brown

**Being Italian, Christmas Eve has always been the more festive and exciting day of the holiday. We always had the seven fishes dinner with 25-30 people at the tables set up from the family room to the dining room into the living room. One long table with everyone sitting together is a must. Unfortunately, this dynamic has changed as people pass on, however, we adapt and still gather at our house for food, fun and family memories, trying to keep as many of the family traditions as possible.** - Marjorie Fucilo







## **CHRISTMAS MEMORIES - continued**

What gathering of an Italian family isn't centered around food (cibo)? For most Italians I know the Christmas Eve tradition is "The Feast of the Seven Fishes". In my family those seven fishes were spread out through the antipasti, the pasta (linguine with clam sauce - both red & white) and the primo dishes. Our overwhelming choice of recipes for cooking the fish was "Deep Fried". As most of you can imagine - quite the cooking mess! There was the second basement kitchen, but that was too far away. Our house, however, had a patio just outside the dining room door. Perfect because the best way to eat fried fish is right out of the hot oil. Perfect, because we had one of those propane outside deep fryers. My memory - everyone seated at the dining room tables (one for the kids); the patio door swinging open, a blast of outside cold air from the open door flowing across the table; "get that door closed!" and then a huge basket of perfectly fried calamari quickly passed out to all with lots of "oohs & ahhs". Bellissimo!

*-Joe Famiglietti*

One of my favorite holidays was Christmas Eve at my grandmother's house in Bensonhurst Brooklyn. Everyone called her Momma. Nonna was my grandmother on my father's side. Our entire family squeezed into the basement (Italians and their basements!) to celebrate. After our traditional dinner, in this order of stracciatella, salad, lasagna and seafood dishes representing the Seven Seas, the table would be cleared, and the games would begin! We played Tombola - Tombola is the Italian representation of Bingo. There were number cards to share, but never enough tokens and coins - so we used peanut shells and orange peels. So much fun and laughs as by that time, the wine had been flowing. (It took me a few years to figure out the peanut shells were not actually the prize.)

Gifts were not opened until midnight and only after the Baby Jesus {ceremony}. The youngest person in the family at the time would take the baby Jesus from the Nativity and carry it around the table. All the kids would join the procession, holding lit candles, while Grandma sang "Tu Scende Dalle Stelle". So beautiful now to remember. This tradition lasted until the year an overly enthusiastic cousin tossed baby Jesus in the air, and it sustained unrepairable injuries. Grandma was furious. Really furious. Luckily for the young ones she only spoke Italian. That was the end of that tradition!"

*- Donnie Caragiulo*

My memory is the time cousins came to our New York City apartment to make strufoli.

We all worked together to roll the balls and fry them. I remember a lot of dough flying from one cousin to the other. Then everything was dipped in honey and decorated with sprinkles and candied peel. It was all delicious and a fun time with the cousins.

*-Joann Rex*







## **CHRISTMAS MEMORIES - continued**

When my kids were little, we started to make homemade gingerbread houses from scratch. The entire thing had to be edible. Year after year I would be on the lookout for certain kind of candies that would fill a need for the house, like sticks of gum for shutters and tiny Chiclet's for a walkway. The gingerbread house was used as a center piece until New Year's Day when the oldest had the honor of smashing the house so everyone, cousins, and friends, could pick off their favorite parts, mostly the Rice Krispy trees and shrubs. Over the years the crude gingerbread houses started to look a bit better with experience and new ideas. One year, when the kids were older and on their own, they initiated a family competition. Each one kept their design a secret. By far our oldest son won, with his medieval village including a castle and a moat made with blue Jello! For the past 20 years I have taken my joy of making a gingerbread house to the high school where I work. At the end of a 2-3 day after school workshop, we raffle the house off and send the proceeds to St. Jude's Children's Hospital so the students learn the real meaning of Christmas. These days I am still making gingerbread houses with my grandchildren. I hope someday they will look back on these special times and carry on the family tradition. - *Debbie Tampone*

**Almost all of my fondest Christmas memories are centered on our Christmas Eve dinner of the multiple types of fish.**

For over 20 years our family would gather on Christmas Eve around 6pm that evening to enjoy a special meal prepared by two or three generations of women. We started out with a seafood antipasto consisting of sardines, anchovies, shrimp, wild mushrooms, pickled herring, sweet and hot peppers in oil, cheeses, salad and some fresh vegetables including fennel. Next came two or three types of pasta with clam, calamari, octopus or plain oil and garlic "sauces". The entrée usually included baccala from the wooden box which took days to soften and marinate, salmon, "blow fish" which I think was tilapia or grouper and occasionally some crab legs or "monk fish". Of course there was white and red wine to wash everything down.

After the feast we enjoyed the assortment of fresh pastries from the Strippoli's at Caffè Aurora including bomba, spiradelli, tiramisu, cannoli and our own homemade pizzelles and other cookies (biscotti). The adults washed everything down with tea, coffee, espresso, and an assortment of after dinner Italian liquors.

After dinner we usually exchanged gifts (some Italian naps) than off to midnight mass at Mt. Carmel.

**All of us have fond memories of the "old days" focused on "La Famiglia" and Food.**

**Buon Natale!! - *Les Lombardi***







## UCIAF SWEATSHIRTS

*order  
now!*

We are taking orders for hooded sweatshirts both pullovers and zippered in black or blue. The cost is \$40 each. Send your order to Linda Palladino at [lindino716@aol.com](mailto:lindino716@aol.com)

*Great  
Christmas  
gift!*







submitted by Debra Tampone

# Italian Christmas Traditions

## BUON NATALE



If you love Christmas time, then Italy is the place for you. While decorating doesn't commence until December 8th, known as the Day of the Immaculate Conception, Italians keep the Christmas season going until January 6th, the Day of the Epiphany, which is also the 12th day of Christmas

### Italians Love Caroling

In Italy, the 8 days prior to Christmas are filled with caroling and bagpipe players, called 'zampognari'. This 8-day stretch is called the Novena and is a great time to brush up on your singing skills. Carols were first introduced in the 12th century by St. Francis of Assisi, who is also credited with creating the first Nativity scene.



### Nativity Displays are a Must

Called 'presepi', you have to put up a traditional scene. In Italy, you'll find these ornately hand-crafted displays that are simply stunning. Even in the U.S. you will find a beautifully designed nativity scene at Nonna's house.

Christmas Eve is popularly celebrated with preparing 7 fish dishes. The number seven is a symbol that's repeated many times throughout the Bible- and in Catholicism, there are seven sacraments and seven deadly sins.

### Get Ready for Midnight Mass

Italians and Italian Americans often head to Midnight Mass after the Christmas Eve dinner. However, tradition does vary in each city. In northern regions of Italy, some families go skiing at midnight instead!





che  
ore  
sono?



Spot the 8 differences!

(actually 11!!)



sono le  
dieci e dieci



sono le  
cinque e mezza



sono  
le tre

