

NUTLEY UNICO
(*nutleyunico.org*)
P.O. Box 43, Nutley

OCTOBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

OUR NEXT DINNER MEETING IS THURSDAY, NOV. 2, AT
7:00 pm at MAMMA VITTORIA.

Please remember to bring your dues to the meeting if attending or to remit by mail (Nutley Unico, P.O. Box 43, Nutley) asap.

October Dinner Meeting/Activities:

The October meeting was one of our most well-attended in the past several years. The 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to retired NJ State District 28 Legislator, Ralph Caputo, for his many years of promoting Italian-American heritage and culture and service to his Community, County and State.

The “meal of the day” coordinated by Dan Marucci was based on a “depression” theme focusing on dishes our ancestors dined on when they had little money to feed their families; pasta and peas, escarole and beans, neck bones, sausage and peppers, mozzarella and tomatoes, polenta, etc. Everyone enjoyed it.

Dan also described a book written by Dr. Rock Positano about the later years of the great Italian-American Yankee ballplayer, Joe DiMaggio. The book focuses on the later years of Joe D’s life when he became much more approachable.

Four new members were sworn in; Frank Russo, Linda Sciorilli, Danielle (Russo) Cohen and Joey Cohen.

Frank Russo did a great job coordinating the Wreath Laying ceremony at the Columbus statue prior to the Nutley-Belleville Columbus Day Parade. Thanks to Anthony Bucchino for his speech on Italian-American culture & heritage in Nutley and Belleville.

We had the largest number of Nutley UNICANS ever marching in the annual parade. We had 30 or so in our main “posse” with additional members marching with the Governing Body, Board of Ed, riding in cars and waving from floats. It was a great showing!!

Nov. 2 Dinner Meeting:

The November meeting will focus on veterans of US military service. Members with veteran status to be introduced include Charlie Kucinski, Mario Cocchiola, Bob Montanino, Joe Zarra, Dave Ingrassia, Peter Ardito, John Kelly and Dominick Cucciniello. If any other member has veteran status please inform me with the details of your service. Also, if you plan on bringing a guest who is a vet send me his/her name and service details so I can properly introduce them.

Good & Welfare:

President, Dan Carnicella, was selected as the Nutley Italian-American “Man of the Year” by the Parade Committee.

National Business:

The 2024 Unico National convention will be held in Princeton, NJ, on July 24-28, 2024.

The chapter will be taking a position on recent action by the new President concerning expanding the criteria for membership in UNICO— **a position we oppose.**

District VII Business:

- Thursday, Oct. 12 – Italian Organization Mass at St. Lucy’s at 6:30 pm
- Tuesday, Oct. 24 – Meet and Greet the President Night at the Venetian in Garfield (\$85). If interested contact Tom Sposato. We will issue one check for attendees from the Chapter.
- Sunday & Monday, Nov. 5 & 6 – Eastern Regional Meeting at Ocean PI Conference Center, Long Branch
- Next District Meeting – Tuesday, Nov 28 (location TBD)

Executive Committee Meeting – Sept. 27

- Membership – 176 members

- The annual Golf Outing was a great success with 98 participants. Money for hole sponsors is still being collected, but the projected profit from this event will exceed \$7,000.
- A charitable initiative called “Save a Suit” was approved and is underway. The objective is to collect suits, sports jackets, or other professional attire for veterans in need who are going to job interviews. Clothing can be dropped off at Bucco Couture, 218 Franklin Ave., Nutley, or brought to the November meeting.

Upcoming Events/Activities:

October 29, Sunday – Nutley Unico Legacy Bocce Tournament. Cedar Grove Community Pool, 99 Slattery Drive, Cedar Grove.; Starts promptly at 8:30 am. Entry fee is \$200 per team of four. Guest fee is \$20 which includes food and beverage. Only a few team slots are available. If interested contact Sal Ferraro (973 495-7935, Ben Costa (973) 798- 2493, Frank Russo (973) 941-3453 or tom Sposato (973) 202-8032.

November 5, Thursday – Dinner Meeting honoring Veterans. I will be introducing all member vets and any guests who are veterans.

December 2, Saturday – Breakfast with Santa at the Chandelier. Details to follow.

December 12, Tuesday – **Annual Christmas Party** at 6:30 pm at Nanina’s. Donations will be accepted for Toys for Tots and Nutley Unico Food Drive. Ladies Grab Bag (\$20 value). The cost is \$80 per person, \$75 per person if paid before Nov. 14. There will not be a monthly dinner meeting in December.

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.....

I want to continue to provide you with some interesting sections of the manuscript. I left off with Chapter Thirty-Seven last year.

