NUTLEY UNICO

(www.*nutleyunico.org)*

P.O. Box 43, Nutley

NOVEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

**There is no dinner meeting in December**. In its place is our Christmas Party on Tuesday, Dec. 12, at Nanina’s in the Park. The night will also include the popular Ladies Grab Bag (gifts at $20 value). Music will be provided by our own John Cafone. The cost per person is $75 up to Nov. 14, and $80 thereafter. We are also collecting toys for “Toys for Tots” and canned and packaged food items for our Unico Food Drive. Contact Debbie Bellucci (dbellucci@msn.com) if interested.

OUR NEXT DINNER MEETING IS THURSDAY, JAN. 4, AT 7:00 pm at MAMMA VITTORIA.

2023-24 dues is past due. If not yet paid, please remit to Nutley Unico, P.O. Box 43, Nutley ASAP.

**November Dinner Meeting/Activities:**

* The November meeting focused on veterans of US military service. Members with veteran status who were introduced include Charlie Kucinski, Mario Cocchiola, Bob Montanino, Joe Zarra, Dave Ingrassia, Peter Ardito, John Kelly and Dominick Cucciniello. Past National President, Joe Agresti, a US Army vet, was also introduced. I presented the work done by a group called Honor Flight which transports military vets from all wars and conflicts to Washington to visit war memorials built in their honor. The focus was on a Vietnam vet from Florida, Andrew Thorry (a personal friend), who was part of a recent trip to Washington. He saw the Vietnam Memorial Wall for the first time and had the honor of presenting a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. This was followed by the introduction of four Viet Nam vets; Charles “Chuck” Nucifora (Unico District VII Governor), Kevin Begin, Donald Sellari and Carl Graziano. These men were among the many who were subjected to ridicule and insults when returning home from their tour of duty in Viet Nam. We took the opportunity to properly thank them for their service.
* Dan Marucci explained the genesis and evolution of the Congressional Medal of Honor. This honor developed from a common practice to groups of servicemen to one which honored men for specific acts of bravery.
* Cathy Marucci (Membership Chair) announced that we now have 178 members.
* A motion was passed to purchase a new banner for above Franklin Ave. at a cost not to exceed $550.
* Members were informed that the Feb. 1 meeting will again be at Nanina’s. This meeting includes the drawing of the winners of the annual $100 ticket raffle. Tickets will be distributed soon. **All members** are expected to participate. Members attending the Feb. meeting will be asked to pay an additional $20 due to the cost of the change in venue.
* The 2023-24 annual budget was approved.

**Good & Welfare:**

Bob Vangieri and Pasquale Ferraro are recovering from recent medical procedures.

**National Business**:

We continue to be active in challenging a recent procedure endorsed by the new National President concerning the addition of DNA as a criteria for membership in Unico – a position we oppose.

**District VII Business:**

* Next District Meeting – Tuesday, Nov 28 (location TBD)
* The Tuesday, May 28, 2024 meeting will be hosted by our Chapter.

**Executive Committee Meeting** – (Pending)

**Upcoming Events/Activities:**

**December 2,** Saturday, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm **–** Breakfast with Santa at the Chandelier, Belleville. Cost is $35 per adult and $10 per child over 6. Children under 6 are free. Children will get to meet and receive a gift from Santa. Family and friends are welcome. RSVP to Marie Solimo (973-284-1147) or Sal Ferraro (973-495-7935). A flier is attached separately.

**January** 4, Thursday – Monthly dinner meeting.

**CULTURE & HERITAGE** (The story of Dr. Virginius Mattia’s grandfather’s recorded exploits in settling in Newark will continue this year.

As noted in previous newsletters from last year, I came into possession of a manuscript titled, *The Early Italian Settlers in Newark.* This is a compilation of the writings of the grandfather of Dr. Virginius Mattia, Jr., who resided in Nutley and was the former President/CEO of Hoffman La Roche. Dr. Mattia’s grandfather, Peter/Petrino Mattia, came to this country from Calabritto, a province of Avellino, with his family as a little boy and settled in Newark in 1873. He began to write about his experiences, and those of the other early Italian immigrants who came to Newark in the 1880’s. His papers were passed on to his granddaughter, Jessie Mattia Rosa, Dr. Mattia’s sister, in 1953 upon his passing. They laid dormant for the next 32 years until Senora Rosa’s husband transcribed them into a 91-page manuscript in 1985 describing Petrino’s recollections, experiences, the problems facing the Italian immigrants, the “firsts” (first school, first macaroni factory, first wedding, first dance in a public hall, first hotel, etc.), problems with the Irish, politics, development of the “colonies” (wards), Branch Brook Park, and many more vignettes……