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

Halsey St. South of Central Ave.

Colenan's Business College was on the northwest corner of Academy St. On the second floor of Chester Row Hall was the headquarters of the Essex County Republican County Committee.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

Market St.

In the 20th century West Market St was made up from High St to Orange St. The old German Hospital was on Bank and Wallace Sts. During WWI the name was changed to Newark Memorial Hospital. It is now Lutheran Hospital. The old courthouse was a brownstone building. All of the county's business was done in that one building. The Hall of Records and present courthouse were built in the new century. There were prison cells in the cellar. Dungeons would be a better name for them. A chamber of horrors. In the front at the curb was a fountain where man or beast could take a drink. Also at that point were two horses to help pull horse cars uphill. In 1887 Rev. Conrad Schotthoefer (a German who spoke perfect Italian) built the first Italian-speaking church, St. Philip on Grove St. (now Court House Pl.)

On the north side of Market St. was Jake the barber. He often shaved Thomas Edison. On Springfield Ave. was a saloon owned by a former Indian scout. On his birthday each year he would put his scout suit on and go up and down Springfield Ave and Market St firing blanks into the air. On the southwest corner of Springfield Ave and Arlington St. was the soda-water works of the late mayor of Newark, Jacob Huesling.

In the late 80's Victor Bianchi with his partner Ottolini, built the first Italian hall in the center of Newark, the Columbian Hall. On the north side of Market St between Comes Alley and Plane St was the furniture store of Amos Van Horn. He presented the city with two beautiful monuments, that of Washington in Washington Park and that of Lincoln in front of the Court House.

On the northwest corner of Plane and Market Sts. was the second A & P store in Newark. At the crosswalk of the A & P to what is now Bambergers was what I, with very little knowledge of art, could not, with any honesty call it anything but a monstrosity. It was cement and looked like it was designed by someone who had a grudge against the city.

In the 90s a large office building was erected on the northwest corner of Washington St. (what is now Bambergers). In the basement was a rathskeller and the first floor was a clothing store. The rest were offices. On the south side of market St between Washington and Halsey Sts was the German National

Bank. On the top floor were the lodge rooms of the Newark B.P.O. Elks, Number 21. I was the first Italian to join in October 1898.

Library Hall was on the north side between Halsey and Broad Sts. Books could be borrowed there. Many amateur plays and concerts were given there. In a building near the library on the upper floors were the rooms of Whitehead and Hoag, inventors of the celluloid button with pins.

The first outside fruit stand in 1975 was on the northwest corner of Broad and Market Sts. Pietro Zazzali started this business.

On the corner of Nutria and Market Sts was a small theatre, the Castle Garden, a variety theatre (vaudeville). It was one of three theaters in Newark. I saw Pat Rooney, Sr. there. I also saw Carlo Diamando, whose stage name was Charlie Diamond.

On the south side of Market St. to Mulberry St was Ferry's ticket office, the Western Union telegraph office, the Newark Sunday Call, Meeker's Marble works, and some small stores.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

Miners Newark Theater

Harry Miner, Sr., the founder of Miner Estate built the Miners theater in the late 80s and early 90s. It became the most modern theater in the state and the first-class theater of Newark. In later years it became known as the Newark. The women of Newark presented the beautiful chandelier. All of the most famous actors and actresses of our time have played there, including Ethel Barrymore who made her debut as a star when she was under 20 years-old in a one-act play called King Renie's Daughter. Another was an Italian male toe-dancer said to be the greatest ever known.

Alexander Salvini

Alexander came to this country to study engineering. In college he became interested in the theater. He quickly became the romantic on the American stage. His father would not even answer his letters for many years. His dad's friends finally convinced him to come to see Alexander. Sitting in the rear of the box he couldn't control himself at the end of the first act and the play and repeatedly called out, 'mio figlio'. Alexander died at a young age.

The first headquarters of the Salvation Army was on Beaver St in Newark.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

Mulberry St From Center and River Sts.

On the west side of Mulberry St was St. John's School. The first mass said by an Italian priest was in that school. That was the Right Rev. Bishop Wigger of Newark who was educated in Italy and enjoyed Italian dining. A waiter in a restaurant kissed his ring, bringing him to tears. The man said he was a priest but lost his credentials from his Bishop. Not having any money he had to work as a waiter. Bishop Wigger believed him and brought him to South Orange. His credentials were restored and he became Rev. Father Nardiello, who later became pastor of the church. His life-sized statue is on the side of the church on Broad St in Bloomfield. Father Nardiello prepared our boys and girls for Confirmation on the school room. St. John's Church is the oldest Roman Catholic Church in Newark.

To be continued.....(three more chapters)

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.