**These are the final chapters of the manuscript.** I hope you found it interesting.

*INTRODUCTION*

*“I am writing this, my second history of the early Italian settlers of Newark, NJ…..I had no thought of writing a history – I did it to make it easy for me to answer questions. As we came from the different towns and provinces of Italy, people would ask me, ‘ Who is he and where did he come from’. So, I got it down in the best way I could to give their names. Later I made memorandums of happenings in the ‘colonies’.*

*I felt sorry for the single men and those that left their families back home. I could see them with tin pails go to get food and take it to their lodgings to eat.*

***CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR***

*“A Strange Story of a Wedding”*

*Mr. Egbert was keeping company with the daughter of his best friend. He asked his friend for permission to marry his daughter. The friend said, ‘I will. But all my life I wanted to have a ride with my daughter after the wedding. Egbert consented. After the wedding the father, bridesmaid, and her father got into his carriage. Egbert and the best man got into another. Arriving at the dining room Egbert and the best man waited and worried. What had become of his wife, her father and the bridesmaid? Finally he reported it to the police. But they couldn’t find them. The father had kidnapped his daughter and had been riding in Elizabeth and Linden all night. In the forenoon he went to Egbert’s home. ‘Here’s your blooming bride, Eggy old boy and hand over that ten dollars’ ‘What ten dollars, you damned kidnapper?’ ‘Don’t get sore. You bet ten dollars that I couldn’t pull a better joke on you’. I lose. Hers’s your ten, and you old fossil, may you enjoy worse than I have.*

***CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE***

*“Lawrence St.”*

*Between Commerce and Market Sts. was the Lawrence School which many Italian boys and girls attended from River St and North and South Canal Sts. Many are in the professions and big business and helped build the Ironbound colony. South of Market St. were many wood working shops, such as wood turners, pattern makers and the James M. Seymore Engineering Co. Mr. Seymore was the Mayor of Newark from 1900 – 1903. On Ward St. were the laboratories of Thomas Edison.*

*“Michael Mazzei and I were Eyewitnesses to a Terrible Tragedy”*

*It was 6:00 in the summer of the early 90s. We were talking and saw a buggy with two men in it. It was going from side to side. That is why we were looking at it. It stopped before reaching the tracks and as the train pulled out the horse started to cross. A locomotive came from the opposite direction. We both saw the locomotive hit the carriage. The two men were ground to bits. Later we found out that one of the men was from the Mullen family of undertakers. The other was a freeholder. Part of the carriage was found near Commerce St, a block away. At the time the tracks were on the surface. There were no gates on any railroad crossings in Newark, only a flagman to warn of an approaching train. But the flagman could only be on one side of the tracks.*

***CHAPTER FORTY-SIX***

*“Market St. on the North Side of Penn Railroad”*

*Between Mulberry and Lawrence Sts was Baker Brothers springing and stationary store. They were also the publishers of Town Talk, a weekly magazine for local topics. Between Lawrence St. and the railroad was the Troy Laundry, Phineas Wheel-Wright Works, one of the largest wheel-making works in the country. Charley Norton, an ex-prizefighter, had a saloon at the middle of the street leading to Commerce St. Norton’s was a place mostly patronized by prize fighters and sports people.*

***THE END***

***EPILOGUE***

***The 1953 Newark News account of the death of Peter B. Mattia (they referred to him as Petrino) revealed other of his achievements not mentioned by him in these recollections. For instance, he was a dramatics instructor for many years at the old Young Men’s Catholic Institute of Newark. He was one of the founders of St. Lucy’s Church. He was selected by Pope Pius XII as a cavalier in the Military Order of Mercedes. He was an honorary lifetime member of the Elks, having been the first Italian to join in New Jersey.***

**Frank Cocchiola**

Please forward any changes in email addresses, good & welfare items, questions for the Executive Committee or questions concerning the newsletter to me at **fcoch1212@gmail.com**.